

## Online and Telephone Counselling



### What is Online Counselling?

Online counselling therapy offers a way for you to engage in counselling using internet technology such as webcam, email or telephone. Working this way enables you to choose a counsellor to work with who may not live close by, at a time and place that suits you. Every effort will be made to ensure a safe and secure environment is provided for your online therapy, with secure encryption software to protect your confidentiality.

### How does it work?

I offer online counselling using a webcam via a platform called Psychology Today Sessions. This way we can see each other face-to-face via the computer screen. Should you decide to work with me through this medium, I will email you a link to our private virtual meeting room. Sessions last for 50 minutes.

### The benefits of choosing online counselling via webcam are:

- Convenience in terms of time and location of sessions.
- Privacy - nobody will see you physically going into counselling premises.
- We can see each other, so communication through facial expressions etc. is still possible.
- Secure encryption software offers confidentiality and peace of mind.
- Access to counselling may be more immediate, as not dependant on room availability.
- Research has shown that online counselling is as effective as in-person counselling.

### Things to bare in mind:

- Is there a computer/space you can use without being overheard or interrupted?
- Are you comfortable using internet technology?
- There may be some visual limitation with online therapy, even with webcam due to lighting, connection quality etc.
- As there are no nonverbal clues or body language via telephone counselling, misunderstandings can occur.
- Technology can be fail, internet connections can suddenly crash. We will agree a plan for this.

### Telephone Counselling

Should you decide to opt for counselling via the telephone, I will ask for your best contact telephone number and schedule a convenient time for our session. Then I will call you and we will have a 50 minute counselling session via the telephone. Please ensure you chose a private space where you will not be overheard or interrupted.

Telephone counselling offers convenience in terms of location, privacy and confidentiality as online counselling. However, as we cannot see each other, there are some limitations to working without non-verbal communication. Therefore, I may ask more questions during telephone counselling and be more descriptive about my own non-verbal behaviours, such as facial expression.

### Paperwork

For any type of therapy with me, there will be some paperwork to discuss and sign prior to therapy commencing. Should you chose online or telephone counselling, I will send you the following documents for signature, securely: Client contact details sheet, GDPR statement, Privacy statement, Pre-counselling questionnaire (to help me assess if online counselling is suitable for you at this time) and our client/counsellor contract. This sets out our working agreement, legal limitations to confidentiality and other necessary information. During our first session, we will discuss the client/counsellor contract - giving you an opportunity to question anything.

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### Is Online counselling appropriate for you?

There are some instances where online counselling would not be appropriate. I will be honest with you if I feel this is not the best medium of therapy for you and help you to find alternative support if necessary. If you are in crisis and considering harming yourself, please contact your GP, local A&E or Samaritans via telephone 116 123.

### What equipment will I need?

- You will need a Wi-fi, 3G or 4G connection. Usually if your network is good enough to stream You Tube or Netflix, it will be good enough for video conferencing via zoom. To make the call as good quality as possible, I recommend closing all other browsers and applications running in the background, during our session.
- You can connect directly to Psychology Today Sessions from the link I will provide to you.
- I recommend the use of headphones or earphones to keep the content of our sessions private and improve sound quality.
- Sit where your back can be supported and you are comfortable.

### Next steps

- Having read this, if you have decided you would like to go ahead with online or telephone counselling with me, please contact me via email or through my 'book a session' button on the website.
- You can chose to have a free introductory telephone call prior to commencing; otherwise we will agree a time and date for our first session.
- I will send you bank account details for payment (at least 24 hours before first session please).
- I will email you the documents mentioned above, for completion/signature (to be returned before our first session please). If you wish to discuss the forms before signing, please email me and we can talk about these further during the first session.
- I will then email you the session link or request your telephone number.

### Questions? Doubts?

If you have any questions, please contact me via email..

If you would like to speak to me before commencing therapy, please email me and I will arrange a mutually convenient time to telephone you for a free initial consultation.