

## **Online Counselling information for Clients**

### Online counselling

Online counselling therapy is a way for you to engage in counselling in a different way to face to face counselling. This allows you to choose a different method of accessing therapy which may be more suitable for your needs.

Every effort is made to provide a safe and secure environment for your online therapy with encryption software to protect your confidentiality and security.

### How it works?

#### Zoom Counselling

Zoom is a way for you to see your counsellor face to face whilst engaging in therapy. I will send you an email with a secure link to our session the day before our agreed session time. The session will last 50 minutes. It is encrypted and not recorded. The benefit of Zoom counselling is that you can experience some of the face-to-face experience by being able to see your counsellor with the convenience of online therapy. Being able to see your therapist allows for empathy and non-verbal cues which aren't available in other forms of on-line counselling.

#### Telephone Counselling

This is via a telephone and offers a level of anonymity as we are not able to see each other. A benefit of telephone counselling is non-verbal communication can be carried through your tone of voice or pace of your speech which will be picked up by me, your counsellor. A disadvantage is that you will need a private space where you will not be overheard.

Online counselling offers various benefits but there are also limitations that are worth considering when choosing online counselling. These are as follows:

### Benefits

- Comfort and convenience - counselling from your own home at a time that suits you
- Anonymity – no one seeing you entering a counsellor's practice
- Flexibility – therapy at a time and place that suits you
- Accessibility – access to therapy may be more immediate
- Choice – you can choose Zoom or telephone counselling
- Secure encryption software giving you peace of mind and confidentiality

## Things to consider

- Are you comfortable using internet technology?
- Would you prefer to see your counsellor in person?
- Do you have access to a computer and does anyone else have access to this?
- Non-verbal cues are limited which can lead to misunderstandings. How do you feel about that?
- How do you feel seeing yourself on the screen?
- Do you have a private space where you can talk freely without being overheard?

## What happens in a technology breakdown?

I ask for additional methods of contact in case there are any technical issues.

If we are working through Zoom and have any technical issues, I will use the alternative number you provide to contact you, either to try to resolve the issue together or to continue the session on the telephone. If I am unable to get hold of you, I will try twice, leaving 5 minute intervals. If I am still unsuccessful, I will use your emergency contact number.

If we are on the telephone, I request you provide another number that I can contact you on.

In addition, I ask for an emergency contact number in case of illness during a session, if I am unable to get hold of you for a session or if I have any concerns for your welfare.

## Availability

My office hours are Monday 12-5, Tuesday 9-5, Wednesday 9-5 and Friday 12-5.

Our sessions take place at the same time each week and last for 50 minutes. Outside of our session time, I can be contacted if a session needs to be re-arranged or for any payment issues. Outside of my office hours, please leave a message. For a mental health emergency, please see "in an Emergency".

## Fees

Invoices will be sent weekly, by email, on Friday with payment due before the next session. I cannot guarantee further sessions if payment is not received.

## Re-scheduling and Cancellation Policy

I operate a 48 hour rescheduling and cancellation policy. If you need to re-schedule, I will endeavour to offer an alternative time. Sessions cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice are liable for the full fee. There is a charge of £10 for sessions cancelled with more than 48 hours' notice. This fee enables me to maintain and hold your session time open for you.

In the unlikely event that I need to cancel a session, an alternative appointment will be provided asap.

## Confidentiality

Online therapy takes place within a secure encrypted environment to offer you confidentiality and safety. The information shared with me is held in strict confidence and all electronically stored information is stored on a password protected drive.

Whilst I endeavour to keep my systems and communications protected against viruses and other harmful effects, I cannot bear responsibility for all communications being virus free.

You can read my full privacy policy regarding how information you supply is handled by visiting this link or the Privacy Policy on the Resources section of my website.

## In an Emergency

Online counselling is not sufficient support if you feel you are in crisis.

Signs of crisis may be feelings of wanting to commit suicide or harm yourself or another. In this case, please consider contacting your local accident and emergency department at your nearest hospital and ask to speak to someone from the crisis team.

If you feel you need immediate assistance you may consider contacting the Samaritans, they are available by telephone on 116 123 or by email on [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)