



RAIN OR SHINE

LGBTQ+ Affirmative Psychotherapy & Counselling

Agreement for parents/ people who are paying for therapy on behalf of young people or dependants who still live with them or are under age 21

In order to protect the client's confidentiality, the only thing I can discuss with parents independently of a conversation with the client is payment for sessions. Unless I have explicit permission from the client to do so, I cannot discuss with parents what the client brings to session; nor any aspect of the relationship between the parent and the client; nor any other aspect of the client's experience.

The boundary is necessary for a number of reasons:

- To maintain a client-centred perspective on what the client brings to the sessions. This perspective might be compromised if I hear other family member's perspectives on what they bring.
- To maintain a clear boundary that I only provide emotional support to the client, and not to other people in their family
- To maintain trust and honesty in my relationship with the client I need to ensure I do not have conversations with family members about the client that I could not then also share directly with the client, without it potentially compromising their well-being or the well-being of other people involved.

This boundary includes if there was a safeguarding issue that presented a risk significant enough that it required me to break confidentiality. In this case I would inform professionals who could provide additional support, such as emergency services, a GP or a social worker. I would explore with the client whether they would be comfortable with their parents being informed, and if following this the client gave their permission, I would also inform their parents. I appreciate that this boundary sometimes raises concern amongst parents. Please rest assured it is not put in place with the intention of withholding information from parents. Rather, it is necessary because in some cases clients who are young people may be at risk of significant harm but are put off from disclosing this to their therapists because they fear that their therapist will inform their parents. Therefore, this boundary is intended to facilitate the client feeling able to be as open as possible. In many cases the client does also want their parent to know and either feels comfortable to tell them from the get go or uses therapy to explore how they might get to a place where they feel better able to tell them.

Occasionally a client may request a three-way meeting between myself, themselves and their parents. In this scenario I would explore with the client their motivations for the request and the possible implications of such a meeting. If the client then decided it was in their best interests to go ahead with the meeting, what would be disclosed in the meeting would be discussed with the client beforehand.

This statement is based on the premise that I only work with clients aged 16 or over. Therefore Gillick Competence is assumed to apply. Gillick competence refers to a principle used in healthcare settings and medical law, which is used to establish when young people have a right to make decisions over their own bodies and lives independent from requiring parental consent to make these decisions. Whilst it may be the case that not every therapist explicitly acknowledges Gillick Competence to parents, it is best practice and so should be applied were any relevant scenarios to arise.