



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Forks and Spoons

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Online Counselling for Young People (Aged 12&ndash;25)

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This policy outlines my commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion within counselling practice. It reflects my professional responsibilities and relevant UK legislation. It should be read alongside the Counselling Agreement and related policies.

## 1. Statement of Commitment

Forks and Spoons is committed to providing a counselling service that is inclusive, respectful and non-discriminatory.

All clients will be treated with dignity and fairness, regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender identity or gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race, ethnicity or nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic background

This reflects the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

Discrimination, harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated within any aspect of the service.

## 2. Professional and Ethical Framework

As a registered member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (Membership No. 418039), I work in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework.

The Ethical Framework requires practitioners to:

- Value and respect diversity

Work towards eliminating discrimination

Be aware of personal biases and limitations

Practise in a way that promotes fairness and inclusion

Regular supervision supports reflection on power, difference, identity and anti-oppressive practice.

### 3. Inclusive Practice

I work in a person-centred, integrative way. This means I adapt my approach to meet the individual needs, identity and lived experience of each young person.

In practice, this includes:

- Using inclusive and affirming language

Respecting a client's chosen name and pronouns

Recognising the impact of systemic inequality and discrimination on mental health

Being responsive to neurodivergence and different communication styles

Creating space for conversations about identity, culture, faith and belonging

Young people are supported to explore their identities safely and without judgement.

### 4. Accessibility

Online counselling can increase accessibility for some young people; however, barriers may still exist.

Where possible, reasonable adjustments will be made to support access. This may include:

- Flexibility around camera use

Adapting communication pace or style

Clarifying expectations in writing

Considering sensory or environmental needs

If online counselling is not suitable, this will be discussed openly and alternative options considered where possible.

### 5. Working with Difference and Power

Counselling relationships exist within wider social contexts. I acknowledge that:

- Experiences of racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of discrimination can significantly affect wellbeing.

Power dynamics may exist within therapeutic relationships.

I am committed to ongoing professional development to deepen cultural competence and anti-discriminatory practice.

### 6. Zero Tolerance of Discrimination

Discriminatory, abusive or harassing behaviour towards the counsellor or others will not be accepted.

If such behaviour occurs:

- It will be addressed directly within the therapeutic space where appropriate.

Where necessary, counselling may be paused or ended in line with professional boundaries and safety considerations.

## 7. Complaints and Accountability

If a client or parent/carer believes that equality or diversity standards have not been upheld, concerns can be raised using the Complaints Procedure.

As a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, complaints may also be directed to the BACP in line with their Professional Conduct Procedure.

## 8. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with:

- The Equality Act 2010

The BACP Ethical Framework

Current best practice in inclusive counselling

Forks and Spoons is committed to creating a counselling environment where young people feel seen, respected and valued in all aspects of who they are.