

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES

Introduction

Health and safety is of paramount importance and you are reassured that I work within relevant health and safety laws, policies, procedures, codes of conduct and good practice. Legally I have what's called a 'duty of care' to anyone who is affected by the service I provide – from a client to a member of the public. I have a responsibility to ensure that the environment in which I conduct therapy is safe, including thinking about other elements such as safety in the local environment, accessibility, and appropriateness for the service provided.

About me

I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), with the National Counselling Society, Tappy Twins Charity and am an associate of DGF Psychology. I have 30 years' experience, an enhanced DBS and insurance relevant to my practise.

Policy

Statement of general policy	Action/Arrangements
Prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health (physical and mental) by managing the health and safety risks in the workplace	I am qualified in CIEH Level 3 health and safety management. I have completed a risk assessment which covers all of my work. I keep updated with new bulletins from HSE and through regular and relevant CPD. I have relevant insurance to practice.
Ensure I am competent to do my work	Through regular training, supervision and CPD I will be kept informed and checked in order to be fully competent/compliant. I am accredited with the relevant governing bodies, have a full DBS and insurance to practice.
Engage and consult with clients on day-to-day basis with regards to health and safety conditions	I will include clients in reviewing and making decision about their health and safety during service engagement and make changes as needed. When on home visits, I complete dynamic risk assessments and address any health and safety concerns immediately. When using schools or hired therapy rooms, I follow have their own policies/procedures and ask clients to

	do the same. If I (or my clients) have any concerns these will be reported where necessary. Clients can access school/therapy room policies & procedures on their websites or by asking at reception
Implement emergency procedures – evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident.	At my office, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are checked regularly. I ensure exits are clear and not locked for ease of access/escape in case of emergency. My risk assessment details further procedures and is available to clients upon request. When on home visits, I complete a dynamic risk assessments and address any health and safety concerns immediately Schools and hired therapy rooms have their own policies/procedures which I follow and I will report any concerns where necessary. Clients are also asked to follow these (they can access school/therapy room policies & procedures on websites or by asking at reception) I obtain 'emergency contact' details from all clients and will contact that person (or their GP if relevant) should this be necessary. I have policies and procedures on communication, confidentiality and privacy
Maintain safe and healthy working conditions, provide and maintain any equipment used in the course of my work	I have risk assessed working conditions and will ensure all areas accessed by clients are regularly cleaned/ serviced and free from hazards. Toilet and handwashing facilities are available at all locations I work. Any therapy / school / home visit room provided to me will be left clean/tidy/free from hazards or obstructions. Schools and hired therapy rooms may have their own policies/procedures which I follow and I will report any concerns where necessary. Clients can access school/therapy room policies & procedures on websites or by asking at reception

Procedural Guidelines

1. Setting up appointments

You can telephone or email me to request an appointment. All sessions are confirmed by email to help me confirm your identity. The first appointment will be either online or at a location where there are other people to avoid lone working until I have assessed suitability. I will only work within my scope of practice and experience and if it might be relevant for me to refer you to other agencies to better meet your needs then I will discuss this with you. By attending /engaging in a session and providing subsequent payment, you agree to all terms as stated below and agree to adhere to the policies and procedures as published on my website.

2. Appointments at my office:

To attend the session you (or the child/young person) will need to be of good enough physical and mental health to attend. It is your responsibility to get to and from the location of the appointment. Upon arrival, you will come through the front gate which (for safety reasons) is not on a spring so will need to be closed

behind you. There is a small step to the front door - please let me know before your appointment if you need assistance with mobility (If you require accessible facilities e.g. for wheelchair use, please let me know and your face-to-face appointment can be booked at the therapy rooms where accessible i.e. facilities are provided). There is a separate toilet and handwashing facilities in the reception/hallway area and a place to hang your coat. There is a mat you can wipe your shoes (or take them off if you prefer). I provide fresh/filtered water or a hot drink (please let me know if you have any allergies). My therapy room is on the ground floor and has a selection of seating for you to choose from (ikea style chair, office chair or stool). Lighting and temperature can be adjusted to meet your requirements – just let me know as there is a window that can be opened and heating can be adjusted. Exits are via the front door and the back door (through utility room); in an emergency the window could also be used. Between appointments, I tend to air the room and may use aromatherapy oils, candles or scented sprays (usually organic/natural products where possible) so please let me know if you have any allergies. I have friendly pets (cat who is usually outside during the daytime and a cute puppy) so please let me know if you have an allergy. I will position chairs so we both have easy access to exits. You have the right to leave the room/building at any point and if relevant, I may contact you shortly after to check on your safety. First aid facilities are available (located in the utility cupboard).

