

Catherine Ashby

COUNSELLING

How the identity of this practice works, and how to use it so that everything looks like the same practice.

For Catherine Ashby, and for anybody asked to make something for the practice: a designer, a printer, a sign-maker, a web developer. Sufficient on its own; the Practice Fundamentals explains why.

Sample practice. Catherine Ashby is not a real person; every fact here is illustrative and marked, so the format can be judged. Nothing in this document is a claim about any practitioner.

Prepared by Alexander Watson Studio · Professional Practice Identity · Linen foundation
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Thirteen short sections. Most people need three of them.

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IF YOU ARE

The practitioner

Read 03, 10 and 15. Keep the rest for when somebody asks.

A printer

07, 13 and 14. The files are in 03-wordmark and 05-applications.

A web developer

04, 07, 08, 09 and 14, with tokens.css and the woff2 fonts.

A designer making something new

All of it, and the Practice Fundamentals beside it.

THE ONE RULE

Nothing is added. No second accent, no third typeface, no drawn symbol, no decorative border. If something seems to be missing, the answer is space, not another element. An identity this restrained stays recognisable precisely because so little is allowed to vary.

A steady, practical counsellor for adults who have been coping well for a long time and are tired of it.

The practice treats being capable as the presenting problem rather than a sign that nothing is wrong. Most of her clients are the person other people lean on. The practice is organised so that they do not have to perform competence to get through the door: no prepared account required, practical facts published, the first conversation short and low-stakes.

HOW SOMEONE SHOULD FEEL

Someone reading the page should feel that this person is unflustered, has done this many times, and will not need to be looked after.

THE FOUR MESSAGES THE IDENTITY CARRIES

Being capable is allowed to be the problem

The practice is for the person other people rely on. That is named plainly, because it is the thing most of her clients have never heard said.

You don't need to arrive with it worked out

No prepared account, no form asking what the issue is. "I'm not sure" is a complete first sentence.

The practical facts, first

Fee, session length, days and location are on the first screen and the first line of every profile, before any feeling is asked for.

A short conversation before anything is decided

Twenty minutes, by telephone or video, so you can hear how she works and decide. It is not an assessment.

HOW THE IDENTITY REFLECTS THE PRACTITIONER

The identity is built from the character, not the modality. Nothing in the wordmark, the colours or the type says "integrative" or "person-centred", and nothing would need to change if the training changed.

Steadiness is carried by the typography: a classical serif for the name, set in sentence case rather than capitals, because capitals announce and this practice does not. The grotesque for everything practical, because facts should look like facts.

Plain dealing is carried by the structure of every application: the practical line comes first on the card, the profile and the posts. The identity makes it hard to hide the fee.

The dryness is carried by restraint. One accent colour, used in one place (the thread). No illustration, no botanical motif, no stock warmth. The warmth is in the paper tones and the type, not in ornament.

The thread is the one gesture: a short line in terracotta under the name. It is the idea of something held steady, and it is small on purpose.

The full reasoning, and the facts it rests on, are in the Practice Fundamentals.

The name, set well. That is the logo.

Catherine Ashby

COUNSELLING

The primary wordmark. Name in Source Serif 4; descriptor in Hanken Grotesk.

THE GRAMMAR, FIXED

The name is set in sentence case, never in capitals. Capitals announce; this practice does not.

The descriptor is one or two words in letterspaced capitals.

Names longer than sixteen characters break onto two lines, first name above surname.

The thread is one quarter of the descriptor's width, set beneath the name, in the accent colour.

Nothing else is added: no symbol, no frame, no second line of text.

WHY THIS AND NOT SOMETHING ELSE

People find a therapist by name. A symbol has to be learned; a name set consistently is recognised the second time it is seen, on a directory, a card or an email. The monogram exists for the places a name will not fit, and it is built from the name rather than designed beside it.

THE MONOGRAM

The initials of the first two significant words, in the serif, on a disc of the accent colour, with the thread beneath. Derived, not chosen, so that it always agrees with the wordmark.

Five configurations, and when each one is used.

Catherine Ashby

COUNSELLING

Primary. Letterhead, the website header, the card front, anything wider than it is tall.

Catherine Ashby

COUNSELLING

Stacked. Centred, for narrow or square spaces: a sign, a directory banner, a social image.

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COUNSELLING

Reversed. For the card back, a dark band on the website, a slide.

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COUNSELLING

Mono. One colour, for forms, embossing, embroidery and anywhere the accent cannot be reproduced.



The monogram. Profile images, favicons, the back of a card, the corner of a document. Accent disc by default; ink on pale pages where accent would be too loud; outlined on dark grounds. Never used where the full name would fit.

