

Online Therapy Guide

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There can be some significant differences between therapy online and in a therapy room. Some of these things may not be immediately obvious, but I hope the following guidance can help to minimize the impact these differences may have upon your experience of the therapy session.

Privacy and Location

I do my best to ensure your privacy is maintained when we have face-to-face sessions, but with online sessions there is nothing I can do to protect your privacy in the environment you are in.

Please take any steps required to ensure you are in a private space where you can't be overheard and won't be interrupted, (preferably using headphones for the audio). In a shared space you may need to ask others to respect your privacy by listening to music or television in another room. Please also give some consideration to the level of protection your computer has in terms of anti-virus/anti-spyware, and if using a shared computer, note that some personal information is likely to be stored locally.

As far as possible, try to arrange to be in the same location for your sessions.

Comfort

Ideally, select seating that is firm but comfortable, very much as you might find in the therapy room. Posture has an impact on how we feel, how alert we are, etc., so it's best to avoid lying stretched out on a couch or bed.

Have a glass of water and a box of tissues close to hand, but avoid having snacks or meals: Have these before or after your session.

Clothing

Please dress as you would if attending a session in person. Again, how we dress has an impact on how we feel, and it's best to have the intention to approach each session just as you would if attending a face-to-face session.

Timing

Try to give yourself a little time before and after the session. This will allow you to be prepared for the work that we are doing; this tends to happen when travelling to an appointment, even when we are not aware of it. Also, give yourself time before engaging in another activity that requires your focused attention, perhaps time for a short walk, or to do some gentle stretches.

Interruptions and Distractions

Please turn off any devices not being used for the online session (or use flight mode). Also, quit programs and turn off notifications on the device you are using for the connection: It can be very distracting to know you've just received a message whilst in the middle of a session so it's best to avoid that possibility.

Handheld Devices

If using a handheld device try to fix the device in a position about 30-40cm away from you, so that you can be clearly seen by the camera. There may be times in a session when you'll need to have your hands free, and it's also very tiring to watch an image that's constantly moving and shaking for a long time.

Psychological Differences

The therapy session is intended to be a safe space in which you can 'unpack' difficult thoughts, feelings, memories, urges, etc., and one aspect of this is experienced through the physical space within which the therapy takes place. When leaving, it can feel as though this difficult material is 'left' within this safe space. The online session presents quite a different dynamic, which is one reason why it's preferable to consider the location beforehand, maintain the same location when possible, and to allow time afterwards, perhaps for a short walk outside or a grounding exercise.

Using Google Meet

You need to have a camera, microphone and a headset or speakers. You should be using broadband internet, either through a wired connection or a WI-FI connection with a strong, reliable signal. The Google Meet web application is available here,

<https://meet.google.com/>

When you are invited you will be given a meeting link. In order to join the meeting just click on the link and follow the instructions. Alternatively, go to the Google Meet web application and enter the meeting code.

Please confirm that your video and audio work correctly by making a test Google Meet call before the therapy session.