



**WAVERLEY
ABBAY**

ANCIENT SPARK NEW FIRES

Research Participant Information Sheet

The following information is provided to help you give informed consent should you wish to take part in the research.

Research Question

How do counsellors experience and make sense of relational moments they perceive as transpersonal within the therapeutic encounter, and what phenomenological qualities characterise these experiences?

Researcher's name and contact details

Dorotea West

Email: dorotea.west@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk

Invitation

Have you as a Counsellor experienced moments in therapy where you felt unusually attuned to a client - experiences that were difficult to describe, perhaps profound, meaningful, or hard to explain, and that seemed to support the client's therapeutic change?

You are invited to take part in a qualitative research study exploring how Counsellors experience and make sense of relational moments they perceive as transpersonal within the therapeutic encounter. In this study, transpersonal moments refer to *'experiences in therapy where both client and therapist temporarily transcend ordinary ego boundaries and connect with a sense of shared humanity, unity, or spiritual presence'* (Clarkson, 2003)

What is the purpose of the study?

This research forms part of my studies on an MA in Professional Counselling. It aims to explore how Counsellors who have experienced 'transpersonal moment' (Clarkson, 2003:20) during therapeutic encounters make sense of these moments.

This study also explores the phenomenological qualities with which participants describe these experiences.

Understanding how counsellors make sense of *transpersonal moments* is important because these experiences can profoundly shape the therapeutic relationship, influencing meaning-making, presence, and the depth of connection within sessions. Investigating the phenomenological qualities of these moments provides insight into how counsellors interpret, integrate, and work with experiences that transcend ordinary ego-level processes, enriching both theory and practice in relational and transpersonal psychotherapy.

Why have I been approached?

You are being invited to take part in this research because you are a qualified (or trainee counsellor) with experience of therapeutic work with clients. My research explores counsellors' experiences of meaningful or hard-to-describe moments in therapy, and I am seeking participants who may have encountered such moments in their practice.

Do I have to take part?

You are warmly invited, though under no obligation, to take part. Should you decide to participate, your contribution will be sincerely appreciated.

If you choose to take part, you may also withdraw your consent for your data to be included in the study at any time up to 10 days after the interview. You do not need to give a reason for withdrawing.

What will happen if I take part?

During the interview, you will be asked to talk about your experiences of meaningful or hard-to-describe moments within therapeutic work. There are no right or wrong answers, and you are free to share only what you feel comfortable discussing.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded so that it can be transcribed for analysis. All recordings and transcripts will be kept confidential and stored securely.

After the interview, you will have the option to withdraw your data up to about 10 days.

What will it involve?

Participation involves one online interview of around 45-60 minutes via Microsoft Teams. Comfort breaks will be offered as required. You will need a quiet space and a device with internet access. No travel or preparation is required.

All data will be anonymised and pseudonyms will be used to protect participant confidentiality. The anonymised data will be analysed to explore how counsellors experience and make sense of relational moments they perceive as transpersonal within the therapeutic encounter, and what phenomenological qualities characterise these experiences.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Talking about your therapeutic work may bring up difficult or emotionally sensitive feelings, particularly if you choose to reflect on moments that were personally meaningful or challenging. You are free to pause, skip any question, or stop the interview at any time.

Although every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality, it cannot be guaranteed in absolute terms due to the nature of qualitative research. However, all identifying details will be removed from transcripts and reports.

If you become distressed during or after the interview, I will offer to pause or end the session. You will be encouraged to access your own supervisory, therapeutic, or professional support networks where appropriate. I can also signpost you to appropriate sources of support, such as:

- Your organisation's pastoral or wellbeing support service
- The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) therapist directory, where you can find a counsellor in your area
- Your GP, if you feel you need additional support
- Samaritans 24/7 online emotional support service – telephone number: 116 123 or contact online: www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there may be no direct personal benefit, many participants find it valuable to have the opportunity to reflect on and discuss aspects of their therapeutic work that are rarely spoken about.

Your contribution will help to increase understanding of counsellors' experiences of meaningful or hard-to-describe moments in therapy and may support the development of future research or training in this area.

Taking part may also offer a space to articulate and explore an experience that you may not often have the chance to discuss in depth.

If I agree to take part, can I change my mind?

Yes, you have the right to withdraw at any time. Participants can withdraw their participation in the research at any time and withdraw consent without giving reason or explanation. After about ten days of completing the interview, transcription and analysis of the interview data will begin. Whilst every effort will be taken to remove all data if consent is withdrawn at any point after, participants should be aware that it is usually impracticable to withdraw after in-depth analysis of the data and submission/publication of the research.

Will my data and personal information be kept anonymous and confidential?

Yes. All information you provide will be kept confidential and stored securely. Your name and any identifying details will be removed from the interview transcript, and a pseudonym will be used in all written materials, including the final dissertation.

The audio recording of your interview will be stored on a password-protected, encrypted device, and any paper notes will be kept in locked storage. Only the researcher and academic supervisor will have access to the data.

