



Therapy Contract

This agreement is designed to provide a clear and transparent framework for safe, ethical, and effective therapy and systemic practice.

Code and ethics of practice: I work within the UKCP, AFTSP and the NMC, details of which are available on their websites.

Nature of the work

You can use your sessions however you wish. You might want to talk about a particular issue, grapple with difficult feelings or simply 'be' with whatever is arising in the present moment. You direct the content and pace of your sessions while your therapist listens attentively and with an attitude of 'interested curiosity' and respect about you and your life.

Systemic Touchstone Therapies offers therapy and systemic work informed by family and systemic psychotherapy principles and EMDR protocol. The work is collaborative and aims to support understanding, wellbeing, and relational change. As psychotherapist my purpose is to create a comfortable, safe and confidential space in which you can explore whatever you decide to bring to therapy. My role is to offer as much care and expertise as I can to act as a supportive and understanding guide on your explorations and help you make sense of what's going on.

Therapy is not a guaranteed outcome-based service, and progress varies between individuals and contexts. Where work falls outside the practitioner's competence, this will be discussed and appropriate referrals considered.

Therapy isn't ...

- **Something that is 'forced' upon you** . You don't have to talk about anything you don't feel comfortable sharing. You stay in charge of your process.
- **About giving advice**. A good therapist won't advise but support you in finding your own answers.

- **‘A friendship’.** A friendship implies a ‘two way or reciprocal’ support system. Instead, the boundary of the therapy relationship is ‘one way’ care for the client. It is the therapist’s role to emotionally hold and support you and not visa versa.
- **A quick fix.** Counselling and psychotherapy doesn’t always offer an instant solution to our problems. The process of therapy can take time. However with courage and a willingness to change on your part it can bring about profound transformation. Therapy might not be able to erase all our hurts but it can allow us to live with our wounds with greater peace and self awareness.

Session Structure

All initial bookings for a consultation or session are usually made via email. Subsequent sessions can be arranged either at the end of the session or via email.

The length of sessions varies depending on the type of service booked, usually sessions last 60 minutes with the initial assessment appointment usually lasting 60-90 minutes. Sessions take place online via Microsoft teams. Sessions are usually weekly or fortnightly unless otherwise agreed.

Cancellations and Rescheduling

Regular attendance supports continuity of work. If you need to cancel or reschedule a session, as much notice as possible is appreciated.

Cancellations with less than 48 hours’ notice are charged in full.

Attending Sessions

Clients should attend sessions free from the effects/influence of alcohol and drugs.

If you anticipate being late for a session, please notify me by email. Sessions cannot be extended beyond the agreed time.

If no contact is made within 15 minutes of the session start time, the session will be ended and a follow up email sent. This session will be charged in full.

For online sessions, Microsoft teams links will be sent by email. If technical difficulties arise, attempts will be made to reconnect. If this is not possible, follow-up contact will be made by email.

Sessions will not be recorded without your explicit consent. Clients are also asked not to record sessions without prior discussion and agreement.

Working online means you don’t necessarily travel to and from your appointment and so may not have the travel time to prepare yourself before and after a session. With this in mind, it is good practice to prepare yourself for a few minutes before you start an online session so that you feel ready to start our work together. Likewise, after a session, it is a

good idea to give yourself some time to readjust before you go back to your daily life. If we are working via video, it is also a good idea to have your screen set to full view. This helps to create the experience of presence or 'being there' in the therapeutic space.

As the client you understand that online therapy is not appropriate if you are experiencing a crisis or having suicidal or homicidal thoughts. If an emergency arises that is life-threatening or needs immediate attention you agree to contact the emergency services on 999, go to your nearest hospital A&E department or phone a crisis help line such as the [Samaritans](#) on 116 123 (for UK Residents).

Contact between sessions

Email contact between sessions should be only for the purpose of arranging/rearranging appointments. Any other content may not be acknowledged or responded to but can be discussed in the next session.

The therapeutic relationship is a professional relationship and in order to protect its boundaries and work in an ethical way, it is considered inappropriate to engage either formally or informally through social networking sites or forums. This protects the confidentiality of the therapy relationship.

Working Electronically

It is important that the environment you choose to work in allows for your physical and emotional safety as well as your privacy where conversations cannot be overheard. This helps to ensure our work together remains confidential.

If you are supporting a child or young person, please ensure they are in a safe, comfortable, and confidential environment. We recommend using an up-to-date browser and a stable internet connection.

In the event of a technology breakdown or technical difficulties, we both endeavour to email straight away and try to reconnect online within 10 minutes. If after 10 minutes you or I are still unable to connect, we can re-schedule free of charge. Please note I will never intentionally end a session prematurely.

Confidentiality, Privacy, and Records

All sessions are confidential. Confidentiality may be breached should you give consent for the confidence to be broken, or where there is a legal or ethical duty to do so, including:

- serious risk of harm to yourself or others
- safeguarding concerns involving children or vulnerable adults
- a legal requirement such as a court order

Where possible, any need to share information about your case e.g. your GP, I will only do so after discussion with you first, unless urgency prevents this.

As part of my professional ethical code of practice I have regular clinical supervision where I discuss my work. Your identity is kept anonymous and confidentiality maintained.

Minimal written records are kept in line with ethical and legal requirements. Records are anonymised and stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation (UK-GDPR and Information Commissioners Office). Any other personal information e.g. information disclosed on the intake questionnaire is also strictly confidential and stored securely.

Clients may request access to their records. Records are retained for a minimum of 7 years after the end of therapy, or until the age of 25 for children and young people, in case you decide to return

Payment

Fees of each therapy offered are covered on Systemic Touchstone Therapies website.

Payment for sessions is typically made through bank transfer, through the following bank details.

Santander

Marianne Ruth Imber

Account no: 41706952 Sort code: 09-01-30

Working With Organisations and Third-Party Funded Sessions

Some clients may access sessions being commissioned through organisations via social care, schools etc. In these cases, the organisation commissions and funds the work rather than the client paying directly.

Where sessions are arranged in this way:

- the organisation determines the number and frequency of sessions
- payment is made by the organisation, not by the client
- the organisation may set review points or require confirmation of attendance

Within sessions, the practitioner's primary ethical responsibility remains to the client. The therapeutic space is confidential and separate from the organisation, except where information sharing has been explicitly agreed in advance or is required by law.

At the outset of the work, clients will be informed of:

- the number of sessions agreed
- any limits to confidentiality linked to the organisational arrangement
- what information, if any, is shared with the organisation (for example, attendance or brief progress updates)

Safeguarding

Practitioners have a legal and ethical duty to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and to act in accordance with current safeguarding legislation and guidance.

Illness or Unexpected Circumstances

If your practitioner is unable to continue sessions due to illness they will try to contact you with as much notice as possible ahead of your sessions.

Ending Therapy

You may end sessions at any time. I encourage clients to discuss the intention to end the sessions in advance and wherever possible spending a number of sessions (the amount will vary dependent upon what is needed, the length of the therapeutic relationship etc) working towards an ending of therapy.

Where therapy is planned to end, this will usually be discussed at least two sessions in advance to support a thoughtful and contained ending.

For organisation-funded work, endings may also be influenced by the number of sessions commissioned.

Complaints

Systemic Touchstone Therapies encourages complaints to be raised directly in the first instance.

If concerns cannot be resolved, clients may contact the relevant professional body that the clinician is registered with. This is highlighted on their website.