

Online Therapy Guidelines

The online platform which I will be using for therapy is called Zoom. This platform is secure and offers us an opportunity to continue doing therapy from the safety of your own home. Once we agree a session date and time I will send you a calendar invite which will have the details of our appointment as well as a link which, when clicked, will take you to our virtual “meeting room”. This calendar invite and Zoom link will be emailed to you. If you click on the link prior to our appointment, it will take you to an empty virtual meeting room. I will only be in your meeting room at the time of our consultation. I will give you all separate virtual meeting rooms, so don’t worry about clicking on the link and disrupting someone else's appointment.

What do I need in order to use Zoom?

You can use Zoom on a laptop, mobile phone or tablet. In addition to one of these, you need an internet connection (mobile data or wifi connection).

How do I access Zoom?

Regardless of what device you choose to use (laptop, mobile phone, tablet), by clicking on the link that I send you, it will open up Zoom in your web browser. It will give you a chance to sign up (using an email address and password) and then you can enter the virtual consultation room. However, it may be easier for you to download the Zoom app instead. If you are using your phone, a tablet, or some laptops, you can download the Zoom app. Depending on your device, you can get the app on the iStore (for Apple devices) or Play store (for android devices) or download it from the Zoom website. Once you’ve downloaded the app, you can sign up and then every time you click on the link I send you, it will automatically open our meeting in your app.

You can click on the following link to watch a video on how to get from the link I send you, into the virtual meeting room: <https://youtu.be/hlkCmbvAHQQ>

I have made the settings for our session to have no camera access upon the start of our session. This is to try and simulate an in-person session whereby you knock on my door, I open the door and then we see each other. Once we are both in the virtual meeting room, please turn on your camera.

Some things to consider:

As much as possible, we'd like to emulate our usual therapy space. Things to consider when choosing a place to have our session from are:

1. Privacy
2. Access to internet/power
3. Access to supportive material

1. Privacy

My online consults will involve me being in my office, as per usual, where privacy is maintained on my end. However, on your side, I acknowledge that you might be in a house that is shared by other people. During our online session, please ensure that you are in a space that is private so that you feel safe in sharing what you need to share with me.

These are some measures that you could take to ensure privacy.

- a) Make sure you are in a space where family members/others can't walk in and interrupt. Perhaps this means locking a door to the room you are in, or informing everyone that they are not to disrupt you for an hour. Putting a notice on the door is also a good option. Some patients choose to have their session in a car/garden/bathroom to ensure they get the privacy they need.
- b) Making use of earphones will assist in getting a sense of privacy. Although your voice may be audible to others, at least the content of what I am saying will not be able to be heard. Many earphones that come with mobile phones have earphones and in-line microphones which are ideal so that you don't need to speak as loudly.

2. Access to internet/power

Obviously Zoom requires an internet connection, so whether you are using mobile data or wifi, please ensure that you are connected and have sufficient data to sustain the session. We'd like to reduce disruptions in the session as much as possible. By the same token, please ensure



your device is plugged into a power source or is fully charged to sustain the full length of the session.

3. Access to supportive material

In trying to keep a sense of similarity to your normal in-person sessions, I recommend having the following things handy during our sessions:

- A box of tissues/toilet paper
- A glass of water (you are so welcome to sip on an alternate beverage in the session if you'd prefer)
- If you usually like to hold onto a scatter cushion during in-person sessions, try to have one available for the online sessions too
- If you would like to have a pen and paper handy to doodle on while we chat, please feel free to do so. Some patients feel that the prolonged eye contact can get overwhelming on Zoom and this might offer you some space (where you might normally look out the window at my practice).

Practical notes:

What should be in the shot?

It is very helpful for me to see not just your face, but your upper body as well. If it is possible, try to sit back from your device, so that I can see you from your chest upwards. I understand that you will be sharing a snapshot of your intimate home space with me and I will place no judgement on the items/things reflected in the background of your screen. Please don't worry about cleaning up or ensuring the background is suitable.

What do I do if I can't connect to the meeting?

Please call me on my mobile number: 073 435 0886 and I will try to assist you.

What do we do if we lose connection during the session?

Try to reconnect to the meeting room. If that doesn't work, I will phone you on your cell phone and we can make a plan from there.