Once transcribed, the audio recording will be deleted. The anonymised transcript will be stored securely for a maximum of 18 months after submission of the dissertation, in line with university data-protection policies.

Confidentiality will only be broken if you disclose information that suggests a risk of harm to yourself or others, or if required by law. If this were to happen, the researcher would discuss it with you wherever possible.

What will happen to my data after I have taken part in the research?

All your data will be kept confidential and anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. All identifying details will be changed in any interview transcripts. Complete anonymity will also be maintained if any brief direct quotes from participants are used in the final MA dissertation or in future publication.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been reviewed and granted ethical approval by the Waverley Abbey College Research Ethics Committee.

How do I raise an issue or make a complaint if I am concerned?

If you wish to raise a concern or complaint, please make contact with me Dorotea West via dorotea.west@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk. You are also welcome to raise a concern or complaint with my research supervisor, [insert name] who can be contact via [insert WAC email address], or the MA Programme Leader Dr Martin Stokley via martin.stokley@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk.

You can also discuss any concerns or make a formal complaint with the Chairperson of the Waverley Abbey College Research Ethics Committee, Dr Martin Stokley, who can be contact via martin.stokley@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk. (For more information on the complaints procedures and policies, please contact Dr Martin Stokley).

What code of ethics or ethical framework does the researcher have to abide by?

I will abide by the BACP Ethical Framework (2018) and the Waverley Abbey College Research Ethics Policy and Procedures (a copy of the policy can be made available upon request).

What will happen to the data I provide?

Your data will be processed in accordance with Waverley Abbey College's relevant data policies and procedures. For more information, please see the Data Privacy Notice below.

You have the right to ask to see any information gathered on you by contacting me on [insert you WAC email address]. You also have the right to ask for information which you believe to be incorrect to be rectified. If you are concerned about the way your information is being handled, please email Waverley Abbey Colleges Data Protection Officer at simon.hawes@waverleyabbey.org. If you are still unhappy you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

In line with Waverley Abbey College policy, on completion of the course (or exit of the course), any raw data, such as, the audio recording [or other raw data] of the research will be securely destroyed. The transcripts of the interviews [or other transcripts] will be kept for a period of 18 months after the end of the course by the researcher and then securely destroyed.

Waverley Abbey College - Research Data Privacy Policy

Our contact details:

*Waverley Abbey Trust
Waverley Abbey House,
Waverley Lane,
Farnham,
Surrey,
GU9 8EP*

Phone Number: +44 (0)1252 784 700

E-mail: simon.hawes@waverleyabbey.org

How we store your information

All information you provide will be kept confidential and stored securely. Your name and any identifying details will be removed from the interview transcript, and a pseudonym will be used in all written materials, including the final dissertation.

The audio recording of your interview will be stored on a password-protected, encrypted device, and any paper notes will be kept in locked storage. Only the researcher and academic supervisor will have access to the data.

Once transcribed, the audio recording will be deleted. The anonymised transcript will be stored securely for a maximum of 18 months after submission of the dissertation, in line with university data-protection policies.

Confidentiality will only be broken if you disclose information that suggests a risk of harm to yourself or others, or if required by law. If this were to happen, the researcher would discuss it with you wherever possible.

Your data protection rights

Under data protection law, you have rights including:

Your right of access - You have the right to ask us for copies of your personal information.

Your right to rectification - You have the right to ask us to rectify information you think is inaccurate. You also have the right to ask us to complete information you think is incomplete.

Your right to erasure - You have the right to ask us to erase your personal information in certain circumstances.

Participants can withdraw their participation in the research at any time and withdraw their consent, and their data, without giving a reason or explanation. Approximately one week after the research interview, transcription and analysis of the data will begin. Whilst every effort will be taken to remove all data if consent is withdrawn at any point after the research interview, it

may be impracticable to withdraw all data after in-depth analysis of the data has commenced, and impractical to withdraw after submission/publication of the research.

Your right to restriction of processing - You have the right to ask us to restrict the processing of your information in certain circumstances.

Your right to object to processing - You have the the right to object to the processing of your personal data in certain circumstances.

Your right to data portability - You have the right to ask that we transfer the information you gave us to another organisation, or to you, in certain circumstances.

You are not required to pay any charge for exercising your rights. If you make a request, we have one month to respond to you.

Please contact us at [insert your Waverley email address and phone number] if you wish to make a request.

How to complain

You can raise a concern or complaint to the data protection officer at Waverley Abbey College via: E-mail: simon.hawes@waverleyabbey.org

You can also complain to the ICO if you are unhappy with how we have used your data.

The ICO's address:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Helpline number: 0303 123 1113

Who do I contact for further information or if I have questions?

If you require and further information or have questions, please contact me via dorotea.west@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk email address.

Thank you for taking time to consider taking part.

Participant's name:

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's name: Dorotea West

Researcher's signature: *Dorotea West*

Date: 04/04/2026