



COUNSELLING
TUTOR

ONLINE & TELEPHONE COUNSELLING

Online Therapy Agreement

How to use this document

Do not copy this document - it is for reference only please **state your Modality** where indicated.

Personalise this agreement to suit you, your practice and your way of working.

Attach the **Agreement form** for the client to fill in when you respond to them via email.

Please note **initial contact response** and the **agreement form are not a contract**.

About me:

My name is [insert your name], I am qualified in [your modality] and I am a registered member of [ethical body name here].

I adhere to the XXX ethical framework for good practice and also the XXX Guidelines for Online Counselling and Psychotherapy.

More information on these documents can be found at:
www.ethicalbodywebsite.co.uk

What is [your modality] counselling?

I find the [your modality] Approach fits my own philosophy as it has at its very core, an unshakable belief that all people are good.

[your modality] counselling believes that each and every person can, and will, become a more fully functioning person if given the correct conditions. The underpinning principles of the [your modality] Approach are focused on the counsellor being honest, non-judgmental and fully accepting whilst being fully integrated in the relationship allowing the client to lead and set the pace. I aim to offer these conditions as best as I can during our relationship.

What is online counselling?

Online counselling is a way for you to engage in counselling using internet technology such as Zoom, email, online chat or webcam video link. You direct your counselling by selecting the method of communication you feel most comfortable with. You chose the time, the place and the pace of your counselling to suit your needs.

How it works

Online counselling chat room

Should you choose the online chat room you will be directed to a secure login page that takes you to an encrypted area where we meet at a time that was prearranged and agreed by us both beforehand.

Your session is 50 minutes.

You do not need a webcam for this counselling and you may choose to remain anonymous should you wish.

Webcam or audio counselling

Zoom is a way for you to see your counsellor face to face from your computer whilst engaging in therapy. Should you chose Zoom counselling, you will be guided through setting up your own encrypted Zoom account and we will meet on Zoom at a time that you have

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previously arranged. Sessions are 50 minutes in length. Being able to see your counsellor gives you more of the benefits you get from face to face counselling but with the convenience of online therapy. By talking you hear tone of voice which is a way to convey empathy and via video you see non-verbal communications such as facial expressions.

If you wish you can chose to only work with audio through Zoom and no video camera would then be needed.

Email counselling

Counselling using email offers you the opportunity to consider what you wish to say before you send it as well as time between exchanges to reflect on the information you have received. I aim to reply to all mails within 48 hours.

You will be guided in how to set up a secure email account and will then have a set amount of email contacts with your counsellor. Email counselling is also sometimes used in between more structured sessions such as online chat or webcam counselling. A consideration of email counselling is the time delay between your mail and the return mail and this makes email counselling ineffective when urgency is a priority.

Online counselling offers certain benefits but there are also limitations that are worth bearing in mind when deciding which type of therapy will best suit your needs.

Benefits

- Counselling therapy from your own home at a time that suits you
- Secure encryption software offers confidentiality and peace of mind
- No chance that you may be seen entering the counsellors practice
- When using email or online chat, you are able to review what you are saying before sending
- Therapy at a time, place and pace that suits you
- Some find it easier to express their feelings by writing it down
- Access to counselling may be more immediate
- Flexibility to choose the technology you feel is best for you: email, live chat or webcam

Things to consider

- Are you comfortable using internet technology?
- Would you prefer to see your counsellor face to face?
- Do you feel you can express your feelings well using words?
- Do you feel your situation is too complex to discuss via the internet?
- Is there a computer terminal that you can use privately without interruption?
- Text communication can sometimes be open to misunderstanding.
- There are no nonverbal cues or body language for you or the counsellor to read this can lead to misunderstanding.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality and Security

You can read my privacy policy regarding how information you supply is handled by visiting this link mywebsite.co.uk

The information shared with me is held in strict confidence and all electronically stored information is stored on a password protected drive.

In adherence with the XXX ethical code, I am obliged to break confidentiality if you were to disclose involvement in or knowledge of an act of terrorism, money laundering and drugs trafficking. In addition I have an agency policy to report instances of harm to self or to others and I do have a legal obligation to report harm or abuse to a minor or vulnerable adult.

Email correspondence is encouraged through a secure mail server such as hushmail to prevent your mails being intercepted and read by a third party and you will be instructed on how to set up a confidential email account for your counselling therapy.

The content of your emails will not be communicated with anyone excepting for the purposes of supervision of my practice. When elements of our sessions are taken to supervision, no identifying information such as your name is used. My supervisor also follows the same procedures for confidentiality as I have outlined.

Audio or audio video counselling takes advantage of the encrypted services offered by Zoom and should you chose this method of

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counselling, you will guide you through setting up a free account for your therapy. You do not need a webcam to use Zoom counselling.

At the end of our counselling agreement copies of our exchanges will be stored electronically on a password protected drive for a period of 7 years and up to the age of 25 years old for a minor (18+7) in accordance with suggestions from the ethical body after this time the information will be deleted and any paper documents will be shredded.

In addition, if at any point during the counselling you were in need of emergency support, I may ask for your consent to contact your GP, or recommend alternative avenues of support other than online counselling.

In an emergency

Online counselling is not sufficient support if you feel you are in crisis. Signs of crisis may be feelings of wanting to commit suicide or harm yourself or another. In this case please consider contacting your local accident and emergency department at your nearest hospital and ask to speak to someone from the crisis team.

If you feel you need immediate assistance you may consider contacting 999 or the emergency responder number in your jurisdiction or the Samaritans, they are available by telephone on 08457 90 90 90 or by email on jo@samaritans.org

All client material is treated in complete confidence and is removed from my computer at the end of our work together. Electronic records are stored on a password protected memory stick and kept in a locked filing cabinet. No identifying names or material is retained on these records as a client ID number is used to replace such information.

Conditions of counselling

As I aim to offer confidentiality regarding the content of our sessions I would ask that you do the same by not sharing any of the content of our sessions with any third party.

If you have any questions regarding the content of this agreement, or would like further information, please contact me at:
counsellor@mycounsellingpractice.co.uk or call me on 0123 456789

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Please answer the questions listed below and then return this agreement document.

Please provide brief details below regarding the issues you would like to explore in counselling:

Your full name

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DOB:

.....

Address:

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What are you looking to address in counselling

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Are you currently involved in or have you been involved in counselling in the past?

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Contact details phone:

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Emergency contact number in case of technology breakdown

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E-mail:

Best time to contact:

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What method of communication would you prefer?

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History of Previous or Existing Medical/Psychiatric Conditions or Admissions:

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Any medical appointments due and what for:

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Where/when/why:

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History of violence/overdose or self-harm:

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GP details:

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Consent for us to contact your GP: YES / NO

Please 'sign electronically' here with your name if you agree to working to the points within this agreement

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Please return this document by email to
counsellor@mycounsellingpractice.co.uk

I aim to contact you via your preferred contact method within 48 working hours of receipt of this form with further information regarding your therapy.