

RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

At Patchouli Therapy, I recognise the importance of maintaining professional practice. This policy concerns therapeutic risk assessment throughout your engagement with me. All mental health professionals have a legal duty of care to prevent further stress and mental health issues in their work with clients.

This mental health risk assessment policy explains how I practice and how to identify issues and risk levels in my private practice.

In the therapeutic sessions, I risk assess all the time throughout our work together.

Levels of Risk

1. Green Flag (Risk level 1 - low)

- Suicidal ideation or disclosure is limited, but may be mentioned occasionally.
- No plans or preparation to harm themselves.
- Limited to nil risk factors.
- The no will to live and the intent to die by suicide is not apparent.
- Has had fleeting suicidal thoughts in the past, and never acted upon them.

2. Amber Flag (Risk level 2 - medium)

- Suicidal ideation or disclosure is mentioned and present.
- No plans or preparation to harm themselves.
- No current plan or means to carry it out.
- The no will to live is present, but the intent to die is not apparent.
- Has had suicidal thoughts in the past, and never acted upon them.
- Has had a plan created to take one's own life in the past, but never acted upon it.
- Suicidal ideation is ongoing.
- Multiple risk factors identified.
- Suicidal plan is denied as the client considered the implications of their action upon other family members.
- History of suicide(s) within the family.

3. Red Flag (Risk level 3 - high)

- Suicidal ideation or disclosure is mentioned and present.
- Have well-thought-out plans or preparation to harm themselves.
- Have no will to live and have an intention to die by suicide.
- Has had suicidal thoughts in the past, and acted upon them.
- Has had a plan created to take one's own life in the past, and acted upon it more than one occasion.
- Suicidal ideation is ongoing.
- Multiple risk factors identified, including helplessness, hopelessness and has limited support network.
- Suicidal plan is active with many triggers.
- History of suicide(s) within the family.
- Already acted upon suicidal plan or tried to take own life.

Adult and Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment see Safeguarding Policy.

Risk assessment and safeguarding are connected. However, safeguarding concerns vulnerable adult, which is any person over the age of 18 years (or 16 in Scotland). A person under the age of 18 years (16 years in Scotland) is classified as Child or Young Person.

Safeguarding concerns with individuals who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm or exploitation by reasons such as illness, age, mental illness, disability or any types of physical, mental or psychological impairment.

At anytime during the therapeutic relationship, I proactive risk assess what you disclosed to establish your current emotional and psychological state. If I suspected that you are at a high risk, red flag, I have a duty to discuss it with you my concerns and would recommend that you contact your GP promptly. Please be aware that I can, in some instances, disclose to your GP of your high risk status without needing your consent.

After you made the disclose to take step to end your life or is planning to actively do so, and then I do not hear from you or you missed the scheduled session, I will report your welfare to your GP, the police or the emergency services to do a welfare check on you.

What is the next step that I would take?

I will always discuss my concerns for suicidal ideation and safeguarding with you in the first instance. But, if I still have concerns:

1. I will complete a risk assessment form as part of the therapeutic practice ongoingly. If you wish to obtain a copy of your record, please note that there will be administrative cost to retrieve your record.
2. I do have offer a 24 hours' service, but will make exception to contact you after 48 hours of the disclosure to check that you have received appropriate support.
3. I will contact your GP.
4. I will break confidentiality to discuss my concerns with my supervision for guidance on further intervention.
5. I may need to disclose my concerns and report your case to Social Services.

Risk assessment forms are legal documents and form part of my practice. In some circumstances, the risk assessment forms may be subpoenaed in a coroner's request, therefore I am obliged to keep accurate record keeping.

If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss them with me at anytime during our session.