3. Appointments at rented therapy rooms / schools:

The responsibility of health and safety when using therapy rooms is that of the manager/owner of the building. The establishment will have their own policies and procedures for health and safety arrangements which should be available either on their website or at the reception desk. I will observe and inform you of any specific arrangements as needed in line with my 'duty of care' to you e.g. we may be required to sign in/out. I will make sure the room allocated has good ventilation, fresh, clean air drawn from outside or a ventilation system, a comfortable working temperature (usually at least 16 degrees C), lighting suitable for the work being carried out, enough space, seating and a clean environment with bins provided for rubbish. If these are not provided, or you are not comfortable with the room, I will ask at reception for them to allocate another space. We should have a safe and private room with chairs positioned chairs so we both have easy access to exit if needed. You can choose to stop the session at any point – just let me know and if relevant, I may contact you shortly after to check on your safety. First aid facilities are locked in the kitchen at the therapy rooms and usually at reception desk (or first aid room) within schools

4. Home visit appointments

During an initial consultation, we will discuss the reasons for home visits and assess risks suitability. Any individual requirements will be discussed and agreed before we meet. Ideally, I like all first appointments to be online or in a building where there are other people around, however if this is not possible then I will complete a dynamic risk assessment on the first visit to your home and would ask that you observe the following;

- I will need a safe parking space which should be negotiated prior to the appointment.
- I will need to be made aware of the exits in case of an emergency.
- Please keep dogs in another room (unless they are super friendly and want a cuddle!).
- We will need a safe and private room that will be free (as far as is reasonably practical) from interruptions.
- Please ensure the room has good ventilation, fresh, clean air drawn from outside or a ventilation system, a comfortable working temperature (usually at least 16 degrees C), lighting suitable for the

work being carried out, enough space, seating and a clean environment with bins provided for rubbish and toilet and handwashing facilities that are in clean working order.

- I will have a first aid kit in my car if you do not have access to one.
- If you'd like to stop the session at any point, just let me know and I will leave.
- Although I like to think I am a 'down to earth person', I am also professional and will keep boundaries and a professional etiquette at all times and I would ask that you do the same. This is important because it creates a mutually respectful atmosphere. Should you say or do anything that is deemed as inappropriate, then I reserve the right to leave your home if at any point I feel unsafe to work. In the unlikely event there is an immediate risk of harm to either myself or you then it might be appropriate for me to call for assistance (e.g. police).

Referring on

Counsellors' professional responsibility requires that I must act within the area of my personal expertise, and consider my own limitations. The implication of this is that if I was to reach the limits of my expertise, consideration should be given to referral on with the client's consent. If the client does not consent to referral on and if the client or others may be at risk of harm, I may address the issues listed above in supervision and with their professional organisation and/or seek other professional advice. If you consent to referral onto another service, this will constitute a change in the confidentiality agreed with you at the outset of our work together, in which case there is little likelihood of any ground for legal or other action against me if the actions then taken are with your full knowledge and consent. (e.g., you can't consent to change therapist and then complain that I changed your therapist). If possible, your explicit consent will be obtained. Implicit or implied consent may be relied upon, but it can be nebulous and is rather more difficult to prove. In the event of a complaint or legal action, both myself and you as my client are best protected by a therapeutic contract with terms including explicit consent, which are evidenced in writing (this can also be in the context of information within an email).

Disclaimer:

No claims are being made that the methods and techniques used can heal physical or mental health conditions and sessions should not be a substitute for the advice and treatment of a doctor or other licensed health-care professional. The methods and techniques used are complimentary which ensures you continue to take full responsibility for you (or your child/young person)'s health, safety and well-being. Websites and other published information are for educational purposes only and should not be taken as substitute for medical advice. Any decision(s) you make having received this information or following a session is wholly your own responsibility. The session(s) are completely voluntary, under yours / your child or young person's free will and at your own risk. You agree to hold the therapist, the venue or property owners completely harmless of all liability if you / your child or YP sustain any injury and assume full responsibility for any injury or injuries, physical, emotional and mental that may be sustained which are not caused by negligence or fraud (by the therapist or any other party using the venue). You also understand that the therapist shall not be liable, whether in contract, tort (including negligence), breach of statutory duty, or otherwise, for any loss of profit, or for any indirect or consequential loss sustained by you or any third party arising under, or in connection with any information or session received. However, nothing in this Disclaimer shall limit or exclude the therapist liability for death or personal injury caused by negligence or for fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation.

Insurance:

I have insurance to practise and am covered for Malpractice and Professional Liability, Public Liability and Products Liability £5,000,000. This protects me against any costs of compensation in claims made against me by a client if they get injured or ill which is caused by my business. I also have fully comprehensive and 'business use' insurance on my vehicle so am able to transport clients (I will complete a dynamic risk assessment prior to agreeing this).

Complaints and queries

I welcome any feedback, comments, queries or suggestions. If you have any concerns with regards to any health and safety just let me know. You have the right to report any concerns or to make a complaint directly to the HSE on <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.html>. You can also make a complaint to the NCS (National Counselling Society). <https://www.nationalcounsellingsociety.org/help/have-a-concern/complaining-about-a-therapist>

And finally...

Phew! That was a lot of information to take in. If you would like me to explain how all of the above relates to the service you are receiving from me, then just let me know! I will review and update this regularly. This notice was reviewed on 27.3.20 and 6.1.21. Next review due: January 2022



*Sharon Branagh
Specialist Practitioner & Therapist*