Every file is supplied as SVG with the type converted to outlines, so it needs no font installed, and as PNG for places that will not take an SVG. 7 files: linen-sample-primary.svg · linen-sample-stacked.svg · linen-sample-mono.svg · linen-sample-reversed.svg · linen-sample-mark.svg · linen-sample-mark-on-ink.svg · linen-sample-mark-outline.svg.

Room around it, a minimum size, and eight things not to do.

CLEAR SPACE

Keep a margin around the wordmark equal to the cap height of the name on every side. Nothing else sits inside it: no text, no photograph edge, no rule.

MINIMUM SIZE

Primary, print	40 mm wide
Primary, screen	160 px wide
Stacked	32 mm · 128 px
The monogram	8 mm · 32 px

Below these the descriptor stops being legible. Use the monogram instead of shrinking the wordmark.

DO NOT

Set the name in capitals, bold, or italic

Change the typeface, even to a similar serif

Recolour the name; it is walnut, or chalk when reversed

Put the thread in any colour but the accent, or make it longer

Add a symbol, an icon, a leaf, a circle or a frame

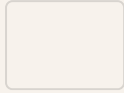
Stretch, condense, outline or add a shadow

Place it on a photograph or a patterned ground

Redraw the monogram with different initials or a different disc

If a supplier asks for something not covered here, the answer is usually one of the files at a different size on one of the grounds. If it is not, ask the studio before anything is made; a new application is built from the same tokens and quoted on its own.

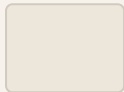
Five colours. Four of them are paper and ink; one is the thread.



Chalk

#F7F2EC · RGB 247 242 236 · CMYK 0 2 4 3

The page. Cards, documents, the website ground.



Linen

#EDE7DB · RGB 237 231 219 · CMYK 0 3 8 7

A quieter page: one band, a recess, the back of a card.



Walnut

#3F3029 · RGB 63 48 41 · CMYK 0 24 35 75

All primary type, and the one dark ground.



Slate

#38475A · RGB 56 71 90 · CMYK 38 21 0 65

Secondary type and hairlines on chalk. Never a ground.



Terracotta

#A95539 · RGB 169 85 57 · CMYK 0 50 66 34

The thread and the monogram disc, and nothing else.

HOW THE COLOUR BEHAVES

Most of any page is chalk. Linen is used for one quieter area at a time: a band, a card back, a recess. Walnut is every word and the one dark ground. Slate is for what should recede: secondary lines, hairlines, labels.

The accent appears in exactly two places: the thread under the name, and the disc of the monogram. It is never a button, a heading, a background or a border. Kept that scarce, it does its job of making the page feel owned by one person.

CONTRAST, MEASURED (WCAG 2.2)

walnut on chalk	11.32:1 · AAA for all text
walnut on linen	10.24:1 · AAA for all text
slate on chalk	8.51:1 · AAA for all text
chalk on walnut	11.32:1 · AAA for all text
chalk on terracotta	4.66:1 · AA for all text; AAA for large text
walnut on terracotta	2.43:1 · below 3:1 — decorative use only

AA is 4.5:1 for ordinary text and 3:1 for large text (18 pt, or 14 pt bold) and graphics; AAA is 7:1. Figures are computed from the hex values above. CMYK is a conversion for guidance; ask the printer to match the hex on their stock and send a proof.

The other options in the Linen foundation (ochre and dusk rose) are not part of this identity. One practice, one choice.

A serif for the name and for meaning. A grotesque for facts.

Aa

SOURCE SERIF 4

Names, headings, pulled sentences. Regular weight; medium for a heading that needs lifting on a dark ground. Never bold. Sentence case throughout.

Aa

HANKEN GROTESK

Everything else: facts, body text, labels, forms. Regular for reading, medium for emphasis, semibold for labels in letterspaced capitals only.

THE SCALE, PRINT

Name · display

Catherine Ashby

Heading · display · 18pt

Being capable is allowed to be the problem

Subheading · display · 12.5pt

Counselling for adults in Stockport and online.

Body · text · 10.5pt / 16pt

Counselling for adults in Stockport and online. Sessions are weekly and last fifty minutes. We begin with a short conversation to see whether we might work well together.

Label · text

FEE · WHERE · AVAILABILITY

Caption · text · 8pt

Sessions are weekly and last fifty minutes.

On screen, multiply by 1.33 (10.5pt → 14px; body text on a website is 17px/1.6). Line length stays between 55 and 70 characters. Both typefaces are published under the SIL Open Font Licence: free to install, embed and hand on.

