



Talking is Mental CIC – Activity Group Code of Conduct

Purpose

Talking is Mental CIC exists to promote mental and physical wellbeing, connection and inclusion through community activities. This Code of Conduct applies to **adult participants (18+)**, volunteers, facilitators, and practitioners involved in our activity groups, including **football, walking, writing, art, mindfulness and theatre**.

All Talking is Mental CIC activity groups are **adult-only spaces** designed to support wellbeing in a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

Our Values

- **Respect** – We treat everyone with dignity and kindness.
- **Inclusion** – Everyone is welcome regardless of background, identity or ability.
- **Safety** – Physical, emotional and psychological safety come first.
- **Wellbeing** – We look after ourselves and each other.
- **Community** – We support, listen and learn together.

Expected Behaviour (All Groups)

All participants are expected to:

- Treat others with **respect, empathy and patience**.
- Listen without interrupting, judging or dismissing others' experiences.
- Use **inclusive, non-discriminatory language**.
- Respect personal boundaries, consent and differing comfort levels.
- Follow instructions given by facilitators or group leaders.
- Take responsibility for your own wellbeing and step back if needed.
- Maintain **confidentiality** – what is shared in the group stays in the group, unless there is a safeguarding concern.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Talking is Mental has a zero tolerance policy. The following will not be tolerated:

- Bullying, harassment, intimidation or abuse (verbal, physical or online).

- Discrimination or hate speech related to race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, age or any other protected characteristic.
- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol during activities.
- Disruptive behaviour that prevents others from participating safely.

Group-Specific Expectations

Football Groups

- Play fairly and safely at all times.
- No aggressive tackling, verbal abuse or blaming others.
- Respect referees, facilitators and fellow players.
- Encourage participation and teamwork over competition.
- Wear weather appropriate clothing.

Walking Groups

- Walk at a pace agreed by the group and look out for one another.
- Inform a facilitator if you need to leave early or are struggling.
- Respect public spaces, nature and local communities.
- Wear weather appropriate clothing.

Writing Groups

- Respect different writing styles, voices and lived experiences.
- Offer feedback only when invited, and keep it constructive.
- Do not share others' work outside the group without permission.
- Avoid sharing material that could be disturbing, triggering or harmful to others.
- If you do share something that include sensitive material, please make others aware by including the term “**trigger warning (TW)**” at the start.

Art Groups

- Respect creative expression and personal meaning in others' work.
- Use materials safely and responsibly.
- Clean shared spaces and equipment after use.

Mindfulness Groups

- Respect quiet, reflection and silence where requested.
- Avoid interrupting or distracting others during practices.
- Participate at your own comfort level – there is no pressure to share.

Theatre Groups

- Create a supportive environment for expression and vulnerability.
- Respect boundaries around touch, movement and personal stories.
- Commit to group agreements around rehearsal, timekeeping and collaboration.

Respect & Dignity

Respect is central to everything we do at Talking is Mental CIC. All participants, facilitators and volunteers have the right to be treated with dignity, fairness and consideration.

We expect everyone to:

- Treat others with kindness, courtesy and compassion.
- Respect differences in background, identity, culture, beliefs, abilities and lived experience.
- Listen actively and allow others to speak without interruption.
- Acknowledge that everyone's mental health journey is personal and valid.
- Respect personal boundaries, including emotional and physical space.

Disrespectful behaviour, even if unintended, may be challenged and addressed to maintain a safe and supportive environment for all.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Talking is Mental CIC operates a **zero tolerance policy** towards behaviour that threatens the safety, dignity or wellbeing of others.

This means we will not tolerate:

- Abuse, violence, aggression or threatening behaviour.
- Bullying, harassment, disrespect or intimidation in any form.
- Discrimination, hate speech or prejudice based on any protected characteristic.
- Sexual harassment or unwanted sexualised behaviour.
- Persistent disruptive behaviour after being asked to stop.
- Behaviour that undermines the emotional safety of the group.

Any breach of this policy may result in **immediate action**, including removal from a session or exclusion from future activities, without prior warning where necessary.

