

Counselling – The First Session

Booking & paying for your first counselling session

First sessions can usually be arranged with one week's notice. Bookings are secured once payment of £55 is received via BACS.

What happens during the first counselling session?

Sarah appreciates that you may feel anxious ahead of your first counselling session, especially if you have never spoken with a counsellor before. This is not uncommon and quite 'normal'.

Once your appointment is booked, Sarah will email a Zoom link over and meet you online at the allocated time. She will check you are in a safe and confidential space where you cannot be overheard.

To avoid other distractions, please also switch your camera on throughout the session; this helps you both to connect. Please refrain from eating, drinking or using any other devices, although, you may wish to have a glass of water close by and/or some tissues, should you feel the need for either.

Assessment

A first counselling appointment can also sometimes be known as an initial assessment.

This is because during an initial session – the first appointment – Sarah will ask a number of questions about your current, general health and wellbeing as well as your health history, including mental and emotional health and the general mental health and wellbeing in your family history. She will also outline confidentiality, safeguarding and how she will work with you, should you both decide to work together after the initial session. You are also free to ask Sarah any questions about the counselling process and how you might work together going forwards.

Goals

Sarah will help you to clarify any goals you may have for counselling. However, please don't worry if you are not yet sure about your goals. Many people come to counselling when they feel in crisis, or do not know exactly what they want to achieve. Often, we all just want to feel better and live more fulfilling lives, even if we don't yet know how to get started when we begin our counselling journey.

Sarah can help you gain clarity and support you with identifying what you would like to gain from counselling.

How long will the session last?

The first session will last for 50 minutes. Sarah will start and end the session on time.

Do I need to book further sessions after the initial assessment?

Both you and Sarah are free to decide whether you wish to continue working together after the initial session. You may wish to take time to reflect after the initial session before deciding, which is absolutely fine.

Equally, if Sarah feels she is not the best person to help you at this time, she will notify you and can sometimes signpost you to other support and/or services.

If I decide to work with Sarah, how many sessions will I need?

Everyone is unique, so there are no set number of sessions required.

However, it can be helpful to commit to a minimum of 6 sessions (held weekly) so that you can start to build a therapeutic relationship with Sarah and begin to see and feel the impact of counselling.

Alternatively, you may wish to work with Sarah in an open-ended way; which is where you meet with Sarah on a once-weekly basis until you decide you no longer require counselling.

All of these things can be explored during the first session.

Counselling Agreement

If you and Sarah decide to work together, Sarah will email you a copy of her standard counselling agreement, which outlines how Sarah works. It includes things such as confidentiality and when confidentiality might need to be broken, appointment scheduling, breaks in counselling, payment of sessions, cancellations and re-arranging appointments.

If you need to re-arrange or cancel your first session

If you change your mind and no longer wish to attend a first session, please provide Sarah with a minimum of 48 hours' notice in order to receive a full refund. If your appointment is on a Monday, a minimum of 72 hours is required for cancellation.

Please note: Sarah is unable to refund fees where less than 48/72hours' is provided.

If you would like to re-arrange a first session, similarly, please provide 48 hours/72 hours' notice, as outlined above, so that Sarah can re-schedule this for you without further charge.

If you have any further questions

If you have any further questions ahead of booking your initial appointment with Sarah, please contact Sarah again via hello@slowcoachsarah.co.uk I look forward to working with you.