Generous margins, one column where possible, facts first.

SPACING

A base unit of 4 mm in print and 8 px on screen; every gap is a multiple of it.

Margins are wide: 18–20 mm on A4, 10 mm on a card, 24 px minimum on a phone.

Space between sections is at least twice the space inside them, so the structure reads without rules.

LAYOUT

The practical facts come first: fee, length, days, where. Then the human part. On every application.

One column for reading, two for comparing. Never three on a page smaller than A4.

Text is left-aligned. Centred text is for the stacked wordmark and a room sign, nothing else.

Photographs sit in a plain rectangle with square corners. No circles except the monogram, no rounded frames.

Hairlines are 0.25 mm in slate at 45% opacity. They separate; they never decorate.

THE THREAD

One fine line in the accent colour: under the name in the wordmark, inside the monogram, and as the divider at the top of a document or beneath a heading. It is 0.5 mm thick in print and 2 px on screen, and short. It is the only ornament in the identity, which is why it is noticed.

Where it goes: once per surface, at most. A card front has one (in the wordmark). A letter has one (under the header). A post has one. If a layout seems to want two, remove one.

Direct, settled, lightly dry. Short sentences that say one thing. Facts set as facts.

HABITS

Lead with the practical: fee, length, days, where. Then the human part.

Describe situations, not conditions. "When the way you cope stops working" rather than a list of diagnoses.

Use "I" and "you". Never "clients" or "individuals" on the page.

Say what won't happen as readily as what will.

One idea per sentence. No stacked adjectives.

SOUNDS LIKE THIS

Most people don't arrive with a reason. Everything is fine, and something isn't.

Sessions are fifty minutes, weekly, at the same time. I'll tell you if I think I'm not the right person.

You don't have to explain yourself well. That is partly what the sessions are for.

AVOID

"Safe space", "journey", "holistic", "empower"

Promises of outcomes, or language implying a cure

Rhetorical questions aimed at the reader's feelings

Exclamation marks, and warmth signalled by punctuation

THE PRACTICE AT THREE LENGTHS

One line

Counselling for adults in Stockport and online.

Three lines

Counselling for adults in Stockport and online. Sessions are weekly and last fifty minutes. We begin with a short conversation to see whether we might work well together.

A paragraph

I am a counsellor working with adults in Stockport and online. People usually come when something that used to work has stopped working: a way of coping, a relationship, a job that was fine until it wasn't. I don't need you to arrive with it worked out. Sessions are weekly and last fifty minutes, and we begin with a short conversation to see whether we might work well together.

The full voice, with the reasoning, is in the Practice Fundamentals. A quick test for any new sentence: would Catherine say it out loud to someone in the room? If not, it does not go on the page.

One good photograph, taken to a direction, used everywhere.

DIRECTION

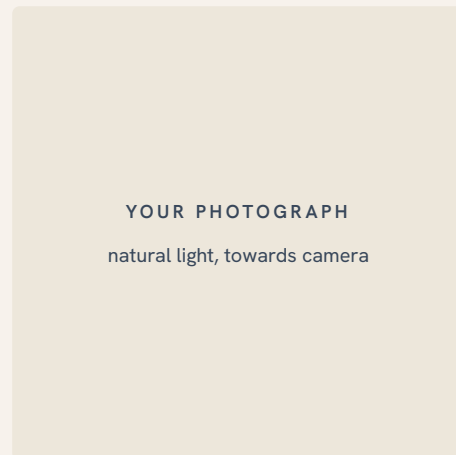
Natural daylight, towards a window, no flash.
Plain background in a chalk or linen tone: a wall, a curtain, a door. Eye contact with the camera, expression at rest rather than smiling for it. Shoulders square or slightly turned. Clothing in one plain mid or dark tone; no pattern, no logos, no white.

CROP

Head and shoulders for the profile image, cropped square with the eyes a third of the way down. A second, looser frame for the website and the directory banner if one is needed.

AVOID

Stock imagery of any kind. Plants, stones, candles, clasped hands. Heavy retouching. Black and white, which reads as a different practice.



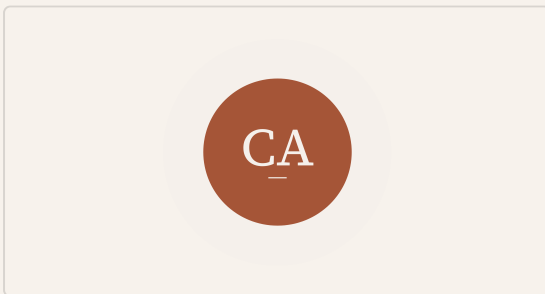
The frame the identity leaves for it: square, eyes a third of the way down.

