

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. This allows for empathy and non-verbal cues which aren't available in other forms of online 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 therapist. A disadvantage is that you will need a private space where you will not be overheard and there is lack of bodily cues.

Online counselling offers various benefits but there are also limitations that are worth considering when choosing on-line 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?

Some useful tips

You may find it helpful to use headphones to provide some privacy.

As there is no travelling to and from the session, the beginning and end of the session may feel very abrupt. Giving yourself some time before the session can be helpful in separating from the stresses of life. It is particularly important after the session to allow yourself some time to decompress and process some of the emotions which may surface in a session. You may find it helpful to make a cup of tea or take a walk. Even a few minutes to allow yourself to make the transition back into normal life.

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.

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

Annual Leave

As I take annual leave, there will be times during our work together when there will be breaks in the counselling as we won't have a session. I endeavour to give as much notice as possible to enable us to think about any support you may need during a break.

I would also be grateful for advance notice of any holidays you may have.

Online counselling provides flexibility to the location of where your counselling takes place. However, I may ask for the address of where you are if it is different to the one provided on your application form. This is a safety issue to enable me to be able to get help to you if you are taken ill during a session.

Ending Counselling

I ask that if you feel ready or wish to end counselling that you raise this with me at the earliest opportunity. We can discuss and plan an ending together which feels comfortable for you.

It is also helpful to raise any concerns you may have. This may be the progress of the therapy or a sense of feeling worse. It is important to point out that you may feel worse before you feel better. This is totally normal, and it is good to talk about this together so that I can support you as fully as possible.

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