Private Practice Safeguarding Policy

Alexandra Counselling, active since 2022, provides counselling and therapeutic support to adults (people aged 18 and over). It also provides supervision to therapists and therapeutic practitioners. Alexandra Kiss is a sole trader, and has no employees, so all work is carried out by Alexandra Kiss; she is responsible for safeguarding concerns within the service. This work involves confidentiality for clients, except for when there are circumstances where this needs to be broken, such as with incidents of safeguarding or well-being concerns. This is explained to clients when they commence therapy; clients also receive privacy policy and a contract, which outlines data handling and storage, confidentiality and its limitations.

Practitioner Name: Alexandra Kiss | Alexandra Counselling

Professional Body: BACP | Registration Number: 00959332

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1. Purpose & Scope

This policy sets out my commitment to safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk who interact with or use my counselling services.

As an independent practitioner, I have a professional and ethical duty to promote the safety and well-being of clients, their families, and the wider community. This policy operates alongside my standard *Client contract* and *Privacy/GDPR Policy*.

2. Key Principles

- **Client Well-being & Safety:** The welfare of adults at risk and children is paramount and overrides all other considerations, including client confidentiality, where serious harm or illegal acts are involved.
- **Proportional Action:** Any response to a safeguarding concern will be proportionate, necessary, and designed to minimize risk.
- **Client Participation:** Whenever safe and appropriate, clients will be involved in discussions regarding potential breaches of confidentiality and external referrals.

3. Definitions & Indicators of Risk

- **Children and Young People:** Anyone under the age of 18.

- **Adults at Risk:** An adult (18+) who has needs for care and support, and is experiencing (or at risk of) abuse, neglect, or harm, and is unable to protect themselves as a result of those needs.
- **Concerns include (but are not limited to):** Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; neglect; domestic abuse; severe self-harm or imminent suicidal intent; radicalization; or disclosure of harm to others.

4. Confidentiality & Limits of Service

Confidentiality is a cornerstone of the therapeutic relationship. However, confidentiality is not absolute.

Confidentiality may be broken if:

1. There is a serious risk of harm to the client or another identifiable person.
2. There is a legal requirement to disclose information (e.g., acts of terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering, or a court order).
3. A child or adult at risk is actively experiencing or at risk of significant harm/abuse.
4. While my practice services adults aged 18 and over only, I have a statutory and ethical duty of care to protect children and young people. If during the course of our work an adult client discloses information that indicates a child or young person is currently at risk of significant harm or abuse, I am ethically and legally obligated to report these concerns to the relevant local Authority Children's Social Care team or emergency services.

5. Safeguarding Procedure & Actions

If a safeguarding concern arises during or outside a counselling session, I will follow these steps:

1. **Risk Assessment:** Assess the immediate level of risk to the client or others.
2. **Consultation:** Where time and situation permit, discuss the concern with my qualified Clinical Supervisor or a team member of the ethical team by my membership body (BACP) to determine the most appropriate course of action.
3. **Client Discussion:** Unless doing so would increase the risk of harm (e.g., in cases of alleged severe abuse by a caregiver or domestic violence partner), I will inform the client of my concerns and discuss the necessity of an external referral.
4. **External Escalation:** If necessary, contact the relevant local statutory authorities (Social Services, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub [MASH], or Emergency Services).
5. **Documentation:** Keep factual, objective, and secure records of the concern, decision-making rationale, and any actions taken, in accordance with GDPR guidelines.

6. Key Contact Details & External Resources

Emergency Services

- **Police / Ambulance:** 999 (Immediate emergency)
- **Police Non-Emergency:** 101

Local Safeguarding Authorities (Fill in your local area details)

- **Local Authority Adult Social Care:**
- 01305 221016 (Dorset Council Adult Access Team / Safeguarding). 01305 858250 or 01305 221000 for out-of-hours support, or email adultaccess@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Website**:** dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/adult-social-care
- **Local Authority Children's Social Care / MASH Team:**
- 01305 228558 (for professionals), 01305 228866 (for member of the public)
- Website: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/childrens-social-care

Local Council Safeguarding Advice Line:

- Adult: 01305 221016 (daytime), 01305 221000 (out of hours), adultaccess@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Children: 01305 228866 (public), 01305 228558 (professional), familysupportandadviceline@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Support Helplines & Resources for Clients

- **Samaritans:** Call 116 123 (Free 24/7) | Email: jo@samaritans.org
- **Shout Crisis Text Line:** Text SHOUT to 85258 (Free 24/7)
- **NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000 (For child protection concerns)
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline:** 0808 2000 247
- **Connection**: 24/7 helpline for all ages. Dorset residents call 0800 6520190 or NHS 111 for free.
- **Mind** Support line: +44-300-102-1234. https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/
- **The Retreat** (Bournemouth & Weymouth): providing a safe space for anyone aged 18 or above to seek face-to-face help and support from registered mental health practitioners and peer specialists. The site in Bournemouth and Weymouth are open every day, 4.30-11.30pm - no need to call ahead, just drop-in.

https://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-and-sites/mental-health-and-learning-disabilities/community-front-rooms or 0800 6520190 or based at The Lantern Trust 2 Ranelagh Rd, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 7JD

- **Community Front Rooms** in Shaftesbury, Bridport and Dorchester Community Front Rooms (bcha.org.uk). Dorchester - 07966 808845, 19 High East Street, Dorchester, DT1 1HH, dorchestercfrstaff@bcha.org.uk, https://www.bcha.org.uk/our-services/bcha-support/mental-health/

More information about helpline numbers can be found on the website: alexandracounselling.co.uk under the 'Emergency' menu.

7. How to Access This Policy or Raise a Concern

Clients and service users are provided with notice of this policy during contracting.

- The full copy of this document is available upon request at any time or accessible at alexandracounselling.co.uk
- If a client has concerns about how a safeguarding situation was handled or wishes to raise a professional standard concern, they can contact my professional registering body, the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), via their enquiries line at 01455 883300 or via their website at www.bacp.co.uk.

8. Contact details

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