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## **Counselling agreement additions for clients using the telephone or an online platform as an alternative to face to face counselling sessions.**

### **Confidentiality**

1. When offering counselling over the telephone or online I will be working from my therapy room offering a quiet and confidential space. Please do all that you can to find a private and undisturbed place for our sessions. If you feel confident that you cannot be overheard you will be able to engage in the session more fully. You may need to be creative about finding a confidential space, perhaps even sitting outside in the car if you have one. (You will also need to ensure that any vulnerable members of your household have adequate care and supervision for this time. If this is not possible we may need to review the suitability of online or telephone counselling for you at this time).
2. We will both agree not to make any kind of recording of sessions conducted by phone or video link.
3. You are responsible for the security of your devices, employing password protection, having regularly updated virus checkers and firewalls installed etc. Please discuss any concerns you may have with me.
4. I will ensure that my devices are secure at all times as above.

### **Technology**

In the event that we lose our connection due to technological difficulties I will always attempt to re-establish the connection. If this is not possible I will contact you by an alternative method (eg telephone or email) to either continue the session or reschedule.

### **Netiquette**

Meeting me from your home environment may lead to the process feeling more informal which may in turn affect how you prepare for and experience our meetings. It can help the counselling process if you take the following steps.

1. Turn off other devices such as phones or TV during our session to minimise distractions.
2. Set up a space where you can sit comfortably for the duration of the session, preferably with your device supported hands free and set up so that you remain clearly visible with adequate lighting and without needing to make adjustments as we talk.
3. It is helpful if you refrain from eating or drinking, other than water, during the sessions and commit to the agreed timings and session duration.

4. Please put all other activities aside so that you can focus on the session.

### **Practical arrangements and contact**

Any contact by email or telephone in between sessions will be limited to practical arrangements and information only. Sensitive and personal material should be kept for the session itself. I will not accept from you invitations or any other form of contact via social media.

### **Fees/Payment/Cancellations**

My fees will remain the same unless we agree to review this. During the Coronavirus Crisis I will be flexible about late cancellations, especially in the case of illness (either your own or that of someone else in your household).

If I become seriously ill and am unable to contact you I have a formal arrangement with a counselling colleague who will then be able to access client contact details and who will inform you and discuss alternative arrangements. This colleague will only receive your contact details in the case of a serious emergency.

### **Payment**

Payment can be made via BACS transfer, cheque or cash.

Engaging in counselling either by phone or video link is different from face to face counselling. It may be the first time you have used this approach and we can explore this together regarding methods, practicalities and suitability.

It has been recognised that sometimes some people find it easier to talk and to express themselves on the phone and online than actually being in the room with their counsellor. Telephone or web-cam conversations can feel different in both pace and tone.

We can explore together how to begin our sessions carefully and slowly, we can set an agenda and also plan a careful and measured ending to each session so that there is not a feeling of being abruptly cut off.

At the end of each session it can be important to take a little time to adjust back to the life around you. There is usually a transition period before and after a face to face session as you travel to and from the therapy room. It might be worth planning a short walk or a little time to yourself for a short period after a session in order to reflect and reconnect gradually with other things.

