

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

At Patchouli Therapy, I recognise the importance of maintaining professional confidentiality. This policy expands the Service Terms and Conditions (or Service Agreement - Short) section 9.

9. Confidentiality

My policies about confidentiality, as well as other information about your privacy rights, are fully described in detail below in Consent to Treatment Consultation. Please remember that you may reopen the conversation at any time during our work together.

As a rule, I will disclose no information about you or the fact that you are my patient without your written consent. My formal Private Practice Record describes the services provided to you and contains the dates of our sessions, your diagnosis, functional status, symptoms, prognosis and progress, and any psychological testing reports and assessments. Healthcare providers are legally allowed to use or disclose records or information for treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes. However, I do not routinely disclose information in such circumstances, so I will require your permission in advance, either through your consent at the onset of our relationship (by signing the consent form) or through your written authorisation at the time the need for disclosure arises. You may revoke your permission in writing at any time by contacting me.

Confidentiality is paramount in a therapeutic relationship. Please take a moment to review my terms and conditions (or Service Agreement - Short).

I will not disclose any information about you without your written consent.

What does Confidentiality mean?

Confidentiality means 'the state of keeping or being kept secret or private'. Thus, the information that you shared in the therapeutic sessions is completely private. It is the fundamental ethical principle in counselling and psychotherapy. The information that you disclosed is recorded, but it is not shared without explicit consent or unless the court subpoenas me.

Confidentiality is essential to building trust and establishing a therapeutic relationship, creating a safe space for therapy. There are only a few instances where confidentiality is breached. This is where confidentiality is not absolute and has limitations. These instances include when there is a risk of harm to yourself or others, when abuse is disclosed, or a court order requires it.

Confidentiality is important because

- Trust is built during the therapeutic alliance. It creates a safe, secure environment that helps you share personal and sensitive information without fear of disclosure.
- It protects your information, disclosure and privacy during the therapeutic relationship. This means that session notes cannot be disclosed without consent.
- For effectiveness, confidentiality allows you to be open to sharing deeper emotions and feelings, which is essential for personal growth and healing.
- Clients can be confident that your personal information is kept, stored and filed safely.
- I have to comply with best practices and ensure that the records are accurate, relevant, and adequate for my governing regulatory bodies, and GDPR (see separate policy).

Limitation to confidentiality

- Risk of harm to yourself and others: If there is a serious and imminent risk of harm to yourself and others, I may need to take action to protect the vulnerable.
- Child or vulnerable adult abuse: If an abuse, including neglect, is disclosed, I may need to report it to the appropriate agency.

- Court order: A court order or subpoena can legally compel me to release records or provide testimony of our work together, which means that I may need to disclose some information about our work.
- Acts of Terrorism/Serious crime: In the UK, there is a legal obligation to disclose information related to acts of terrorism, money laundering, drug or sex trafficking.
- Supervision: All counsellors must have regular supervision to ensure ethical practice and quality of care. This means that I will discuss my clients in supervision, but I will disclose this without any personal information, and it will focus on my engagement with you rather than what you bring to therapy. Supervisors are also bound to keep the information private.

What you need to know and do

- Understand the limits: It is important that if you are unclear or have any concerns about confidentiality, you need to bring it up with me so that we can discuss it further. You need to have a clear understanding of what will be protected.
- Ask questions: If you have any specific concerns about your confidentiality, always ask, and I will explain it further.