

Online therapy/telephone therapy refers to therapy delivered via the internet or telephone. Some people prefer to use video conferencing, and others audio.

Online therapy/telephone therapy can help with a range of issues including abuse; anxiety; bereavement; childhood trauma; depression; eating distress; loneliness; perfectionism; relationship problems; self-esteem; trauma; work related issues; and many more. However, it does not suit and/or benefit everyone, and I'll conduct an assessment with you to ascertain whether online/telephone therapy is the most appropriate format for you, and what you're wanting to work with.

Online/telephone therapy works very much like therapy in person. Sessions last for 60 minutes and are normally weekly but may be fortnightly.

### Benefits

- You can have therapy anywhere that is comfortable and convenient for you
- Having fewer visual distractions often encourages focus and concentration
- You may experience you're more comfortable online or find it easier to talk
- You'll often be able to access continuous support even when you're travelling

### Challenges

Research shows online/telephone therapy is as effective as in-person therapy. However, there are some limitations, and these are:

- If we're using video conferencing our internet connection may fail
- There can occasionally be a slight delay which can cause us to interrupt each other or not hear all of what the other says. This can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, so if you feel I've not completely understood you, please let me know. I may ask you to repeat things if I do not hear you clearly
- We're not able to see the whole of each other, so some physical cues can be missed. I'll usually ask more questions about how you feel, physically and emotionally, in a session to address this limitation
- People can sometimes experience a "disinhibition factor" during online/telephone therapy. This means that some people feel more comfortable with distance therapy than working in person. However, this can also leave you feeling vulnerable if you're not supported appropriately. We'll usually spend some time looking at your support network and self-care strategies to address this limitation

## Technology for Online Therapy

### Video Conferencing Platforms

I use secure video conferencing platforms to protect our privacy and confidentiality, although no one platform can be guaranteed to be 100% secure. I use FaceTime, Skype, WhatsApp, or Zoom as these are platforms, I've found to be the most used by people.

### Bandwidth Requirements

The bandwidth used by video conferencing platform will be optimised for the best experience based on the participants' network. Usually, if your internet is good enough to stream YouTube or Netflix, it's good enough for video conferencing. Call quality is usually improved by Ethernet connection (as opposed to Wi-Fi).

### Technology Breakdown Arrangements

In the event we experience difficulties with connecting using your chosen video conferencing platform, I'll try to reconnect with you three times. If we're not successful in connecting/reconnecting, I'll telephone you on the emergency telephone number you've provided in the event of technology breakdown, and we'll continue our session via the telephone.

## Guidelines

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 appointments. It can help the therapy process if you take the following steps:

1. 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 you remain clearly visible with adequate lighting and without needing to adjust as we talk.
2. I encourage you to use headphones or earphones. This keeps the content of our sessions private if other people are close by (i.e., in the next room), improves sound quality and minimises distractions.
3. Ensure you close other applications and browser windows on your device and put your phone on silent or turn it off just as we would do in person.
4. Please put all other activities aside so you can focus on the session.
5. After the session ends, 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 my consulting room.) It might be worth planning a short walk or a little time to yourself for a short period after a session to reflect and reconnect gradually with other things.

## Privacy / Security

### At My Location

I will be at my consulting room and will be the only person in the room. I may wear earphones to encourage a feeling of privacy and to improve sound quality.

### At Your Location

I recommend you find a comfortable, private, and undisturbed place for our sessions. If you feel confident you cannot be overheard, you'll 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 other people live with you, you may wish to put a note on the door requesting you're not disturbed except in an emergency.

### Security

- You're responsible for the security of your devices, employing password-protection, having regularly updated virus-checkers and firewalls installed, etc.
- I'll ensure that my devices are always secure.

## Location

Please note it's important I know your physical location during an online/telephone therapy session to fulfil our professional obligations and in case of emergency.

It's important I'm authorised or permitted to work in whichever location you're in at the time of the session. If you're not based in England or Wales, I'll need to research requirements pertaining to your region or country regarding online/telephone therapy and attempt to obtain recognition from local authorities where possible.

### If you have any other questions...

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email: [counsellinginshropshire@gmail.com](mailto:counsellinginshropshire@gmail.com) or telephone: 07714 590133.