



**Traveller Counselling Service**  
**CHY 18635**

## **1.3 Information on Counselling For Clients and their Families**

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## **1 Definition of Counselling and Psychotherapy**

Counselling and psychotherapy are activities involving a practitioner, who offers a professional service as a helper, and a client, who seeks the service. The term "client" may include individuals, couples or families or groups of people. In what follows, the term practitioner is used to denote a counsellor or psychotherapist who is a member of the Traveller Counselling Service.

The practitioner offers an impartial relationship in which the client can explore specific issues and develop more satisfying and resourceful ways of living. Confidentiality is recognized as a vital basis for such a relationship. The practitioner respects the client's values, personal resources and capacity for self-determination. Counselling and psychotherapy are formal activities where both parties explicitly agree a contract about participation and procedure.

To ensure that their practice remains effective and appropriate, practitioners are obliged to meet regularly with a supervisor, who is an experienced colleague with whom they review their work. Information discussed during supervision is regarded as confidential.

## **2 Why people would avail of Counselling**

People avail of counselling and psychotherapy for many reasons, if they feel they are no longer able to cope and feel they need to look at ways of dealing with a particular situations better, or if they are experiencing a particular problem and feel they need to talk to someone about it in confidence.

## **3 Stigma**

Within wider society but more especially within the Traveller community, there is often a stigma attached to someone who goes and seeks help, particularly help with emotional or psychological issues. People who go for counselling or psychotherapy, whether these are individuals, couples or families, are not mad or crazy, they are ordinary everyday people who are trying to manage everyday living as best as they can and are experiencing difficulties which they feel they need to talk to someone about. We all at some stage experience problems and need to talk to someone about these, though this is usually done in an informal way. The difference with counselling is it is done in a formal setting between someone who is trained in counselling and the person experiencing the difficulties.

Stigma can prevent people from seeking help even when the person themselves know they need help and the community also knows they need help which can be detrimental to the person's mental health and well-being.

#### **4 Types of Counselling that are available:-**

- **Family Therapy**

In conjunction with the Clanwilliam Institute, we provide a family therapy service. This includes working with all of the family or some members of the family as required.

- **Addiction Counselling**

This will be provided to individuals who are looking to break a habit of dependency with alcohol or drugs. An agreement will be in place whereby the counsellor will work with the client for a number of sessions during which the client will have to engage with an appropriate treatment programme. An agreement will correspondingly be in place whereby a client will not be seen if they arrive for an appointment under the influence of either drugs or alcohol.

Counselling will be available to people trying to cope with substance misuse and while the service will see clients who are actively engaged in substance misuse, we will encourage all clients with such issues to engage with addiction support programmes. Clients who arrive to appointments under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be seen.

- **Couple Counselling**

Couple counselling will be provided to couples who are experiencing difficulties in their relationship and feel they need help in order to deal with these difficulties

- **Individual Counselling**

Individual counselling will be provided to people who feel that they can no longer manage their situation or are feeling depressed or anxious or might be experiencing other problems that they feel they need help with.

#### **5 Who the service will be available to**

The service is available to all members of the Traveller community and those who are in relationships with them who are over the age of 18 years. The service is also available to Traveller children or children of Traveller parents who attend with their families through our partner organisation, The Clanwilliam Institute.

## **6 When the service is available**

Our services operates between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.30 pm Monday to Friday (unless an alternative arrangement is made between the client and counsellor), with specific time slots available on different days in locations where we provide our service. This applies to face to face, online and telephone counselling. Our service is also available in times of emergency, though we do not operate a crisis intervention service.

## **7 Making appointments**

There are a few different ways to make an appointment:

- Sending an e-mail - [info@travellercounseling.ie](mailto:info@travellercounseling.ie)
- Calling the office – 01 8685761/086 3061476
- Contact local group directly to make an appointment
- Via our website [www.travellercounseling.ie](http://www.travellercounseling.ie)

Once a client has completed their initial assessment, it is the responsibility of the therapist to arrange all follow-on appointments.

## **8 Where our service is available**

Our service is currently available in seven different locations in Dublin and Wicklow. These locations are Clondalkin, Tallaght, Fingal, Phibsborough, City Centre, Dochas Women’s Prison and Bray.

Since March 2020, we are also providing a telephone counselling and online counselling service. For more information on these, and details on how to make an appointment, please see our website.

There are also other Local Traveller Organisations who provide counselling to Travellers based in Exchange House Ireland, Galway, Navan and Offally. For contact details of these, please see our website.

