



## John Earl Counselling

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### Data Protection Policy

Any personal data provided by you to me through any means (verbal, written, in electronic form, or by your use of my website) will be held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles set out in the **Data Protection Act 1998** and the **General Data Protection Regulations** for the purposes for which you have given consent, to provide the services you have requested from me.

#### Introduction

I am committed to protecting your privacy. Please read the following in order to learn more about my privacy policy and my information collection and use practices.

If you have any queries concerning your personal information or any questions on our use of the information, please contact me.

When you request counselling with me, or otherwise provide your personal details to me, you will be asked to consent to my processing of your data under the terms of this policy.

#### What information do I collect?

- **Counselling Requests**– Registering with me to request access to my counselling service can be done online, on paper or in person. My request process involves you providing me with your name, address, telephone number and email address. I may also request information on your availability, therapeutic issues, and other details which we deem relevant to processing your request.
- **Initial Assessment Appointments**– At an initial appointment I will ask about your current personal, social, medical and financial circumstances. I may also ask about your background and family history, as well as the issues which are affecting you now. I require this information so that I can decide about my offer of counselling to you and to manage the service I provide to you.
- **Other Forms** – The information you give me on my forms (including all enquiry and application forms) may include your name, postal address, email address, phone number and other messages to me.

## What do I use your information for?

I use information held about you in the following ways:

- To provide my clients with the professional counselling service requested from me.
- To notify you about changes to your appointments and other changes to my service.
- To seek feedback from you on your experience of counselling with me.
- To improve my service to ensure that it is provided in the most effective manner for you and for me.
- To administer my service, including the arrangement of appointments.
- To keep in touch with those who consent to this, for the purposes of organisational service and professional development.

## What information do I share?

I will **not share** any information about you with other organisations or people, **except** in the following situations:

- **Consent** – I may share your information with professional carers or others whom you have requested or agreed we should contact.
- **Serious harm** – I may share your information with the relevant authorities if I have reason to believe that this may prevent serious harm being caused to you or another person.
- **Compliance with law** – I may share your information where I am required to by law or by the regulations and other rules to which I am subject.

## How do I keep your information safe?

All information you provide to me is stored as securely as possible. All paper forms and correspondence are kept in locked filing cabinets. Any electronic records which are kept to a minimum, are stored on my home computer, all access to which requires password-protected authentication.

Unfortunately, the transmission of information via the internet is never completely secure. Although I will do my best to protect your information using industry-standard protocols and encryption, I cannot guarantee the security of your data transmitted to me via email, including forms completed on my website which are transmitted by email; any transmission is at your own risk. Once I have received your information, I will use strict procedures and security features to try to prevent unauthorised access.

Your identifiable personal information is kept separately from any session notes and other descriptive material. Client notes and other documentation are destroyed 7 years after the end of counselling, and up to the age of 25 years old for a minor (18+7) in accordance with suggestions from the ethical body and in line with insurance requirements, after counselling has been completed. After this time, they will be shredded.

Personal contact details are destroyed/deleted after our contract has ended unless you authorise me to retain them.

### **Online Counselling**

Should you choose online counselling, you will be directed to a secure login page that takes you to an encrypted area where we meet at a time that was prearranged and agreed by us both beforehand. I use the Doxy.me platform which is secure and used by other healthcare professionals. All Doxy.me links will be sent by secure email.

I am not responsible for the activities of online software which is out of my control.

### **Your rights**

You have the right to ask me to provide a copy of the information held by me in my records. You also have the right to require me to correct any inaccuracies in your information.

You may withdraw your consent for me to hold and process your data at any time. However, if you do this while actively receiving counselling, your counselling would have to end.

### **Cookies**

I use cookies, when you visit our website to help customize the Site and improve your experience.

These are:

- Security cookie to help me keep this site safe to use.
- I collect anonymous statistics about which pages people visit.
- Some 3rd parties like Facebook may know you visited my website, if you use their services.
- I take great care to keep information safe, and we'll never share it with others.

I log visitors to my website using Google Analytics. This records what pages you view and how you arrived at my website. All of that information is anonymous. I won't know who you are only that someone visited the site. This information helps me to understand what parts of my website is doing well so that I can make amendments.

### **Payment Methods**

I take payments using the Paypal POS system which does not record your personal details or card number at any time. Any payments for online counselling will involve me sending a payment link by email which again will not record any personal information.

## **Data Protection Complaints**

In the event that you believe that your personal data has been compromised in any contact with me you should:

- Make a full complaint to me in writing by email to my email address which is [johnearlcounselling@gmail.com](mailto:johnearlcounselling@gmail.com)
- I will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 30 days.
- I will take steps to investigate your complaint
- I will inform you of the outcome within 30 days without undue delay.

## **Changes to this policy**

I may edit this policy from time to time. If I make any substantial changes I will notify you by posting a prominent announcement on my website.