

## **COUNSELLING SERVICE**

### **Confidentiality Policy**

The Counselling Service does hold information on all users of the service. Mind in Croydon places the highest importance on keeping client information safe and confidential. Information that is provided by a client is used so that we can make available the appropriate service. Only in rare cases where the safety of the client or others known to the client is at immediate risk will Mind in Croydon break confidentiality.

Mind in Croydon stores any personal information and access to that information according to the 1998 Data Protection Act. The Counselling Service will ensure that all personal information is accurate and safely stored.

The Counselling Service at Mind in Croydon is an accredited organisational member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and works within the Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

#### **Confidential Information within Mind in Croydon Counselling Service**

- Clients of the Counselling Service are told in the assessment session that Mind in Croydon stores personal information and that this information is securely stored.
- The contents of counselling sessions are confidential to the Counselling Service.
- Counsellors are in regular supervision with Mind-appointed Supervisors to ensure good practice.
- Assessment forms are completed with a client number and without a name.
- Brief log notes are kept on each session a client attends. These notes are kept in locked cabinets with restricted access. Client names are not to be attached to log sheet: the client number is to be used.
- Once clients completed their counselling, client details and session notes are stored securely for three years and are then shredded.
- Mind in Croydon is obliged to provide its funders and Board of Trustees with statistics regarding the service. None of this information is identifiable as relating to individuals.

### **Confidentiality relating to outside Mind in Croydon Counselling Service**

- All clients wishing to use the Mind in Croydon counselling service must provide details of the GP with whom they are registered. It is not possible for clients to be seen without this information.
- Mind in Croydon does not routinely write to clients GP.
- If at the initial assessment stage the Assessor thinks that it could be helpful to discuss the client's mental health needs with other professionals who are currently supporting the client, or professionals who may be able to provide additional or alternative support to the client, this is discussed with the client and written consent form signed before contact is made.
- If a Counsellor wants to contact an outside agency/GP/Psychiatrist about a counselling client, he or she must discuss this decision either with the Clinical Supervisor the Counselling Manager or the salaried counsellors. In cases of emergency and not being able to contact the above people the counsellor should liaise with another member of the counselling team.
- If a client requests a letter to be written on his or her behalf to an outside agency he or she is asked to sign a consent form. The signed copy of this form is filed in the clients file.
- If an outside agency contacts Mind in Croydon to discuss a client they should be referred to the Counselling Manager. No personal information is to be shared without the consent of the client involved, unless clients are a danger to themselves or others.
- If Counsellors discuss their clinical work as part of a training programme they must disguise the identity of clients.

### **Access to Counselling Service Notes**

- Mind in Croydon will not pass client assessment notes or session notes on to the third parties unless instructed to by a Court of Law.
- If a client requests to see their counselling notes they should put this in writing to the Counselling Services Manager.
- Once agreed, space can be made available at Mind in Croydon premises for clients to read any notes held and photocopies can be provided.