



Sudden client death

If you are watching this because a client has died – please accept my warm wishes and know that I understand some of what you feel.

This video is based on my own experiences and those of colleagues and I hope will offer you support during a shocking and traumatic time.

I focus on supporting you, the therapist, from the first moments to tips for later. This video is alongside your usual Supervision support.

Make notes

- As soon as you are able, make notes on your memories of *your* last experiences of your client
- A few bullet points
- Keep anonymised

Self-care

- It can be difficult to know what to say to those close to us who may notice a change in us. Close friends and family are aware of the nature of our work and confidentiality.
- I say “I have had a shock and need to some time to get used to it”
- Consider an additional supervision conversation, and you can wait to your scheduled session. How we are impacted varies. Do what is right for you.
- If you need to postpone clients, “I’ve had a bereavement. I will contact you next week to rearrange.” And you can ask your trusted colleague to do this.

Legal obligations

- The Data Protection Act 2018.
 - In legal terms, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act no longer applies to identifiable data that relate to a person once they have died. However any duty of confidence established prior to death does extend beyond death.
- We may need to discuss with our Supervisor and consider taking specialist legal advice whether we contact the coroner.
 - Perhaps no one else knew our client was seeing a counsellor
- We might be contacted by the Coroner as a witness. Be mindful of our obligation to client confidentiality and the legal process of an inquest.
 - I have been called as a witness – if it would help and you would like to talk, please get in touch.
- Barbara Mitchels and Tim Bond are my go-to authors for legal information

Notes

Be aware of language – I think ‘committed suicide’ can sound like the victim has committed a crime by taking their own life.

I think ‘died by suicide’ is more sensitive, especially to family and friends

Support:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/suicide/>

Papyrus supports under 35’s and their information for professionals is relevant for all ages:

<https://papyrus-uk.org/im-a-professional/>

A thorough and thoughtful support resource, I found this page helpful with my own grief:

<https://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/helping-someone-else/>

If you would like to talk, email alison@abundanttherapycoaching.co.uk to arrange a time or to have an email conversation

I will respond to your email as soon as possible, and I do not offer an emergency service – the websites on the previous page are a good source of out-of-hours support

Take good care of yourself, Alison

Alison Moore

www.abundanttherapycoaching.co.uk