Working in an online space – a guide from Kusudama Therapy

Choosing to work with a therapist online will bring some changes to the experience. Here is some information about online sessions to help you decide whether they might be right for you.

**The technology**

* Online sessions will normally be delivered using Zoom. ([https://zoom.us](https://zoom.us/))
* You can access this via an app on your phone, tablet, desktop or laptop.
* This is free to download and use for our purposes.
* This technology allows for confidential working, as the content cannot be accessed by the company (as with Skype or FaceTime), and each session with me has a unique code and password. I use end to end encryption settings, and ensure the meeting is ‘locked’ once it has begun, so no one else can enter.
* If this is new to you, you might want to have a go on the technology with a friend or family member before your sessions begin to find out if your signal is good enough, and if you are comfortable with it.
* You should ensure that you can always see and hear me, and expect that I will do the same.

**The sessions**

* Online sessions will be for up to 50 minutes, and take place at the same time each week.
* If we normally work face to face, this session will be at the same time as your original one when possible.
* I will be in a private space; you will need to find the same in your home or workplace. In some circumstances a car may be the most suitable space.
* If appropriate, you should discuss this arrangement with members of your household so they know not to disturb you.
* When in session, please turn off notifications on your devices.

**Contact between you and your therapist**

* I will contact you via text or email to arrange sessions.
* Please do not use text, email or phone calls to contact me for anything other than administrative information. This is to protect your confidentiality.
* During a Zoom session, if the technology fails for any reason, I will contact you.
* I will email you prior to your session with the codes you need to access the session.

**Cancellations**

* If you are unable to attend your session for any reason, please contact me directly via text or email, with as much notice as possible. If you cancel less than 72 hours before the appointment, you will normally be charged.
* Following a cancellation, I will text or email back to arrange another session at the same time the following week, please acknowledge and confirm this with me.
* If I need to cancel a session, I will contact you and indicate when I will be available again for work.

**Changes in the relationship**

* Online working can be challenging at first and I ask for patience, especially as we deal with technological problems.
* You may find it harder to understand and be understood than normal, and it may be necessary to speak more clearly or slowly at first.
* The relationship may feel very different to a face-to-face one, either at first or throughout online work. This is normal, though not ideal. It’s ok to explore that with me.
* We gain a lot from just being a room together, and will miss that, so you may need to spend more time finding out how it feels to work this way. It’s ok to ask questions about how this feels for you, and me.

**Self-care**

* Online work isn’t suitable for everyone, you are free to change your mind at any time and agree to wait until we can resume face-to-face work.
* Online work can be uncomfortable initially, so give yourself time to adjust to the new space. Be ready for the session and then allow yourself time to reflect before returning to your household and normal environment.
* Working online may make you feel more drained at first, so try to make allowances for this by adjusting your plans for the day of your session.
* If you are used to working from home and using Zoom or similar platforms for your work or social contact, I suggest you select a different room or chair for our sessions. This enables you to create a ‘different’ space (even in the same room) for our work, allowing further separation from your normal work and conversations, and increasing your sense of privacy.
* If you need additional support between sessions, there are many online services you can access via the NHS ([www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines))