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Ruth Whyman
Counselling & Psychotherapy

PRIVACY POLICY AND DATA PROTECTION

Introduction

I adhere to current data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (EU/2016/679) (the GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003. This privacy notice tells you what I will do with your personal information from initial point of contact through to after your therapy has ended, including:

- Reasons for processing your data
- How long I store it for
- Whether there are other recipients of your personal information
- Whether I intend to transfer it to another country
- Whether I do automated decision-making or profiling
- Your data protection rights

'Data controller' is the term used to describe the person/organisation that collects, stores and has responsibility for people's personal data. In this instance, the data controller is me. I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (**registration number: ZB603345**).

The lawful basis for holding and using your personal information

The GDPR states that I must have a lawful basis for processing your personal data. There are different lawful bases depending on the stage at which I am processing your data. I have explained these below.

If you are currently having therapy or if you are in contact with me to consider therapy, I will process your personal data where it is necessary for the performance of our contract. The GDPR also makes sure that I look after any sensitive personal information that you may disclose to me appropriately. This type of information is called 'special category personal information'. The lawful basis for me processing any special categories of personal information is that it is for provision of health treatment (in this case counselling) and necessary for a contract with a health professional (in this case, a contract between me and you).

If you have had therapy with me and it has now ended, I will use legitimate interest as my lawful basis for holding and using your personal information.

What data is being collected

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Email address
- Telephone number
- Medical history including: current medication, suicide/self-harm attempts
- General Practitioner (GP) details
- Emergency contact details

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- Counselling assessment and session details

Use and storage of your data

Initial contact

When you contact me with an enquiry about my counselling services I will collect information to help me satisfy your enquiry. This will include: name and contact details. Alternatively, your GP or other health professional may send me your details when making a referral or a parent or trusted individual may give me your details when making an inquiry on your behalf. If you decide not to proceed I will ensure all your personal data is deleted within **six months** of initial contact. If you would like me to delete this information sooner, please let this be known via email.

While you are accessing counselling

Content of counselling sessions is considered confidential, barring a few legal exceptions. The terms of these exceptions are outlined in the counselling contract.

I will keep a record of your personal details listed above to: identify you as a counselling client; contact you with information pertaining to your counselling; ensure your safety in emergencies; assess how counselling can best work for you. These details are kept securely on a password protected device and backed-up to an online server under password protection. I will keep notes on each session referring only to content. No identifying information is included. Notes are coded and filed separately from personal information. They are stored on a password protected device and backed-up to an online server under password protection.

Any emails or text messages containing personal information are sent by the client at their own risk.

After counselling has ended

Once counselling has ended your session notes and personal details will be kept for **six years** from the end of our contact with each other and are then securely destroyed. If you want me to delete your information sooner than this, please let me know.

Third party access to your data

Only in the case of emergencies or where there is a lawful requirement (see contract for details) might your information be shared with third parties. I do not intend on sharing your data for any other purpose.

I hold a personal contract with an online back-up server, to store client information and session notes. My understanding is they do not use your information in any way other than the task for which they have been contracted.

Your rights

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You have a right to ask me to delete your personal information, to limit how I use your personal information, or to stop processing your personal information. You also have a right to ask for a copy of any information that I hold about you and to object to the use of your personal data in some circumstances. You can also ask me at any time to correct any mistakes there may be in the personal information I hold about you. You can read more about your rights at: ico.org.uk/your-data-matters.

To make a request for any personal information I may hold about you, please put the request in writing addressing it to info@ruthwhymantherapy.com. I will acknowledge receipt of your request within 48hrs and contact you with further information after a review of your query within one calendar month.

If you have any complaint about how I handle your personal data please do not hesitate to get in touch with me by emailing info@ruthwhymantherapy.com. I would welcome any suggestions for improving my data protection procedures. I will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 30 days after receiving it and process accordingly. Please note there is no statutory deadline for serving the final outcome. If you want to make a formal complaint about the way I have processed your personal information you can contact the ICO which is the statutory body that oversees data protection law in the UK. For more information go to ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint.

Website

Visitors to my website

I use *Wix*, as the content management system for my website. *Wix* log's information and details of visitor behaviour patterns. I monitor this to find out things such as the number of visitors to the various parts of the site. This information is only processed in a way that does not identify anyone. I do not make, and do not allow *Wix* to make, any attempt to find out the identities of those visiting my website. I use legitimate interests as my lawful basis for holding and using your personal information in this way when you visit my website.

Like most websites, *Wix* also uses cookies to help the site work more efficiently. No user-specific data is collected by me or any third party. You can find out more about Wix privacy and cookie policies, here: www.wix.com/manage/privacy-security-hub