

Safeguarding Policy

For counselling clients, supervisees and people making enquiries

If you need help now

If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

For urgent mental health help, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option, or use [NHS 111 online](#)

For a concern about an adult, find the appropriate safeguarding service through the [local council](#)

For a concern about a child, use [report child abuse to a local council](#)

This policy explains how I respond to concerns about serious harm, abuse or neglect in my counselling and supervision practice. I consider each situation individually, respect the person's wishes and capacity, and take proportionate action. My practice is not a crisis response service.

1. Confidentiality and safety

I treat information shared in an enquiry or session as confidential and explain foreseeable limits to confidentiality in the working agreement and privacy notice. Telling me about distress, suicidal thoughts or self-harm does not automatically mean I will contact another service. I normally discuss any proposed sharing with the person first, unless that would be unsafe or impracticable.

I listen, clarify what is happening and seek to agree a response. I presume that an adult has capacity for a particular decision unless there is reason to assess it. An unwise decision alone does not establish incapacity. I also consider the safety of children and others who may be affected.

2. How I assess a concern

I establish what was disclosed or observed, by whom and when. I distinguish the person's account, observed facts and my interpretation. I consider the nature and timing of potential harm, available support, the person's wishes and any risk to others. For self-harm or suicide concerns, I explore current thoughts, intent, plans, access to means, timeframe, relevant history and protective support as appropriate to the situation.

I may consult my supervisor or a relevant safeguarding service where time allows, using anonymised information where feasible. I do not delay urgent action to obtain supervision.

3. What I do when action is needed

Immediate danger

If I believe someone is at risk of immediate serious harm, I share the information needed to seek an appropriate urgent response, including contacting 999 where necessary. I seek agreement and explain my action where safe and practicable. For online work, I establish the person's current location if possible so that the relevant local service can respond.

A child or adult safeguarding concern

For a non-immediate concern about a child, I consider advice or referral through children's social care in the child's area. For an adult who may have care and support needs, experience abuse or neglect, and be unable to protect themselves, I consider the local adult safeguarding route. I check whether a specific legal reporting duty applies to the circumstances.

When I do not make a referral

I record my reasons, any advice obtained, the action agreed with the person, what would prompt reconsideration and when I will review the concern.

4. Consent, refusal and information sharing

I normally seek the person's agreement before a referral or disclosure. If they decline, I consider their capacity for that decision, the seriousness and immediacy of harm, the safety of others and alternatives. A capable adult's refusal carries significant weight. A concern does not automatically justify sharing information without agreement. I check whether a specific statutory reporting duty applies; I do not assume that every safeguarding concern creates one.

When sharing without agreement is required by a specific law, or is necessary to protect someone from immediate serious harm, I disclose only what is needed. For other concerns, I assess whether disclosure is legally permitted and ethically justified, taking account of the person's wishes and the risk of harm. Depending on the circumstances, I may contact emergency services, a relevant NHS service such as the person's GP, or a local authority safeguarding service. I contact a nominated emergency contact only if that is appropriate, taking account of the person's wishes and any instructions they gave about that contact. I record what I shared, with whom, when and why, and the applicable data-protection basis and any condition for sensitive information. In some circumstances I may need to inform my professional insurer as required by my policy.

5. Online work and supervision

For online sessions I collect proportionate contact and emergency information and agree what happens if a session is disrupted. Messages are considered when I read them and are not continuously monitored.

A supervisee remains responsible for their own clients and safeguarding decisions. I ask supervisees to bring the minimum identifying client information needed, support them to consider appropriate action and record the agreed responsibility. If an immediate serious concern remains unaddressed, I consider what action I should take.

6. Records, contact and review

I make a timely, factual record of the concern, assessment, wishes expressed, consultation, decision, action and reasons. I record any disclosure and follow-up. Records are kept under my privacy notice and governance procedures.

You can raise a concern about my practice by emailing contact@mrccounseling.uk

I review this policy at least annually and after a material incident or relevant change in law, professional guidance, insurance terms or practice arrangements.

7. Legal and professional references

These references inform this policy. The Care Act and Children Act provisions below describe local authority safeguarding functions; they do not, by themselves, impose a general reporting duty on my private practice. I assess the law applicable to any particular disclosure.

What it covers	Reference
Safeguarding practice and client access	BACP Ethical Framework 2026, especially section 2.4
Local authority adult safeguarding functions	Care Act 2014, section 42
Capacity and the person's wishes	Mental Capacity Act 2005, sections 1–3
Local authority children's services functions	Children Act 1989, sections 17 and 47
Lawful, proportionate sharing	UK GDPR, Articles 5, 6 and 9
Safeguarding condition where applicable	Data Protection Act 2018, Schedule 1, paragraph 18

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