



Information Sheet: Recording Client Sessions

Why do counsellors sometimes record sessions with clients?

The reason why counsellors might want to record a client session will vary, but it is always to help them – or the counselling service - grow and develop therapeutic skills.

Some of our counsellors are students undertaking a counselling training course, which requires them to record some of their work with clients. Other of our counsellors, who are already qualified, may use recordings in supervision (see below), or be undertaking further training which requires recording of some of their client sessions.

Counsellors must explain to you why they want to record a session, what will happen to the recording after use, and if they will write a case study (see below) about you. They must get your written consent before recording a session and you have the right to decline. They will only make audio recordings and never a video-recording.

Who will hear the recording?

Sometimes the student counsellor will be the only person who will listen to the recording. Recordings will only be played back to people who have a need to hear them i.e. course tutors and fellow students on the counselling training course. The student counsellor might also play the recording during supervision (see below).

What is counselling supervision?

Counselling supervision is when a counsellor uses the services of another experienced and qualified counsellor to review their work with clients, their professional development, and often their personal development as well. All counsellors are required to have supervision as a matter of course.

What if a client doesn't want their sessions to be recorded?

As mentioned above, you can decline a request to record a session. A refusal will not affect the service you receive from the counsellor in any way.

What is a transcript?

A transcript is a written record of exactly what was said during a client session. It can be just a small part of a session, say five to 10 minutes, or in some cases, a record of the whole session. Transcripts are used during training to help students - and their tutors – better understand how they work with their clients and ways to improve this.

What is a 'case study'?

A case study is a written report looking at what issues a client brought to counselling and how the counsellor helped the client to explore these issues and make any changes. Case studies can be short or long. Sometimes case studies are based on more than one client, which is another way we protect client confidentiality.

Case studies are used in most counselling training. In addition, Community Counselling sometimes uses case studies in progress reports and grant applications to funders.

What happens to recordings/transcripts/case studies after use?

Once the relevant training course has finished, counsellors will destroy any recordings and any transcripts made from them. Case studies used by Community Counselling in progress reports, funding applications etc. are permanent records however.

Who 'owns' recordings, transcripts, case studies?

Unless, the recording or transcript is made for a case study for Community Counselling e.g. for a progress report to a funder, the recording, transcript or case study remains the property of the individual counsellor. As such the counsellor is responsible for making sure that such records are kept confidential and destroyed securely.