

Sue Seager
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Counselling ~ Supervision ~ Training

Online Counselling Policy

Scope

Online and telephone counselling are different experiences to face to face meetings and they do not suit everyone but can be valuable for support in specific circumstances provided there are clear ground rules and an understanding of limitations as well as potential benefits.

If I consider that online counselling would not be the most suitable means of support for you, I will endeavour to assist you in a referral to a suitable alternative source of support in the area in which you live. Services available for remote counselling are phone or cloud based applications such as Zoom.

Process & Cancellation Policy

A weekly time can be booked a phone or video call. I require 48 hours' notice of cancellation so if you miss your time slot or fail to log in to a booked session then I reserve the right to charge for the full session. The only exception will be if a technical failure at my end has prevented the online meeting. Online or phone counselling sessions last for 50 minutes. Fees are per session not per hour. Sessions are normally weekly but may be fortnightly or at other intervals by agreement.

I will supply my ID information in advance for Skype and send you a link to any meetings booked on platforms such as Zoom. Please aim to arrive online a few minutes before we are planning to begin to ensure there is time to trouble shoot any connection difficulties.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Confidentiality and limits as explained in my face to face working agreement also applies to online or telephone work. In addition, neither of us must record online sessions or share the content (data) with third parties. This includes not putting anything we do together in an online session on any social media platforms or blogs or circulating it using messaging services or email. Counsellors are ethically required to have supervision and I may discuss your case, but your identity will never be revealed, and my supervisor will not have direct access to our sessions either live or recorded. I am not responsible for any breaches of confidentiality, interruptions or intrusions because of your internet connection or lack of privacy in the physical environment in which you choose to hold a phone or video conference session with me.

It is important that you find a safe and private place for our sessions to take place and that you build in adequate recovery time from the sessions should you feel distressed at the close of a session as there will not be the physical presence of a therapist with you.

I cannot be responsible for any government, security services or provider surveillance of the platforms that we choose to use however I will endeavor to suggest means of communicating that are fit for purpose and as secure and reliable as possible.

Fees and Payments

Individual online video sessions are charged at £50 per session. You are asked to pay in advance of to confirm your booking, either by internet transfer or to make specific arrangements for cash or cheques. Please use your name as a reference and let me know by email or text that you have made the payment.

Security

Please ensure that you secure your computer, phone and any relevant messages against unauthorised viewing by third parties. It is recommended that you only use a private computer and not a work or public computer. Please ensure you keep your anti-virus protection up-to-date and I will undertake to do the same.

Technology breakdown arrangements

Should you experience a technical breakdown which prevents you from attending an online session as agreed, please contact me by mobile (07368 590416) so that we can discuss how to re-arrange our session. I also undertake to contact you by telephone should I experience a technical breakdown.

Personal crisis procedures

I cannot provide a crisis service for clients who require intensive levels of support or promise to respond to ad hoc requests for emergency support particularly after 8pm or at weekends as these times are outside my working hours. Unless we have agreed to correspond by text, phone or email I do not guarantee to extend communication with you between sessions using these methods. However, I will always acknowledge any communication and suggest a method for us to discuss further or signpost another means of support. If you find yourself in a major crisis and/or were considering serious self-harm it would be vital to get immediate help. This could include contacting your GP, going to your nearest hospital accident and emergency department (A & E). You could also call the Samaritans on 0330 094 5717 or free on 116 123 or visit their website www.samaritans.org

What next?

If you are happy to proceed with online or telephone counselling on this basis and in conjunction with the information set out in my standard working agreement, please confirm by “signing” at the bottom and email this back to me at sueseagercounselling@gmail.com.

Signed:

Date: