Connections

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The purpose of this AI Policy is to outline the use, limitations, and ethical considerations of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology within [Your Practice Name]. This policy ensures that any AI tools or applications used in the practice support the highest standards of professional counselling while prioritizing client privacy, confidentiality, and ethical care.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, associates, contractors, and clients of [Your Practice Name] who may engage with or be affected by AI technologies. The policy covers AI tools used for administrative functions, data analysis, communication, and any potential use in client care.

Policy Statement

At Connections we are committed to maintaining ethical standards in counselling and psychotherapy. While AI technologies may be used to enhance operational efficiency or service delivery, they will never replace the core human elements of empathy, understanding, and therapeutic relationship building. Any AI tools or technologies used will comply with legal, regulatory, and ethical standards and will be designed to support—rather than replace—human decision-making in the counselling process.

Use of AI in Connections

Administrative and Operational Functions:

- **Appointment Scheduling**: AI-powered tools may be used to assist with online booking and scheduling appointments, reducing administrative workload and providing clients with easier access to services.

- **Client Communication**: AI-based chatbots or virtual assistants may be used to answer routine queries, send reminders, or provide general information about the practice.
- **Data Management**: AI may be used to analyse non-sensitive, aggregated data (e.g., usage trends, appointment patterns) to help improve services or operational efficiency.

Therapeutic Use:

At Connections, AI tools will **not** be used to provide direct therapeutic interventions or replace face-to-face counselling sessions. Counselling will always be carried out by qualified human practitioners. However, AI tools may assist in:

- **Assessment Support**: AI-based questionnaires or forms may be used to gather pre-session information (e.g., mental health screening questionnaires) to help counsellors tailor their services.
- **Client Progress Tracking**: AI systems may be used to track and summarize client progress based on regular self-reports or client input, under strict data protection guidelines.

Ethical Considerations

Human-Centred Practice:

All counselling services at Connections are human-centred. AI technologies are used to enhance the service but not to replace the human judgment, empathy, and expertise that are fundamental to therapeutic practice.

Client Consent:

- Clients will be informed whenever AI technology is used in the management of their care or personal information. Clear, informed consent will be obtained before the use of any AI tools that directly impact client interactions.
- Clients have the right to opt out of the use of AI tools in their care and will be offered alternative, non-AI-driven options.

Non-Discrimination:

AI tools used in Connections will be vetted to ensure they do not perpetuate bias or discrimination. We are committed to using AI technologies that are fair, transparent, and unbiased in their operations.

Transparency:

Clients will be informed about the specific ways AI is used within the practice, particularly regarding data processing, communication, and any client-facing tools. This includes explaining how AI decisions are made and ensuring that AI recommendations do not replace professional clinical judgment.

Data Protection and Privacy

Data Collection:

AI tools that collect or process client data will only gather the minimum necessary information required to deliver services. All personal and sensitive data will be handled in accordance with data protection laws, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Confidentiality:

- AI systems used in Connections will follow strict confidentiality protocols. Client data processed by AI will be treated with the same level of confidentiality as any other client records.
- Data will only be accessible by authorized personnel within the practice and will be stored securely in compliance with data protection legislation.

Data Security:

We will take appropriate measures to ensure that AI tools and systems used within the practice are secure, including:

- Regular security assessments and updates to protect against data breaches or unauthorized access.
- Encryption of sensitive data processed by AI technologies.
- Compliance with industry best practices for data security and privacy protection.

Data Retention:

Any data processed by AI systems will be stored for only as long as necessary, in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Clients have the right to request the deletion or amendment of their personal data at any time, subject to certain legal or regulatory obligations.

Accountability

Connections takes full accountability for any AI tools used in its services. While AI may assist in certain tasks, the final responsibility for decision-making, client care, and data protection remains with human professionals at the practice. AI tools will not make decisions about client care without appropriate oversight from qualified practitioners.

Training and Oversight

Counsellors, therapists, and staff who interact with AI systems will receive appropriate training to ensure they understand how AI works, its limitations, and the ethical implications of its use. Regular reviews of AI tools will be conducted to ensure their safe and appropriate use.

Complaints and Feedback

Any client who has concerns about the use of AI technologies in their care can raise these concerns via Connections **Complaints Procedure**. Complaints will be handled promptly, and any feedback about AI use will be considered when reviewing policies and tools.

Review of AI Policy

This AI Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains in line with technological advancements, legal changes, and ethical standards. We are committed to continuous improvement in how AI is used to enhance, not replace, the therapeutic process.

Name: Privacy Policy

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