

Rose Whiteley UKCP & COSRT accredited

Post Grad Diploma in the Theory and Practice of Psychotherapy for Sexual Dysfunction
Advanced Diploma in Humanistic-Integrative Counselling Diploma in Clinical Supervision

INFORMATION AND WORKING AGREEMENT

Welcome to my practice!

Sometimes people say that therapy is only for weak people who need a prop to lean on. Don't believe it for a moment! Psychotherapy requires strength, courage and a lot of commitment. It takes guts to look inside ourselves and figure out what's going on, and even more to let someone else share that journey with us.

Our first two or three sessions together are called the Assessment: they give us both the opportunity to consider whether we think we'll be able to work well together. It is important that you feel comfortable with me, and that I feel I have the right skills and experience to work with the issues you are bringing.

During the Assessment I will find out what is bringing you into therapy at this time and what you are hoping to get out of it. I will also take a thorough life history. I am interested in the whole person: body, mind, emotions, spirit, relationships, family and social context. Often events and patterns from the past still influence us in the present, even if we don't realise it, and exploring this will be an important part of the work. Once the Assessment is complete, we will decide if we are both comfortable to proceed. If we are, we will move to the main part of the work. We will meet weekly, at least in the early stages: regularity and continuity are very important to successful therapy.

I will encourage you to explore your thoughts, feelings, actions and circumstances, in order to help you gain greater understanding of the issues that have brought you into therapy and, crucially, your own part in them. It's very important to understand from the outset that, whilst we may have influence over other people, the only person we have the power to change directly is ourselves. But we do have that power!

A crisis intervention may last only a few sessions; dealing with one very specific problem might take a couple of months; but generally, I work over months or years at greater depth with more complex issues. In shorter-term work, I'll help you to identify the inner and external resources you have available to you; to develop your problem-solving skills; to recognise the choices you have; and to make changes if you want to. In longer-term work, we'll also look at concepts such as understanding your emotions, authenticity, intimacy and interdependence. Sensing real connections in our relationships is vital to us as human beings, and being able to experience this as part of the therapeutic relationship can help us to become more confident and genuine in the way we relate to other people in our lives.

You will be an active partner, rather than a passive recipient, of this thing called 'therapy'. Being as honest as you can during sessions is very important. The more you engage and participate in the work we do together, the more likely you are to find therapy helpful. You may want to work on the issues we discuss in session during the course of your week. I may give you suggestions on how to do this, such as writing thoughts and feelings in a journal, or suggesting books or articles to read.

60 Bedford Street Amptill Beds MK45 2NB: the therapy room is opposite, numbered 60a.
Tel: 07940 526664 rose@whiteleywords.com www.whiteleywords.com

Although many people find therapy beneficial, it is not without risks. Don't be surprised if you find sessions challenging and difficult at times. You may get in touch with thoughts or feelings that you have previously preferred not to acknowledge, such as guilt, shame, anger or sadness. It would be misleading for me to guarantee specific outcomes, but if you are troubled at any time about your therapy, please don't hesitate to discuss this with me.

How will our therapeutic relationship work?

The therapeutic relationship is special and close, but it is different from a normal friendship. There are things that a counselling relationship can never be, "*but that what it is can nevertheless be relied upon*" (Lott, 1999 "In Session"). It is my responsibility as your therapist to set and maintain certain boundaries, such as those described below, which help keep the relationship safe for both of us.

- 1) My fee for assessments and ongoing sessions is currently £60. Concessions are sometimes available depending on household income: please ask in advance of making an appointment if you are looking for a reduced fee. My minimum fee is £45 for weekly therapy, or £50 if you come less often. I review fees each summer, but if your circumstances change in the meantime, please let me know.
- 2) Each session will last 50 minutes; if you arrive late for a session, we will meet for whatever time is remaining. Unfortunately, I do not have a receptionist or waiting area, so to safeguard your confidentiality, and that of other clients, please **wait until your appointed time** before approaching the therapy room.
- 3) Therapy works best when there is security and consistency in the arrangements between us. Because making an appointment means I keep a space in my diary to ensure I am available for you, **I need to charge the full fee for appointments missed or cancelled with less than one week's notice for any reason (including sickness)**. This helps me run my practice efficiently and fairly, and allows me to be reliable and available to you. If you are unable to keep our next appointment, let me know at the previous week's session if you want to avoid having to pay.

