



About the IMCS

(Important Information for Clients)

1. Introduction

This document contains important information for all clients of, and new referrals to, the Iron Mill Counselling Service (IMCS.)

2. About the Iron Mill Counselling Service

The Iron Mill Counselling Service (IMCS) is an affordable counselling service provided by Iron Mill College. Our aim is to make safe, effective and ethical counselling more accessible to the general public.

We offer one-to-one, face-to-face, general counselling to adults over the age of 18.

3. About Iron Mill College

Iron Mill College (IMC) is a leading provider of education and training in mental health and wellbeing. The service is run by the IMCS Coordinator and IMCS Senior Counsellor, both qualified counsellors employed by the college. Other members of IMC staff provide support to the service as required. The College operates the counselling service on a low-cost basis, and any profit that might be made is re-invested directly into the service.

4. About Our Therapists

The IMCS employs counsellors in training as volunteer therapists. All student counsellors working within the service are studying a counselling course at Iron Mill College and have been assessed as being competent to practice by their tutors before starting their placement with the IMCS. Throughout their time with the service they are supported by experienced and qualified counselling staff, tutors and supervisors.

We also employ a Senior Counsellor and a small number of newly qualified, volunteer counsellors.

All IMCS therapists and service management staff are members, or student members, of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and are committed to working under the BACP's Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions. This is your assurance that the service and your counsellor will strive to practice in a safe, ethical and professional manner at all times.

The BACP Ethical Framework can be viewed for free on the BACP website:

www.bacp.co.uk.

Limitations of the Service

Our counsellors aim to provide safe, effective and affordable therapy for our clients but, because they are still in training, there are some limits to what they can do and who they can work with. For this reason, every potential client who contacts the service must attend a consultation with one of our qualified counselling staff before their referral can be progressed (see Section 6 below).

5. Client Consultation and Assessment

- 5.1. **Telephone Consultation:** After you have made contact with us, we will arrange a brief telephone consultation for you with one of our qualified counselling staff. The telephone consultation will take around 15 minutes. You will need a reliable

phone line and a safe place where you can talk confidentially and without being interrupted.

We may be able to provide a decision after the telephone consultation, or we may invite you to a Face-to-Face Consultation if more information and discussion is needed.

5.2. The Face-to-Face Consultation: will be with a qualified counsellor and will usually take between forty minutes and an hour in one of our dedicated counselling rooms at Iron Mill College.

5.3. Consultation Outcomes: The purpose of the consultation, whether over the phone or in person, is for us to learn a little more about you and to make an assessment about whether we are going to be the right service for you. If we don't think we will be able to help you we will explain why and, where possible, signpost you to other services.

There are three likely outcomes of the consultation process:

- We offer to place you on our holding list for counselling (see below)
- We are unable to progress your referral and will explain the reasons why. Where possible, we will suggest alternative sources of support.
- We defer a decision while we consult with other senior counselling colleagues. We will explain to you what you can expect to happen next.

6. The IMCS Holding List

As a service we are limited in the number of clients we can support at any one time. This means the most likely outcome of your consultation is that we will offer to add you to our holding list to wait for a therapist suited to your needs to become available.

The length of time a client is on the holding list is different for every client as it depends on their individual needs, preferences and availability as well as the overall capacity of the service at any time. Whilst we will do our best to give you an indication of the *average* wait at the time you are added to the list, we cannot make any specific commitment as to how long this might be for you.

Being accepted into our Holding List means we think it likely we can find a counsellor suitable for you; however, it is important to understand that *this is not a guarantee*. In a very small number of cases we might be unable to find a suitable counsellor even after a long wait despite our best efforts.

If we are unable to find you a suitable counsellor within 3-4 months following your initial consultation, we will contact you to discuss whether it would be in your best interests to remain on the holding list, or to actively explore other options. If you haven't heard from us after 3 months you are welcome to contact us for a review of your case.

With the above terms understood, if it is very important to you to start counselling soon, you may of course pursue other options whilst being on our holding list. You may withdraw from the holding list at any time if you find counselling support elsewhere in the meantime.

7. In an Emergency

As a service, we are not able to provide emergency support to any client or potential client who finds themselves experiencing acute distress or a mental health crisis. Under such circumstances, our duty of care and ethical framework requires that we direct the client to the appropriate medical services.

Your first port of call if you are struggling with your mental health should be your GP or the Emergency Services.

8. What is expected of you?

Counselling can support you to explore the changes you want to make in your life, and/or explore in depth the issues you choose to bring. To be effective, it requires a firm commitment from the client.

As a service we expect the following commitments from our clients:

- 8.1. **Session Fees:** We charge £20 per session. If you are worried about paying for sessions please talk to the Coordinator or your counsellor.
- 8.2. **Regular Attendance:** You will need to be able to attend your session at the same time each week. Unfortunately, we are not able to move session times from week to week or to accommodate regular sessions of less than weekly frequency (i.e. fortnightly or monthly.)

9. Contact Us?

If you have any questions about the above please contact the IMCS Coordinator on 01392 499 388 or e-mail counselling@ironmill.co.uk.