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing

Talking is Mental CIC recognises that participants may attend activities while experiencing a range of mental health challenges. Our groups are not a substitute for clinical or crisis services, but they aim to offer **supportive, wellbeing-focused spaces**.

Participants are encouraged to:

- Engage at a level that feels safe and manageable for them.

- Take breaks, step outside, or leave a session if they feel overwhelmed.
- Communicate with facilitators if they need additional support during an activity.
- Respect that others may be managing mental health challenges that are not visible.

All participants agree to:

- Avoid pressuring others to share personal experiences.
- Respond with empathy, not advice-giving, unless explicitly invited.
- Use non-stigmatising language when talking about mental health.

Facilitators will:

- Foster an emotionally safe and non-judgemental environment.
- Signpost participants to external mental health or crisis support services where appropriate.
- Act in line with safeguarding procedures if there is concern about immediate risk of harm.

If you are in immediate distress or crisis, please seek urgent help from emergency services or an appropriate crisis support organisation.

Mental Health Support Signposting

If you or someone else needs additional support outside of Talking is Mental CIC sessions, the following services are available:

- **NHS 24 Mental Health Services** – 24/7 urgent mental health support.
 - Call **111**
 - If you are already under the care of mental health services, you may be given a local crisis number.
- **Breathing Space** – Free, confidential support for anyone feeling low, anxious or overwhelmed.
 - Call **0800 83 85 87** (24/7)
 - Website: breathingspace.scot
- **Samaritans** – 24/7 listening support for anyone in distress.
 - Call **116 123**
 - Website: samaritans.org
- **Shout** – 24/7 text support for anyone struggling to cope.
 - Text **SHOUT** to **85258**
 - Website: giveusashout.org
- **Mind (Scotland)** – Mental health information and support.
 - Website: mind.org.uk/scotland
- **Emergency Services** – If there is an immediate risk of harm:
 - Call **999** or go to A&E

Participants are encouraged to seek professional help when needed. Facilitators may also signpost to appropriate services where concerns arise.

Safeguarding & Wellbeing

- Talking is Mental CIC works with **adults aged 18 and over only**.
- We are committed to safeguarding adults at risk and promoting emotional and psychological safety.
- If you are concerned about your own wellbeing or someone else's, please speak to a facilitator or contact the organisation directly.
- Facilitators may break confidentiality if there is a risk of harm, provided they follow safeguarding procedures and relevant legislation.

Social Media & Photography

- Photos or videos may only be taken with **clear consent**.
- Do not post images or personal information about others without permission.
- Respect that some participants may not wish to be photographed.

Reporting Concerns & Incidents

Talking is Mental CIC takes all concerns seriously and encourages participants to speak up if something does not feel right.

How to Report

- If you feel safe to do so, speak directly to a **facilitator or group leader** during or after the session.
- You may report concerns privately, in person, by email to info@talkingismental.co.uk, or through any official Talking is Mental CIC contact method.
- Reports can be made about behaviour you experience or witness.

What Will Happen Next

- All reports will be handled **confidentially, respectfully and without judgement**.
- Facilitators will listen, record concerns where appropriate, and explain next steps.
- Incidents will be reviewed in line with Talking is Mental CIC safeguarding, adult protection and zero tolerance policies.
- Where necessary, concerns may be escalated to senior staff, safeguarding leads or external agencies.

Protection from Reprisal

- No one will be disadvantaged, excluded or treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern.
- Retaliation or intimidation against someone who reports an issue will not be tolerated.

If you are unsure whether something should be reported, we encourage you to **share your concern anyway**.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If this Code of Conduct is breached:

- A facilitator may have a conversation with the individual.
- A warning may be issued.
- The individual may be asked to leave a session or, in serious cases, be excluded from future activities.

All incidents will be handled fairly, confidentially and in line with Talking is Mental CIC policies.

Agreement

By attending or participating in any Talking is Mental CIC activity, you agree to follow this Code of Conduct and contribute to a safe, supportive and respectful community.

Combating Loneliness, Building Community.