St Rita’s Clinical Practice

At St Rita's Clinical Practice, I am committed to protecting your privacy and maintaining the confidentiality of your personal information. This privacy policy explains how I collect, use, store, and protect your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

For the purposes of data protection law, I am the Data Controller for St Rita's Clinical Practice.

1. What Information I Collect

I collect relevant personal information to provide you with a safe, professional, and effective counselling service. This includes:

* Personal Data: Your name, date of birth, address, email address, and phone number.

* Emergency & Medical Contact Details: Your doctor's (GP) name and surgery details, as well as an emergency contact name and phone number.

* Special Category Data: Notes on your mental and physical health, lifestyle details, family history, and brief, factual session summaries.

2. Age Eligibility and Capacity

I work with adults and young people aged 16 and over. Under UK data protection and medical law, individuals aged 16 and above are generally presumed to have the legal capacity to consent to their own treatment and control their own personal data. Therefore:

* I contract directly with the client (whether an adult or a 16+ young person).

* Information regarding the therapy will not be shared with parents or guardians without the explicit, written consent of the young person, unless a defensible exception applies (see Section 5).

3. Lawful Basis for Processing Your Data

Under the UK GDPR, I must have a lawful basis to process your information. I rely on the following:

* Legitimate Interests: To provide safe, ethical, and effective psychological treatment and fulfill my professional obligations to you as a practitioner.

* Special Category Data Provision: Processing your health data is necessary for the provision of health or social care and treatment (specifically, counselling and mental health support).

4. How Your Data is Used & Kept Safe

Your information is handled with the highest level of care across both in-person and remote environments:

* Communication: Your contact details are strictly used to manage your appointments and communicate with you about your therapy.

* Session Notes: I keep brief, factual summaries of our therapy sessions. These are stored anonymously under a unique log number/code, entirely separate from your identifiable personal data.

* In-Person and Physical Security: Written records and physical intake forms are kept in a secure, lockable cabinet.

* Digital and Remote Security: Digital records, emails, and text messages are kept on password-protected and encrypted devices. For remote video or telephone sessions, I only use secure, end-to-end encrypted platforms (e.g., Zoom, Whereby, or encrypted phone networks) to ensure our conversations remain confidential and unrecorded.

5. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information shared during counselling sessions is strictly confidential. It will not be disclosed to anyone without your consent, with the following defensible exceptions:

* Clinical Supervision: In line with BACP ethical guidelines, I regularly discuss my casework with a qualified clinical supervisor to ensure I am working safely and effectively. Your identity is kept entirely anonymous during these sessions.

* Serious Risk of Harm: If I believe there is a serious risk of harm to yourself or to others, I may need to contact your GP, emergency services, or relevant safeguarding bodies. I will always endeavor to discuss this with you first, where possible.

* Legal Requirements: I may be legally required to breach confidentiality if ordered by a court of law, or in compliance with specific laws regarding terrorism, money laundering, or child protection/safeguarding.

* Clinical Will: In the event of my sudden incapacity or death, a trusted professional colleague (my Clinical Will holder) will be granted secure access to your contact details so they can notify you. They are bound by the same strict duties of confidentiality.

6. Data Retention (How Long I Keep Your Data)

I store your personal data and session notes for seven years after our therapy relationship ends. This is the standard period required by my professional indemnity insurer. For clients who start therapy at age 16 or 17, records are kept for seven years after they turn 18, in line with standard legal and insurance guidelines for young people. Once this period has passed, all physical and electronic records will be securely destroyed.

7. Your Rights

Under data protection law, you have specific rights regarding your personal information. You have the right to:

* Access: Request a copy of the information I hold about you (a Subject Access Request).

* Rectification: Request that I correct any inaccurate or incomplete data.

* Erasure ("Right to be Forgotten"): Request that I delete your personal data, though this may be limited by my legal and insurance requirements to retain records.

* Restrict Processing: Object to or restrict how your data is being handled.

If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please contact me directly at the contact details provided below. If you remain unhappy with how your data is handled, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

8. Contact Details & Registration

St Rita's Clinical Practice operates as a sole trader enterprise and is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

* Practice Name: St Rita's Clinical Practice

* Data Controller Name: Tereza Harvey

* Email: tereza@stritaspractice.co.uk

* Phone: 07725321267

* ICO Registration Number: **ZC240851**