Photography direction is included; a photographer is not. If you are having a photograph taken, give the photographer this page. One session, two frames (tight and loose), supplied as full-size JPEG, in colour. The studio crops and places it. Finding or booking a photographer is quoted separately.

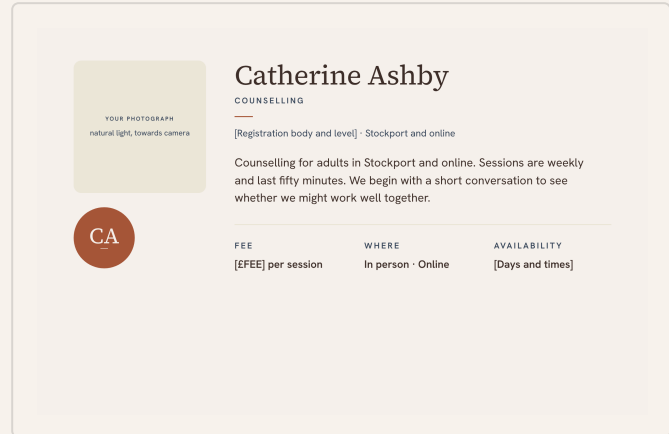
The directory profile and Instagram, which is where most people first see a practitioner.



Directory profile image. The monogram on the page colour, 1200 px square, for Counselling Directory, Psychology Today, BACP and similar where a photograph is not wanted or as the secondary image. Your photograph, cropped to the direction, is the primary image.

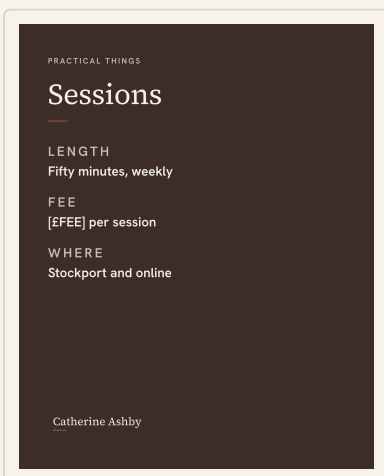


Instagram profile. The same monogram, which survives the circular crop.



The profile, laid out generically. Directories control their own page design; the identity supplies what goes into it: the image, the one-line headline, the three-line opening, and the practical facts in the order fee, where, availability. Copy the text from 01-practice-fundamentals, page 2.

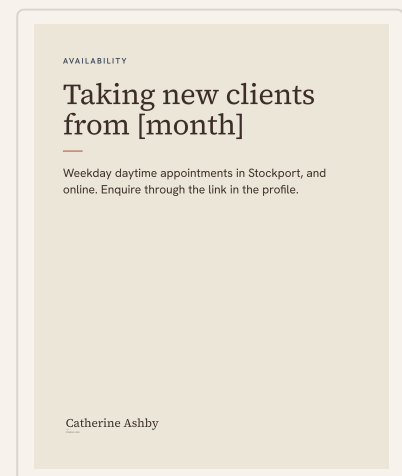
THREE POST FRAMES



Practical things: the facts.



A question people ask, answered in a line or two.

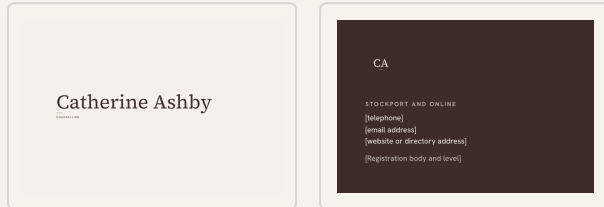


Availability, stated plainly.

Frames carry information, never inspirational quotations. You retype the words in the HTML source (or send them to the studio); the frame does the rest. Posted at 1080 × 1350.

