



centre for psychotherapy and counselling

CLIENT INFORMATION CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Confidentiality is maintained within Wellspring in accordance with good practice. This leaflet aims to explain our policy on confidentiality and data protection. If you have questions about these issues, your therapist will be happy to discuss them with you. Wellspring abides by the ethical requirements of BACP and COSCA. Copies of these may be requested from our Administrator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Your record file may be seen by our administrative staff, who may be involved in the making and rearranging of appointments, and any letters and phone calls required. However, administrative staff do not have access to any notes made by therapists about the counselling process, which are kept securely by therapists themselves.
- There is consultation between therapist colleagues within Wellspring.
- In accordance with the ethical requirements of BACP and COSCA, therapists' case work is supervised. The purpose of supervision is to help therapists to reflect on their work with clients. Supervisors are experienced practitioners external to Wellspring and are also bound by a code of confidentiality.
- Trainee counsellors' work is supervised by Wellspring therapists.
- Paper and computerised records held by Wellspring are kept in accordance with our Procedures for Data Handling and Storage and our Data Protection Policy.

DISCLOSURE

We will not normally disclose *any* information about you to *anyone* without your consent.

Wellspring therapists are bound by the ethical standards of BACP and COSCA to safeguard client confidentiality. However, certain exceptions (see below) make disclosure of information necessary.

- Wherever possible, consent to disclose information will be sought from the client.

- Where disclosure must be made, the therapist will normally encourage the client to pass on information to the relevant person or agency. If there is no indication that this has been done, or if the crisis or danger is sufficiently acute, the therapist may pass on the information directly.

No therapist would break confidentiality in the absence of the client's express permission without a great deal of reflection, where time is available for that. To break confidentiality a therapist must act within the law and have a legitimate objective, such as the protection of life and health, or the prevention of a serious crime. A therapist would normally consult a supervisor or colleague and may also take independent professional advice before proceeding. In these circumstances you would, wherever possible, be told in advance that a disclosure will be made.

The circumstances in which a therapist would make such a disclosure include:

- Where the therapist would be subject to civil or criminal legal proceedings if the information were not disclosed to a court.
- Where the therapist believes the client to be in serious danger, for instance of death from suicide or self harm.
- Where the therapist believes that there is a serious danger to a third party, including Wellspring personnel.
- Where it is necessary to prevent serious crime. For example, it may be mandatory to report if the client is currently abusing a child and it may also be mandatory to report where a client tells us that someone else is abusing a child.

COMPENSATION CLAIMS

Wellspring will not normally provide reports for the purpose of compensation claims etc.

If you consult us about, say, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, or something similar following trauma, such as a car accident, your therapist will do a routine clinical assessment for the purposes of treatment. This is not intended for the purpose of any existing claim or any you may decide to make against others for financial compensation.

Assessment for compensation requires an expensive and specialist approach. There are psychologists and psychiatrists who specialise in providing evidence for compensation and you should consult one of them if you wish to obtain this. Wellspring will not normally supply your solicitor or representative or claims organisation with such information, nor enter into correspondence with them.

RECORD KEEPING AND DATA PROTECTION

Wellspring processes largely statistical information about clients, obtained from application forms, application letters, therapists' records of attendance and evaluative client questionnaires. All information is held securely and is confidential within Wellspring. Where clients attend under an employee assistance scheme, brief feedback from therapists is used for monitoring and evaluation. Any information given to employers is of a statistical nature and individuals can never be identified.

Wellspring collates statistical information about its work and its clients. This is used for policy making, statistical and promotional purposes. In all cases this does not identify individual clients.

As part of their work, therapists may keep notes on sessions, held securely by them, which help them to offer you a professional service.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, you will have been asked to sign a form giving your permission for personal data and notes to be taken and kept. Your permission is essential if you are to receive counselling or therapy at Wellspring. If you have any concerns about this your therapist will be happy to discuss these with you.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Under the Data Protection Act you have the right to see all records kept on you. If your file contains a letter or additional information from another service (for example, your General Practitioner) consent from this person needs to be obtained before the correspondence is disclosed because data protection is also granted to third parties. If you wish to see your file, please speak to your therapist.

WELLSPRING'S DATA PROTECTION POLICY

A copy of this can be obtained from the Administrator.