



Scotland's
Professional Body
for Counselling &
Psychotherapy

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Client/Counsellor Relationships Post Counselling

Below is the policy position of COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) on the ethics of client/counsellor relationships following the end of counselling or psychotherapy.

In COSCA's view:

- it is the responsibility of counsellors and psychotherapists not to do harm to their clients. There are no time limits to this responsibility. The harm covered by this policy is the result of a previous client/counsellor relationship.
- counsellors and psychotherapists need to be mindful that they maintain importance in clients' lives beyond when the counselling ends.
- counsellors and psychotherapists should take steps to maintain reasonable and appropriate boundaries after the ending of the counselling/psychotherapy relationship, especially in relation to the development of intimate relationships with former clients.

Relevant literature on the above includes:

Syme, Gabriel, *Dual Relationships in Counselling and Psychotherapy: Exploring the Limits*, Sage, 2003

Rutter, Peter, *Sex in the Forbidden Zone: When Men in Power – Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers and Others – Betray Women's Trust*, 1997.

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