

## **Helen James, Registered Counsellor, MBACP**

[www.helenjamescounselling.com](http://www.helenjamescounselling.com)

[helenjamescounselling@gmail.com](mailto:helenjamescounselling@gmail.com)

### **Privacy Statement**

We are required by law to provide you with a written statement setting out the personal information we hold about you (known as personal data) and specifying why we hold it, as well as how we safeguard it. This information is below. If you have any questions on this then please speak to Helen James about it.

#### **General Principles**

We will comply with data protection law, which says that the personal information we hold about you must be:

1. Used lawfully, fairly and in a transparent way.
2. Collected only for valid purposes that we have clearly explained to you and not used in any way that is incompatible with those purposes.
3. Relevant to the purposes we have told you about and limited only to those purposes.
4. Accurate and kept up to date.
5. Kept only as long as necessary for the purposes we have told you about.
6. Kept securely.

#### **The kind of information we hold about you**

It is intrinsic to counselling that your counsellor will acquire information about you, much of it highly personal and sensitive. Much of this information is known legally as “sensitive personal data” and requires a higher level of protection. In addition, we will likely acquire knowledge of personal identity information such as your contact details, date of birth and possibly your banking details through payment of our fees.

We anticipate that all the personal information we obtain will be provided to us by you and as such we do not anticipate holding any personal information of which you would be unaware.

As is standard practice with counsellors, records are kept of counselling sessions including information provided by you – much of which will be sensitive personal information. The information is kept on our computer system which is secure, and to which no other person or entity has access.

#### **How we will use information about you**

The information you provide to us will only be used for the purposes of providing counselling services. The counselling relationship is fully confidential and all information that you provide to your counsellor will not be shared by them with any other person or entity - other than (1) with your express consent – for example when you have asked us to

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refer you to another health professional, and (2) in exceptional circumstances such as where a breach may be legally necessary for the physical safety of you or others.

### **Data security**

We ensure that all information which may be recorded from counselling sessions, or other personal information we may hold (such as banking details) are kept fully secure and take all reasonable steps to safeguard your privacy.

### **Data retention: How long will you use my information for?**

We will retain records for the period that you are a client and for a period of 7 years thereafter. This additional period is so that the records are available should you return as a client in future. We destroy records 7 years after you ceased being a client to ensure compliance with data privacy laws, but can keep them longer on request should that be your wish (to be confirmed in writing).

### **Rights of access, correction, erasure and restriction**

You have a right to see the records we hold about you. You also have a right to ask us to destroy the records we hold about you earlier than the expiry of the 7 year period referred to above. Should you ever wish to exercise these rights then please let Helen James know.