## **9 Initial Interview/Assessment**

The aim of the initial interview/assessment is to decide whether or not the type of counselling we offer is appropriate to the client’s needs, to gain an understanding of what the problem is from the client’s perspective and to explore whether or not the client is in a position to benefit from the service being offered.

The initial assessment also provides an opportunity to gain an understanding of the clients background i.e. social and family life, to asses if the client is at risk of suicide or other risk and if so, what is the level of that risk, to determine what type of intervention might be needed and which therapist might be right for this client and to establish if the client is motivated to change.

It also gives the client to the opportunity to assess the therapist or the service and a chance to ask questions.

If it is felt that the client is suited to our services, an appointment to attend for their first session of counselling will be made and a copy of the clients contact details will be forwarded to the offices on Form CF1 (Appendix A).

At the end of the initial interview, clients will be informed about this document that is available on our website, that provides all the information they need to know about the counselling process. Clients will also be given a leaflet that gives some important information about our counselling service.

## **10 Client Contracts**

When the new client attends for their first session of counselling, there are three very important pieces of information that need to be discussed before counselling commences:-

1. Confidentiality – Each client must be aware of the conditions where the therapist might have to share information with a third party:
  - a. Risk of harm to self
  - b. Risk of harm to another person
  - c. Disclosure regarding child abuse where children may be at risk
2. Data Protection - The type of data that will be collected by us, what this data is used for and their right to access the data we hold on them (3. TCS Data Protection Policy Document).
3. Complaints - Procedure that the client can follow if they have a complaint or if they are not satisfied with the therapist or the service.

The contract also contains some information about missed appointments and finishing up.

In some instances, if a client is unable to sign the contract (literacy issues, online counselling or telephone counselling), the therapist may sign on behalf of the client once they are satisfied that the client understands the information that is detailed on the client contract.

## **11 Referrals to Other Services**

After an initial interview, if it is felt that the client needs help other than the support we can provide, the client will be referred to the appropriate organisation or agency and every assistance will be offered to the client to ensure that the client engages with the appropriate service.

## **12 Referrals to the TCS**

There are two types of referrals to the Traveller Counselling Service

a. Self referral

This is where the client makes direct contact with the service

b. Referrals by other agencies or professionals

This is where other family members or friends, agencies or professionals make contact on behalf of a client.

Effective counselling requires a high degree of motivation, which involves both keeping appointments and cooperating with the process of working to gain insight or to solve personal problems. The experience of some counselling agencies is that clients who are referred by third parties, such as relatives or professional workers can be less likely to commit themselves to the possibility of change through counselling.

The onus therefore should be placed on clients themselves to make appointments and to keep or cancel them and communicate back, if they wish, to anyone who encouraged them to refer themselves. What this means in practice, is that people who phone on behalf of someone, whether this is a relative or professional, could be asked to encourage that person to make his or her own appointment and contact the service directly themselves provided they are in a position to do so.

## **13 Fees**

The service will be free to the clients.

## **14 Missed Sessions Clients**

Counselling needs to be conducted on a regular basis and if there are too many or very long breaks between sessions this can interfere with and undermine the therapeutic process. Where clients are missing sessions on an ongoing basis this issue will need to be addressed by the therapist and the client.

The space for a client will only be held for a limited number of sessions where the client has failed to turn up unless there is a good reason to do otherwise. Anytime a session is missed, the therapist will endeavour to contact the client to see if they wish to return the following week or to come to an alternative arrangement.

## **15 Cancellation Policy**

As we operate with maximum flexibility, we don't adhere to a strict cancellation policy. We do request that clients contact us in advance if they are unable to attend but if there is no contact before a missed session, the therapist contacts the client at a later date to reschedule their appointment.

## **16 Client Records**

There are a number of key issues which have to be considered with regard to keeping client records such as contents, access, confidentiality and security. These issues are all dealt with in greater detail in our 2.3 TCS Data Protection Policy. All client information is stored in a highly secure and confidential manner. Client names are not used on their notes, only an anonymised reference number.

## **18 Confidentiality**

The limits of confidentiality will be explained to the client in the initial session and will be outlined on the Client Contract form, which will be signed by the client where possible.

Confidentiality is considered to be fundamental to counselling, because by its very nature, counselling is an intimate relationship which often involves the client divulging information about their current and past situation, as well as their opinions and inner most feelings. This can only take place in a relationship based on trust.