If you are not able to give me one week's notice of cancellation, but let me know you won't be attending before your session begins, I will do my best to offer you a replacement session (for no extra charge) during the same week, though I cannot guarantee this will be possible. Of course, you will not be charged in the unlikely event that I have to cancel a session we have booked (for example, due to my own illness).

You are of course entitled to take holidays, but if you are away for more than three weeks at a time or six weeks in a year, and you would like me to keep a space open for you, we may discuss a 'holding fee' for the time that you are not here.

- 4) We will not normally have email or telephone contact outside of sessions, except for administrative reasons such as rearranging appointments, unless this has been agreed in advance. I do not link with clients or previous clients via social media.
- 5) Please feel free to talk to me in session at any time if you are unclear or unhappy about any aspect of our work together. You have the right at any time to stop coming to therapy. However, ending should not be a spur of the moment decision. Indeed, if you find yourself having a strong, sudden urge to end, this is very likely to indicate something unconscious going on in the therapy that needs to be talked about! It is good practice for us to discuss ending well in advance of the event, so that feelings about endings in general can be worked through, and any outstanding issues from the therapy can be discussed.
- 6) Please don't bring children or pets to sessions.
- 7) I have the right to end a session and potentially terminate therapy if I believe you to be coming to sessions intoxicated, or I sense a threat to my wellbeing.

Confidentiality

The fact that you are coming to therapy is private to you, unless you want to share it with others; so if I bump into you outside of a session, e.g. in Ampthill or a social event, I won't acknowledge you unless you speak to me first.

I fully appreciate that you will be trusting me with sensitive and personal information, and I take your privacy very seriously. I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as a data processor and controller under registration reference ZA124885. I make brief notes following each session, in accordance with good practice and GDPR principles of integrity, lawfulness, fairness, transparency, accuracy, storage/purpose limitation and data minimisation. Your notes do not include your name and are kept separately from your contact details in a locked cabinet in the therapy room, and password-protected on my PC. They will not be shared with anyone (except my supervisor) without your permission, unless I am compelled to do so by a court. Under normal circumstances they are destroyed 7 years after therapy is complete. You can find out about your rights to make a Subject Access Request (see the data I hold on you) here <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/personal-information/> - just ask me if you want to know more.

There are a few exceptions to the general principle of confidentiality, as described below:

- 1) If you reveal to me during our sessions that you or someone else is at risk, especially a child, I will encourage and support you to take necessary action (for example, to talk to your GP, go to A & E or inform Social Services). If you are unable or unwilling to do so, I reserve the right to break confidentiality and contact the relevant agency myself. I will not contact your GP or anyone else without your permission or knowledge,

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unless I believe you present a serious risk to yourself or others (for example, if you are psychotic or intentionally suicidal).

- 2) As a professional therapist, I regularly discuss my casework in confidence with a supervisor from outside of Beds/Herts/Bucks (who also upholds the same principles of confidentiality). Supervision helps therapists to offer as high a level of safety and quality of care as possible.
- 3) Please note that non-payment of fees could ultimately result in legal action being taken, which might require me to give your name and address to a legal body.
- 4) If you are a psychotherapist or counsellor in training, other exceptions to confidentiality might apply: please ask if you would like further information.

I am an accredited Psychotherapist with a specialism in sexual and relationship difficulties. I am accredited as a Psychotherapist and Sexual and Relationship Psychotherapist with the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and with the College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists (COSRT). I am also on the register accredited by the Professional Standards Authority that was set up by the Government to improve standards and safety for the benefit of the public. Being on an accredited register demonstrates my commitment to high professional standards. I abide by and am subject to my professional bodies' codes of ethics and complaints procedures. You can find out more about them as follows:

UKCP, America House, 2 America Square, London EC3N 2LU www.psychotherapy.org.uk
COSRT, PO Box 13686, London SW20 9ZH, Tel 020 8543 2707, www.cosrt.org.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this working agreement. At our first (or next) session together I will ask you to sign below to confirm that you have read and understood it and agree to its contents. If you have any questions or concerns about this agreement, please don't hesitate to discuss this with me.

Client name:

Signature:

Date:

Signed also by Rose Whiteley:

Date:

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