Complaints Policy

Power Of Two Psychotherapy

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1. Purpose and scope

This policy explains how to complain about any aspect of my practice, and what I will do in response. It is published openly so that you can see how complaints are handled before you make contact.

It covers complaints from clients, former clients, prospective clients, and anyone else affected by the practice - for example a person making an enquiry on someone's behalf, or a referrer.

It covers anything you are unhappy about: the therapy itself, the way I have communicated with you, fees and cancellations, accessibility, the way I have handled your personal information, or my conduct.

Separate routes apply in three cases:

- Complaints about how I have handled your personal data may also be taken to the Information Commissioner's Office. See my Privacy Notice.
- Allegations of abuse or professional misconduct against me are handled as set out at section 11 of my Safeguarding Policy, and are notified to my insurer and to BACP.
- Anything that may amount to a criminal offence should be reported to the police. You do not need to raise it with me first.

2. Principles

- Complaining is legitimate. Raising a concern will not affect the quality of care you receive, and I will not end our work because you have complained.
- I would rather hear it. Most concerns are easier to resolve early and directly, and I will not treat it as a failure of the therapy if you raise one.
- I am a sole practitioner. There is no internal panel or second-tier review — I investigate my own practice, which is why the independent routes at section 5 matter.
- Proportionate response. Simple matters are dealt with simply; serious ones are documented, discussed in supervision, and where relevant referred on.
- Confidentiality still applies. A complaint is handled under the same confidentiality terms as the rest of our work.

3. Raising a concern informally

If something is not working, you are welcome to say so in a session, or by email or WhatsApp using the contact details on the front page of my website at https://www.poweroftwotherapy.com.

Most concerns can be resolved this way. If we resolve it between us, that is the end of the matter and no formal record is made beyond a note in your clinical record (where the issue is clinically relevant).

You do not have to raise a concern informally first. You may go straight to a formal complaint, or straight to BACP.

4. Making a formal complaint

Put your complaint in writing, by email or WhatsApp, using any of the contact routes on my website. If writing is difficult for you, tell me and we will agree another way - for example a phone call that I summarise in writing afterwards and send to you to check.

It helps if you can tell me what happened, when, and what you would like to happen now. You do not need to use any particular format.

What I will do:

Stage	**Timescale**
Acknowledge your complaint in writing	Within 7 days
Full written response	Within 28 days of acknowledgement
If I need longer	I will tell you why, and give you a new date

In responding I will set out what I understand the complaint to be, what I have found, whether I accept it in whole or in part, and what I propose to do. Where I have got something wrong I will say so plainly and apologise. Where I do not accept the complaint I will explain my reasoning.

I discuss complaints in clinical supervision. I may also seek advice from the BACP Ethics Helpline or from my professional liability insurer. Any complaint that could give rise to a claim is notified to my insurer immediately, and I will not admit liability or agree any settlement without their written consent - which may limit what I am able to say to you at that stage. I will tell you if that is the case.

I do not investigate allegations made against me where they concern abuse or serious misconduct. Those go to the routes at section 1.

5. Taking a concern to BACP

I am a registered member of BACP (membership no. 418519) and am subject to its Professional Conduct Procedure. You can raise a concern with BACP at any point. You do not have to raise it with me first, you do not have to wait for my response, and you do not have to be dissatisfied with it.

Who can raise a concern. Anyone currently receiving a therapeutic service from a BACP member, anyone who has received one within the last three years, a family member or professional representative acting for someone who is vulnerable, a family member of a deceased client, a current or former employer of a member, or a third party. If the events you are concerned about took place more than three years ago you can still submit a complaint form, but an independent panel will decide whether it is in the public interest for BACP to consider it.

Get help with counselling concerns. If you are unsure whether to complain or how to go about it, BACP runs a free, confidential telephone and email guidance service for members of the public. It is independent of me and you are welcome to use it before deciding anything.

What happens. All complaints are assessed by BACP's Case Assessment Team, which decides whether the complaint can proceed and by which route. A case manager then applies a threshold test - whether the complaint, if proved, would mean I had failed to meet BACP's professional standards, and whether it is frivolous or vexatious. BACP may ask for further information from either of us, including a preliminary response from me. Both of us are told the outcome.

If the complaint passes the threshold test, it may be dealt with by a letter of advice for minor or technical breaches, or referred to the Investigation and Assessment Committee - a panel of three independent people - which can resolve it by consensual disposal, impose an interim suspension, refer it to a disciplinary hearing or a practice review hearing, or dismiss it. Outcomes are BACP's decision, not mine, and I have no part in them beyond responding to what is put to me.

Appeals. If a complaint is closed at the threshold test, a complainant may appeal only where there is convincing new evidence that was not available at the time. There is no right of appeal for either party where a complaint is dealt with by letter of advice or by consensual disposal.

The full Professional Conduct Procedure and the complaint form are published at www.bacp.co.uk.

6. Other routes

Contact	**Details**
BACP (professional conduct, and Get Help service)	01455 883300 — www.bacp.co.uk
Information Commissioner's Office (data protection)	0303 123 1113 — ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint
Police (non-emergency)	101
Emergency services	999

7. Records

I keep a record of formal complaints, including what was raised, what I did, and the outcome. This is held securely and separately from your working notes, and retained for seven years from the conclusion of the complaint, in line with the record-keeping condition of my professional liability insurance.

I review complaints periodically to see whether my practice, contracting or policies need to change.

8. Anonymous and third-party complaints

I will consider a complaint made anonymously or by someone other than the client, but there are limits to what I can do. I cannot discuss a client's therapy with a third party without that client's consent, and I may not be able to respond substantively to an anonymous complaint. I will still record it and consider whether any change to my practice is needed.

9. Vexatious or abusive contact

I will respond to any genuine complaint, however critical. Where contact becomes abusive, threatening, or is repeated after a complaint has been fully answered and the independent routes at sections 5 and 6 explained, I may limit further correspondence to a single written channel and say so in writing.

10. Review

This policy is reviewed annually, and following any complaint, any material change in the scope of the practice, or any change in BACP guidance.

This policy describes my own procedures and is not legal advice.