

Michele Kirschstein Therapy Data Privacy Policy

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

GDPR is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information from individuals. This is increasingly pertinent due to the advancement and prevalence of digital technology. 'Data controller' is the term used to describe the person/organisation that collects, stores and has responsibility for people's personal data. In this instance, the data controller is me. My phone number is: 07735 887 704. My email address is: hello@michelektherapy.com. I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (registration number ZB031562). You can read more about your rights at ico.org.uk/your-data-matters.

This policy will be relevant to you if you are a client / potential client, relating to what data I keep, why I keep it, and how I store it, as well as if you are a website visitor, relating to how my website collects, uses, discloses, and manages the data of its visitors.

CLIENTS & POTENTIAL CLIENTS

The GDPR makes sure that I look after any sensitive personal information that you may disclose to me. This type of information is called 'special category personal information'. The lawful basis for me processing any special categories of personal information is that it is for provision of health treatment (in this case counselling and psychotherapy) and necessary for a contract with a health professional (in this case, a contract between me and you).

As a counsellor and psychotherapist who adheres to the [BACP's ethical framework for the Counselling Professions](#), confidentiality is of utmost importance to my practice. Furthermore, transparency is a key aspect of therapy and how I work, and I will discuss these aspects from the outset of all therapeutic contracts.

You have a right to know what details of yours I keep and why, and about the different ways I collect and store your data. Firstly, I take and retain your contact details in order to arrange our sessions. When you contact me with an enquiry about my counselling services, I will collect information to help me satisfy your enquiry. This will include your name, contact details and your availability. Alternatively, your GP or other health professional may send me your details when making a referral or a parent or trusted individual may give me your details when making an enquiry on your behalf. If you decide not to proceed, I will ensure all your personal data is deleted within fourteen days. If you would like me to delete this information sooner, just let me know.

Secondly, I keep digital notes of all sessions. These are kept on Sync, which is a cloud-based storage platform that provides end-to-end zero-knowledge encryption. This means that only I can decrypt files – Sync cannot access them. You can see Sync's privacy policy [here](#). I access Sync via my laptop, which is password protected and I am its sole user. I keep minimal handwritten notes in a secure place within my home. I do not include names in any of my notes and am careful to anonymise their content. I keep notes to reflect on our work together, for supervision and further training purposes. I keep information that may identify you, such as your contact details, separate to these notes. When discussing therapeutic work in supervision I anonymise the clients I discuss.

If you would like to see a copy of my notes, I will require a written request and seven days' notice to compile them. I would encourage you to discuss your reasons for this within our sessions.

I am obliged to keep my notes for five years after our counselling contract has ended.

Email: I use encrypted email supplied by Tutanota. Their servers are hosted in Europe and abide by GDPR. Emails I send will be encrypted on my end but not when you receive them. If you would like to use end-to-end encryption when we communicate by email, please let me know (this will involve you using a password to open emails from me, unless you also hold a Tutanota account). Tutanota operate on a zero-knowledge basis, which means they do not hold the decryption keys and only I can access our communications. Email addresses are stored within my email account – please inform me of any concerns you may have about this. I do not share your email address with any third party. Please note, it is best to use email only for logistical purposes such as changing session times or payment notifications, and to avoid the inclusion of personal or sensitive information. You can read Tutanota’s privacy statement [here](#).

Phone: I store your initials (and not your full name) and your telephone number on a sim card on my mobile phone. This device could be stolen or lost. My phone is locked by password, but no method is 100% secure against unlocking. If you would like me to keep your contact details manually please let me know. I do not share your phone number with any third party.

Video: There is currently no verified completely secure video conferencing platform. I will send you a Zoom meeting link and password for our initial session and if we continue working together will set up a recurring meeting. Your meeting ID will be unique and the waiting room will be enabled to limit the possibility of interception.

I take the security of the data I hold about you very seriously and as such I take every effort to make sure it is kept secure.

You can ask me at any time to correct any mistakes there may be in the personal information I hold about you such as your name, email, phone number, emergency contacts, pronouns, etc.

You also have the right to request that I erase information about you, which I will do so to the furthest extent possible, allowing that I may need to retain some information about you to ensure that I am compliant with any legal requirements, or for the purposes of public safety or my own internal complaints processes. I keep minimal information about clients in order to carry out my work. I conduct regular audits of the data I collect and routinely delete emails, email addresses and text messages. Once counselling has ended your contact records will be kept for five years from the end of our contact with each other and are then securely destroyed. If you want me to delete your contact details sooner than this, please tell me.

If you would like to: access, correct, amend or delete any personal information I hold about you, please put the request in writing addressing it to hello@michelektherapy.com.

The Information shared in therapy is strictly confidential. The only time I will break confidentiality and share information about you, is if I believe you are at risk of harming yourself or others, and in compliance with the following acts: The Terrorism Act 2000; Drug Trafficking Act 1994, Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 or the Money Laundering Regulations 2007; Road Traffic Act 1991; the Children Act 1989; the Serious Crime Act 2007, and the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. I will endeavour to share my concerns with you prior to taking any action.

If you have any complaint about how I handle your personal data, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me by emailing to the contact details given below. I would welcome any suggestions for improving my data protection procedures. If you want to make a formal complaint about the way I have processed your personal information you can contact the ICO which is the statutory

body that oversees data protection law in the UK. For more information go to ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint.

WEBSITE VISITORS

Squarespace is a Data Processor for my site-visitors' data. This means that Squarespace will only process site-visitors' data following my instructions and on my behalf, as the Data Controller. Squarespace will not process my site-visitors' data for their own benefit. For more information about Squarespace's obligations as a data processor for my site-visitors' data, see their [Data Processing Addendum](#).

When someone visits my website, I use Squarespace.com and Google Analytics as third-party services to collect standard internet log information and details of visitor behaviour patterns. I do this to find out things such as the number of visitors to the various parts of the site. This information is only processed in a way that does not identify anyone.

I do not make, and do not allow Squarespace or Google to make, any attempt to find out the identities of those visiting my website. I use legitimate interests as my lawful basis for holding and using your personal information in this way when you visit my website. I use Google Analytics so that I can continually improve my service to you. To opt out of being tracked by Google Analytics across all websites, visit this link: <http://tools.google.com/dlpage/gaoptout>.

Like most websites Squarespace uses cookies to help the site work more efficiently. You will be given the option to choose which cookies to opt-in or out of when you visit the site. No user-specific data is collected by me or any third party.

PRIVACY POLICY UPDATES

I reserve the right to modify this privacy policy at any time. Changes and clarifications will take effect immediately upon their posting on the website. If I make material changes to this policy, I will notify clients that it has been updated.

Last updated: March 2024