

## Working Together Over The Phone & Online

### **Counselling Works: Phone & Online**

Working together on the telephone or online, via video or voice, can be a different experience for you than working face-to-face. We have a choice of methods, and each method has its benefits.

These guidelines will help us to get the best for you from our sessions together. Please keep them handy, especially during our first sessions.

(I will use the term 'call' to cover how we have agreed to meet, whether by phone or online.)

### **Self-Care**

It is important for our work together that you to consider your own self-care during the process, both in and out of session. Please make yourself aware of your GP contact number, local emergency services, and any self-referral walk-in clinics for psychiatric or psychological services in your locality. If you need any other form of support during our session, including an third-parties such as a translator

### **Find a Safe Place to Talk**

Ensure that you are in safe and private location where you cannot be overheard. Please do not prepare for your session in a public place, such as a café, coffee-shop, or open-plan office. Make sure that you are physically comfortable, and able to move around if that is important to you. It is essential that you are able to allow yourself to be open with your emotions and feelings, just as if we were face-to-face together in a private room.

### **Preparing Technically**

It is best if you have a good pair of earbuds or headphones and, if we are using video, access to a webcam and screen. It is worth checking that your device is fully charged or is plugged in. Please check the quality and strength of your mobile signal or internet connection. This will make a more comfortable environment for you in our session.

### **Software/Apps**

For video or voice sessions over the internet, **I exclusively use Zoom [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us).**

**I do not use Skype, Facetime, Messenger, WhatsApp, or any other social media related video and voice software/apps.**

This is for your security and privacy. Zoom is as easy to use as similar services, as well as being secure, encrypted, HIPAA & GDPR compliant. Zoom is widely compatible and can be accessed directly from most web browsers, mobiles, or via downloaded PC and MAC software and apps.

**Please visit the Zoom site for any installation/use questions, and ensure that you can use this method, well-before our arranged session.**

### **Telephone**

I have a Swiss mobile number which I use for all telephone sessions. If cost is a factor, or you are calling from outside Switzerland, then I suggest we discuss the Zoom voice option.

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### Recording

I am fine with you recording any of our sessions for your personal use. You have my explicit permission to do so. I do not record unless we have a specific additional agreement to do so.

However, please be aware that any material you may choose to record electronically or in any other form including, but not exclusively: still photographs; video material; audio recording – **is for your personal use only**. I assert my copyright © and explicitly do not agree to any further distribution, or any other storing, sharing, or replay method e.g. Live Streaming, YouTube, public display.

### Starting Our Session

**It is your responsibility to start the session, just as if we were meeting face-to-face, on or reasonably after our agreed session start time.** Consider it like coming to my consulting office and knocking on the door.

The standard cancellation policy applies to sessions where you do not call at all.

If you call early, I am not able to welcome you until our session is due to start.  
For Zoom calls: you will be placed in a waiting room and I will welcome you in at the agreed time.  
For phone: please call later at the agreed time. If for any reason you have technical difficulties, please let me know via SMS/Text or email.

Of course, I may have technical difficulties too. If that is the case, then I will try to let you know by SMS/Text or email with alternative options or arrangements. Otherwise, please try again 5 minutes later. I will not call you back, but will remain in session waiting for you to call.

### Working with Hiccups

Sometimes the unavoidable happens during our session and we will lose our connection, or it will stop working effectively. A sudden unscheduled break in a call or a bad connection can often prove frustrating for you, and I completely understand this. Experience says that if we are both patient and try to reconnect, all will work well again.

**If our connection breaks, it is your responsibility to call again as soon as possible, or let me know your situation by SMS/Text or Email.** I will not call you back, but will remain in session waiting for you to call.

### Working Well Together

I hope these guidelines have been helpful and give you the opportunity to prepare to have the best call possible in our work together. Whilst they cannot account for all happenings, they have been developed from years of experience working internationally and remotely to allow, often with difficult connections, the best possible virtual therapeutic experience together.

If you have any further questions, please do contact me.

Otherwise, I look forward to you calling in at our agreed session date & time.