

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 think that couple or relationship therapy is only for people who are on the verge of splitting up. Sometimes this is the case; but it can be a great idea to seek help long before things get to that stage, or even if you just feel your relationship isn't making you as happy as it should be.

Our first two or three sessions together are called the Assessment: they give us 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 take you through some ground rules that help relationship therapy to be safe and to succeed, and we will decide if we are happy to proceed. If we are, I will go on to take a thorough life and relationship history for you. Often, we find that 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 move to the main part of the work. We will usually meet weekly to begin with, although we may decide later that more or less often would be more helpful. Regularity and continuity are very important to successful therapy.

I will encourage you to explore your circumstances, thoughts, feelings and behaviours in the relationship, in order to help you to gain greater understanding of the issues that have brought you here. Crucially, I will help you to understand the part you may be playing in creating or maintaining the problems in your relationship.

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.

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. In couple therapy, you may even feel "got at" sometimes, if the focus seems to be on your behaviour that week – but don't worry, things will even up at another session! 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.

60 Bedford Street Amptill Beds MK45 2NB: the therapy room is opposite, numbered 60a.

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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 to keep the relationship safe for all of us.

- 1) My fee for assessments and ongoing sessions is currently £75 for 60 minutes or £110 for 90 minutes. Concessions are sometimes available depending on household income: please ask in advance of making an appointment if you are looking for a reduced fee. I review fees each summer, but if your circumstances change in the meantime, please let me know.
- 2) Couple therapy won't begin until you both arrive. 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 four weeks at a time or eight 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 in advance of the event, so that 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.

Be aware that notes of couple therapy belong to both parties, and neither may request access for themselves or a third party without the other's permission.

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 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, 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:

Client name:

Signature:

Date:

Signed also by Rose Whiteley:

Date:

Updated August 2019