13 · APPLICATIONS: PRINT AND CORRESPONDENCE

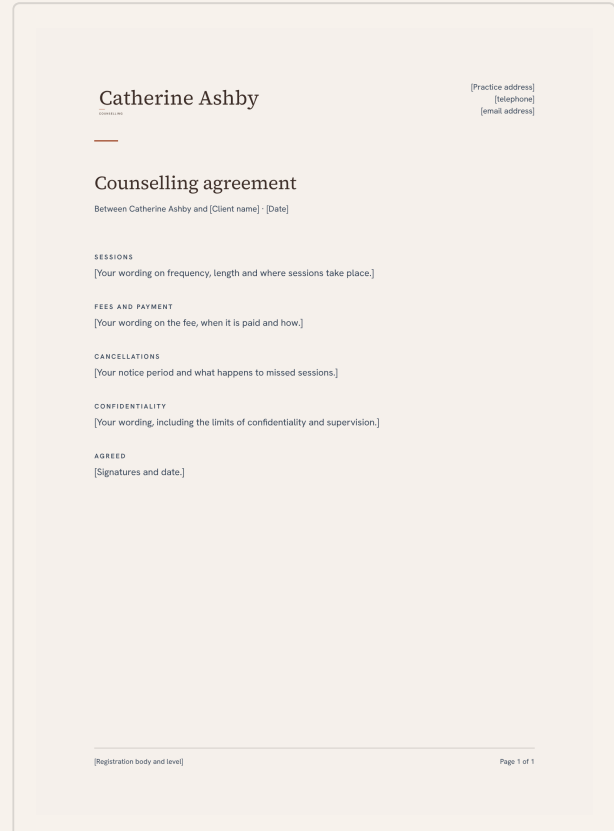
The card someone is handed, and the paperwork they sign, look like the same practice.



Business card, 85 × 55 mm. Front: the primary wordmark. Back: the monogram and the practical details. Supplied as a PDF with 3 mm bleed. Uncoated 350 gsm stock in a natural white; no lamination, no rounded corners.



Email signature. HTML for Gmail, Outlook and Apple Mail, and a PNG fallback. Name, descriptor, the practical line, registration. No image of a handwritten signature, no banners.



A4 letterhead and agreement template. Header with the primary wordmark; the practice details top right; body in Hanken Grotesk 10pt. Use it for the counselling agreement, letters and invoices. Supplied as HTML (prints to PDF from any browser), PDF, and an editable Word document with the header and styles set up.

What to send, and what to ask for.

PRINTER

Send the PDF from 05-applications/_exports (it has 3 mm bleed and the trim marked), and the colour specification from 04-colour-and-type.

Ask for uncoated 350 gsm stock in a natural white; no lamination, no rounded corners; a printed proof before the run; the hex matched on their stock rather than the CMYK figures taken literally.

Decline lamination, spot varnish, foil, and any offer to "tidy up" the artwork.

DESIGNER

Send this guide, the Practice Fundamentals, the SVG wordmarks and tokens.css.

Ask for anything new to be built from the colours, the typefaces and the files in this folder, following section 09. Send them section 06 before they start, not after.

Decline a new symbol, a gradient, a third typeface, or a "refresh". If the practice has changed, the Fundamentals changes first and the studio can advise.

WEB DEVELOPER

Send tokens.css, the woff2 fonts with their licences, the SVG wordmarks, and sections 07 to 09.

Ask for the fonts self-hosted, body text at 17 px / 1.6, line length 55-70 characters, the accents used as section 07 says, and WCAG 2.2 AA throughout.

Decline icon packs, stock photography, animated backgrounds and a cookie banner for analytics nobody reads.

THE SHORT VERSION, FOR ANY SUPPLIER

Two typefaces, five colours, five files, one thread. Nothing added. If in doubt, more space.

Everything in one folder, named and ordered.

01-practice-fundamentals

The practice written down, approved by you.
Read it again when something changes.

02-identity-guide

This document, as HTML and PDF.

03-wordmark

Primary, stacked, reversed, mono and the monogram, as SVG (outlined) and PNG.

04-colour-and-type

colour-specification.txt · tokens.css · the typefaces with their licences.

05-applications

Directory profile image and layout, Instagram profile and three post frames, business card, letterhead (HTML, PDF and Word), email signature: editable sources and finished exports.

CHANGING SOMETHING

A fact: fee, days, address, availability

Edit the source file, or send it to the studio. Up to three straightforward text changes in the first year are included.

The descriptor, the town, the accent

These are set once at the start. Changing one afterwards means re-issuing the wordmark and the applications; ask for a quote.

A new application

A leaflet, a sign, a slide template, a second card: built from the same tokens and quoted on its own.

A website

The identity is built so that a website follows from it. Ask the studio about adding one.

OWNERSHIP

DRAFT, REQUIRES UK LEGAL REVIEW. The wordmark set in your name, the documents written for your practice and every file in this folder are yours to use for your practice for as long as you practise, including by handing them to another designer, printer or developer. The studio keeps the underlying foundation and templates (the typeface pairing, the palette, the layouts and the production method) and uses them for other practices in their own names; your identity is personalised, not exclusive.

One consolidated round of corrections after the first issue. Corrections to facts are never counted. Ten working days from a complete discovery, if replies arrive promptly. Photography direction is included. A photographer, or arranging one, is quoted separately. Questions: hello@alexanderwatson.co.uk.