

# Client Guide

## What to expect when starting counselling?

We recognise that coming to counselling might be a daunting thought for some; you may have questions about how it all works. Here's some initial information that may help.

You can contact us via phone, email or the contact form on our website and we'll get back to you within 48 hours to arrange a first meeting for a mutually convenient time. When you arrive at Riverwood Counselling & Wellbeing Practice please enter by the main door and make your way up the stairs to the waiting area. You'll be met there by one of the counselling team at your appointment time.

This first meeting is free of charge, 30 minutes long and you can outline to us what brings you to counselling and what you hope to get out of it, if that's something you know. You only need to share information you're comfortable to share. We'll tell you more about our counselling approach, and we can discuss how we might work together. We'll also take down some contact information and basic personal details, with your permission.

If you feel you'd like to go ahead with counselling sessions we'll book a date and time to suit you with one of our therapy team. Or you can take time to consider it at home and get back in touch with us.

Your appointments will be at the same time, same day each week with the same counsellor. They last for 50 minutes. This is your time to share any thoughts or feelings you want to, we'll be ready to listen to whatever you bring.

You may know how many sessions you would like to have with the counsellor; this can be stated at the initial meeting. Alternatively, you may want to make a decision about ending counselling after a number of sessions when it feels right for you to start bringing the work to a close.

Payment for each session is made directly to the counsellor, at the end of the session. This can be by cash or cheque. The fee will be confirmed to you at the initial meeting and you can see our fee structure on our website.

Confidentiality is a core component of the counselling relationship and something we stringently uphold. There are specific exceptions to this, which ensure we are working ethically, details of which will be provided in writing at the first meeting and discussed fully with you. Our confidentiality policy is available on the website.

There is no set way that counselling is 'done'. Although we always work within an ethical framework we believe that the therapeutic value is created in the relationship between the counsellor and client and therefore every client has a unique and entirely personal counselling experience.