

Th Platypus Counselling

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Crisis Safety Plan Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines how the practice supports clients who may experience a mental health crisis, including risk of harm to self or others. It sets out the use of a Crisis Safety Plan as a preventative and responsive safeguarding measure, in line with the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

This policy applies to all clients receiving counselling through the practice, including face-to-face and online sessions. It is used where risk is identified or where it is clinically appropriate to support client safety and wellbeing.

2. Definition of a Crisis

A crisis may include, but is not limited to:

- * Suicidal thoughts or intent
- * Self-harming behaviour or urges
- * Severe emotional distress or loss of emotional regulation
- * Risk of harm to others
- * Situations where a client feels unable to keep themselves safe

3. Crisis Safety Plan

A Crisis Safety Plan is a collaborative document developed between the practitioner and the client. It is intended to support the client in managing periods of increased distress and to reduce risk.

The plan may include:

- * Early warning signs or triggers
- * Coping strategies and grounding techniques
- * Sources of personal support (friends, family, trusted others)
- * Professional and emergency support contacts
- * Steps the client agrees to take if risk escalates
- * The counsellor's role and limitations during a crisis

The Crisis Safety Plan is reviewed regularly and updated as needed.

4. Counsellor Responsibilities

The counsellor will:

- * Carry out ongoing risk assessment as part of therapeutic work
- * Discuss the purpose and limits of a Crisis Safety Plan with the client
- * Encourage client autonomy while prioritising safety
- * Act in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities where there is concern about serious harm
- * Seek supervision and/or consultation where appropriate

5. Client Responsibilities

Clients are encouraged to:

- * Engage collaboratively in developing and reviewing the Crisis Safety Plan

- * Use the agreed strategies and supports where possible
- * Inform the counsellor of changes in risk or circumstances
- * Understand the limits of the practitioner's availability outside sessions

6. Limits of Availability

The counsellor is not a crisis or emergency service. Clients are informed that:

- * Support outside scheduled sessions is limited
- * In an emergency, clients should contact appropriate crisis or emergency services

Relevant emergency contact details are provided as part of the Crisis Safety Plan.

7. Breaches of Confidentiality

If the counsellor believes there is a serious risk of harm to the client or others, confidentiality may be breached in line with safeguarding responsibilities and the BACP Ethical Framework. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with the client.

8. Online Counselling

For online counselling, additional considerations apply, including:

- * Confirmation of the client's location and emergency contact details
- * Limitations in responding to crises remotely
- * The importance of clients accessing local emergency services

These factors are addressed within the Crisis Safety Plan.

9. Record Keeping

Crisis Safety Plans and any associated risk assessments are recorded and stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation. Records are factual, proportionate, and relevant.

10. Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated to reflect changes in professional guidance, legislation, or practice needs.