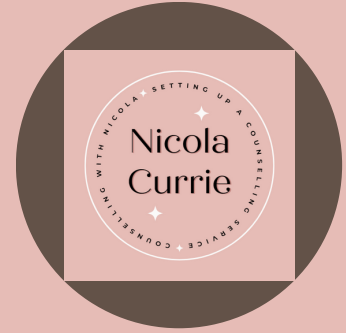


# SETTING UP YOUR PRIVATE PRACTICE

WITH NICOLA CURRIE



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## Creating your Policies - Workshop Handout

One of the things that can be tricky when Setting up your Private Practice is creating the Policies that are required. In this handout, I will explore the ten policies that I think are important for your Private Practice and hopefully give you the confidence to start creating them.

As someone who has set up three counselling services within my local community and my Private Practice from home, I am confident about creating policies and how to keep them simple but effective.

As everyone's Private Practice is different I can't create policies that suit everyone. What I can do is pose key questions that will make you reflect on what policies would work for your Private Practice.

The ten main policies are listed below. I will explore each one in more detail and give you pointers to get you thinking about your policies.

The main policies are -

- Data Protection
- Living Will
- Lone Working
- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding
- Risk Assessment
- Cancellation
- Social Media
- Complaints
- Contract

Let's take each one of these policies and explore them further.

### **DATA PROTECTION**

What are the key elements of the Data Protection Policy? To create this policy you need to think about the data you will be gathering and what you plan to do with it. Here are my five key points to consider:-

- What information do you plan to store?
- Why do you need to store this?
- How do you plan to store the information
- How will you ensure the confidentiality of the information?
- How do you plan to destroy the information when you are finished with it?

Once you have worked out the answers to these five key points you will be able to get started on your Data Protection Policy. You will also have to think about how you communicate this information to your clients, as they have a right to see any data you may have on them.

## **LIVING WILL**

Our Living Will sometimes known as Clinical Will is a policy that will set out what will happen should you become unwell suddenly or die in service. This policy will outline the processes required to communicate your absence to your clients.

The key things that I think you need to consider are:-

- Who will communicate to your clients about your death or ill health?
- What processes are in place for this?
- Who will cancel any Social Media platforms and cancel any Professional Memberships you may have?
- How will your case notes be destroyed
- What are the processes for letting any EAPs know your situation?

The Living Will policy can be tricky as we need to create external processes that are activated if you are not available.

## **LONE WORKING**

What are the key elements of the Lone Working Policy? In my mind, we need to consider these five key points:-

- How do you keep yourself safe whilst working alone?
- What will you do if you feel threatened?
- Who is your emergency contact?
- What if any, escape routes do you have?
- Is there a way to ensure you are not alone?

Once you have worked out the answers to these questions it should potentially be easy to get started creating your Lone Working Policy. It may be that you have to consider other things to ensure your safety whilst working alone. You can add anything else that is relevant to your Lone Working Policy.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

This policy is similar but slightly different to the Data Protection Policy. In this policy you need to communicate to your client: -

- What your confidentiality covers
- The limits to your confidentiality
- The legal requirements of confidentiality
- Your use of supervision
- What steps you would take should you feel the need to break your client's confidentiality.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

What are the things you should consider for your Safeguarding Policy? Here are some of the things I have in mine.

- Confidentiality - should I be considering breaking this
- Risk Assessment - is the person safe?
- Reporting Procedure - what is my process for this?
- Training and Support - do I need training or extra support
- Review and Monitoring of the situation

Your safeguarding policy should be there to guide, help and support you as you question whether the person is safe or needs extra support.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Key things to ensure the client's safety around risk are:-

- Safety around client's confidentiality
- Safety measures to minimise hazards
- Safety measures around Technology and Data Security
- Emergency Preparedness
- How often do you keep up to date with these processes

I would recommend that you do a risk assessment at least once a year of the above key points. That way if something happens to your client, you can evidence that you take risks seriously and have done as much as you can to prevent them.

## **CANCELLATION**

Some of the things to consider regarding your cancellation policy are:-

- Are you going to charge if a client cancels?
- How much notice would you like a client to give you if they cancel?
- How will you pursue payment?
- Will you have a different process for a DNA (no-show client)?
- How many times is acceptable for a client to cancel?

Everyone's cancellation policy is unique to their Private Practice. Make sure your cancellation policy fits with how you want to run your service.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Some key things to consider with your social media policy might be

- How you plan to manage your privacy settings
- Managing your profile online
- How you communicate online
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries with people
- Your motivation for posting

There are many more things to consider in your social media policy but these key points will get you started.

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

Hopefully, we never need this policy but just in case we do it is good to have your complaints policy created. Here are things to consider.

- Definition of what a complaint might look like
- How clients should make a complaint
- What your Complaint Handling Process is
- How you plan to resolve complaints
- Your appeals process

## **CONTRACT**

If you can create all the above policies first your contract should write itself. Here are some key components of your contract:-

- Describe your modality of therapy
- Describe how your sessions work
- Fees
- Cancellation
- Data Protection
- Confidentiality
- Supervision
- How to complain

There are other components to your contract but these key factors will get you up and running with your contract quickly.

So there you are a quick overview of the policies that I think you need to create with some key factors to get you started on reflecting on your policies.

I hope you have found this handout useful! Follow these tips and I promise you will get your Policies for your Private Practice off the ground quickly and efficiently. To learn more about each of these policies, pop over and purchase my Practice Ready Resource

Package where these will be covered in depth. There are downloadable templates of my policies for you to use in my full Practice Ready Resource Package.

**As always though I am here to help!**

**Nicola Currie**  
**[www.nicolacurrie.com](http://www.nicolacurrie.com)**  
**[hello@nicolacurrie](mailto:hello@nicolacurrie)**