This is particularly true for the Traveller community, where there is a smaller population and a great fear of other people knowing their business.

However, circumstances issues may arise that need to be brought to the attention of a third party.

Such instances include:-

- (a) where there is a serious risk to the client themselves
- (b) where there is a serious risk to a third party
- (c) where there is risk to a child (2.1 TCS Child Safeguarding Policy).

The principle of respect for client autonomy provides a basis for emphasizing the importance of client consent in decisions about confidentiality.

The identity of the clients who avail of the service will be kept confidential by the therapist who is working with the client unless there are circumstances where this is unavoidable (see above).

The onus is on management, staff, volunteers, workers and Board members, to ensure the confidentiality of our clients is maintained.



For further detail please see our policy documents 1.4 TCS Code of Conduct, 1.2 TCS Operating Procedures and Policies for Counselling and 2.3 TCS Data Protection Policy.

## **18 Clients Complaints Policy**

Clients are informed at the initial assessment that if they are not satisfied with either the therapist they are working with or with the service they receive that a complaints policy is in place that will guide them as to how to make a complaint.

They are also advised that client complaints forms CF5 are available to be printed from our website or can be posted directly to the client if requested by phone or e-mail. In some locations, complaints forms are available to be taken freely at the leaflet stand. The 'Information on Counselling' document, that is available on our website, also includes a copy of the complaints form in the appendix.

Completed forms can be either posted into the office or e-mailed into [info@travellercounselling.ie](mailto:info@travellercounselling.ie) and are dealt with according to our Client Complaints Policy.

## **20 Contact Details**

We hope that you found this information helpful, but if you have any further queries, please don't hesitate to contact our office on either 01 8685761 or 086 308 1476 or you can e-mail us at [info@travellercounselling.ie](mailto:info@travellercounselling.ie) or visit our website at [www.travellercounselling.ie](http://www.travellercounselling.ie).



Traveller Counselling Service

**Client Contract – CF2**

This contract is between the Traveller Counselling Service and the client. It will operate for the duration of time that the client attends counselling. There are a number of items, detailed below, that need to be discussed and agreed when the client and counsellor first meet.

**1. Confidentiality**

While each counsellor working for the Traveller Counselling Service is bound to maintain confidentiality in all work carried out during counselling, there are three circumstances where the counsellor is obliged to share information with a third party:-

- (a) If a client is intending on harming themselves
- (b) If a client is intending to or is harming another person
- (c) If a client discloses the name of someone who is abusing children or from whom children may be at risk of abuse.

In the above circumstances, the counsellor will discuss in advance with the client any communications they are obliged to make.

**2. Data Protection**

In order to attend counselling with our service, we need to keep a record of some information about our clients, for example, their name, their contact number etc. This data will not be shared with any third party, with the exception of when the counsellor is obliged to share information or if a client requests that their information be shared, for example, with their GP. Anonymised data will be used for the generation of quarterly statistical reports.

Clients have a right to see their information and/or amend their data at any time. All details relating to client counselling sessions will be anonymised, meaning a client cannot be identified from their notes.

**3. Complaints**

If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the service, you can make a complaint by using our complaints form. A copy of this form is attached to the Counselling Information Sheet. Our Complaints Policy is available on our website at [www.travellercounselling.ie](http://www.travellercounselling.ie)

**4. Attending and Cancelling Appointments**

Clients are expected to attend their appointments on a weekly basis unless an alternative agreement is made. If a client is unable to attend, they are expected to contact their counsellor in advance. Where the client misses a number of sessions (usually 3 weeks) and fails to make contact with the therapist, they risk losing their place. However, every effort will be made to communicate this to the client in advance

**5. Termination of Counselling**

The client can end counselling at any stage during the process, however, we recommend discussing this with the counsellor before deciding to finish up.

**6. Signature on form**

In some instances, such as where there may be literacy issues or cases of phone and online counselling, the counsellor can sign and confirm that the contract has been discussed, understood and agreed with the client.

Therapist : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Client Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Client Ref : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Signed : \_\_\_\_\_  
Client Therapist



Traveller Counselling Service

**Client Complaint Form – CF5**

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Individual Involved :

\_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident : \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Complaint : \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

Please use additional pages as necessary)

What would you like to see happen in response to this complaint? (Eg an apology) : \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For Official use only:**

Date Received : \_\_\_\_\_

No : \_\_\_\_\_

Date Responded to : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome : \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_