



bacp

British Association for
Counselling & Psychotherapy

Scams:

A Guide for Counsellors

Scam:

A dishonest or fraudulent scheme designed to cheat the targeted individual

Scams are not a new phenomenon, but the same recent advances in technology that have made it easier for you to reach out to potential clients have also made it simpler for criminals to target you and your businesses.

Some scammers concentrate their efforts on specific professionals such as counsellors, carrying out detailed background research in order to appear more credible.

At BACP, we will never pass your contact details on to a third party without your permission.

If you advertise your counselling service on your own website, on an online directory or on social media, the contact details you publish are in the public domain and available to anyone with internet access. It's not just genuine potential clients and service providers who have access to your details – scammers can see them too.

Below are some example case studies, based on recent scams targeting counsellors, for you to look out for. We've also got some tips for you on avoiding scams, and advice on what to do if you're the victim of a scam.

“ I was phoned by someone claiming to be from the ‘Police and Fire Association’. They said that BACP was recommending therapists in the area and asked if I would like to place an advertisement in a directory for emergency services. **They asked for my bank details.** I found out that other counsellors in the area had had the same call. It turned out that **the company didn't exist** and had no association with the Police Service, the Fire Service or BACP. ”



Stock photo. Posed by model.



Scam-busting Tips

Take your time – resist pressure to make an immediate decision

Get the caller's details and call them back when you've had time to think about it

Overwhelmed by persuasive sales patter? It's OK to say “no, thank you”

“ I received a phone call today from someone who said they wanted to see me for a series of counselling sessions.



Something didn't seem quite right, but we agreed a price and the 'client' said I could send them an invoice at the conclusion of the four sessions we'd agreed on. I asked them to send me this information in writing and they said they'd email me. When I got the email it asked for **my bank account number** and sort code. ”



Stock photo. Posed by model.



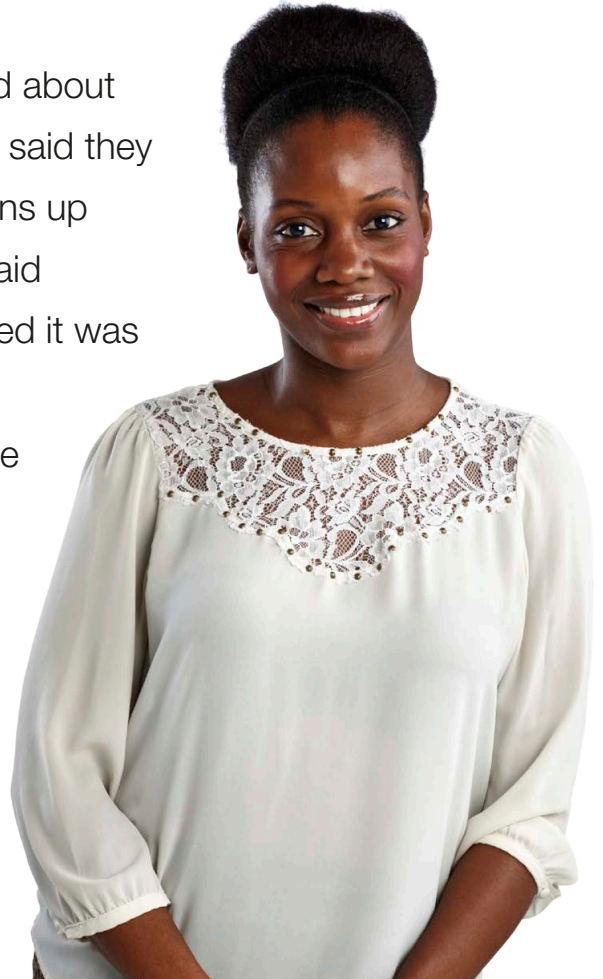
Scam-busting Tips

Trust your instincts if something doesn't feel right

Ask for information to be confirmed in writing – it's a great way to buy yourself some thinking time

Never give out your bank details unless you are certain you can trust the person

“ A potential client emailed me and asked about having a course of counselling. They said they would like to pay for the sessions up front and that the cheque would be paid by a third party. When the cheque arrived it was for a **much greater amount** than the counselling fees. The client asked me to bank the cheque and send them back a cheque for the excess, minus a generous admin fee. **The cheque turned out to be a fake.**”



Stock photo. Posed by model.



Scam-busting Tips

Remember the golden rule – if something seems too good to be true, it probably is

Read up on how to spot counterfeit cheques – they’re a scammer favourite

Never send money to someone you don’t know



Next steps...

If you've been targeted by a scam, or been a victim of fraud, report it to Action Fraud via their website, **www.actionfraud.police.uk**, or by calling 0300 123 2040.

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