

**Sharon Doherty**

**Working On-line**

Working online is slightly different to working face to face. Because online we haven't got the little in-person clues that we all pick up on when we meet with another person face to face, it really helpful to have clarity about certain things.

**How online therapy can take place**

Video

For video sessions I use Zoom, one of the most secure platforms. In order to use this type of online therapy, your computer must have a webcam and microphone so we can see and hear each other, or you would download the appropriate app to your phone or tablet. I will message you with the signing-in details for sessions.

Voice

For voice therapy I use my own dedicated phone line which will incur no call costs to you. I can call any number you give me. Your number is saved in my phone under a code and not your name.

**Considerations Prior to On-line Sessions**

There are many reasons people come to therapy. A key question I will discuss with you is if on-line sessions are appropriate for you and the issues you feel you would like to discuss. People often have some questions, concerns and positive aspects as they are considering video or phone sessions. For many they offer a convenient, easily accessible and private way of working. There is no travel time and you are in an environment you know. If choosing the phone some people like that they can’t see me and it allows them to talk more freely. For other people they feel more comfortable using video and us being able to see each other. My experience is that distance or a screen does not take away from the effectiveness of therapeutic contact, in fact it can enhance it as the focus is without distraction. Whatever is used being in a quiet, safe and private space is important so you feel most at ease with talking. Some people are in a room in their house, their car or sometimes walking or sitting outdoors.

What happens if there are connection problems? Where either of us experiences a technological breakdown, which prevents us meeting online, exchanging emails, or speaking on the telephone, we would discuss via the alternative contact details you gave. If we can not rectify the issue quickly we would re-arrange the appointment. If this is not possible, you will not be charged for the session.

**Maintaining the privacy of your online exchange**

There can never be a 100% guarantee that online therapy is safe, but with awareness, attention, and diligence, the risk that a third party can access the communication or its records, is minimal. Please consider how you keep or save emails or documents linked to your therapy to ensure your privacy against unwanted viewing by third parties. This may include adopting the use of password protection for all personal email accounts and documents etc. It is recommended that you do not engage in online therapy using a public computer where the content of exchanges could be viewed by others in close proximity.

**Social Media**

Boundaries between Psychotherapists and their clients are clear and absolute. You and I will agree;

* it is not appropriate to make contact requests via Social Media.
* we will not talk about or discuss clinical work on any forum/social media platform. It is not permissible to publicise the content of our exchanges or share them with a third party using social media or other personal or public means.
* we will focus our contact to our sessions times, when we are discussing appointment times or communicating about technical issues.

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**Moving forward**

If you decide you'd like to go ahead with online therapy please contact me.

Due to the changes in privacy laws under GDPR, you will receive my Privacy Statement and Personal Information form which you will be required to sign to give me consent regarding your contact details and any information I may hold as we move forward.

If you are enquiring about therapy I will also send you an assessment form so we can be sure I am the right counsellor for you before you incur any costs.

April, 2021