Working Together with Online Video

This leaflet summarises the main things you should consider before, during and after online sessions. See the next page for a guide to telephone sessions.

The creation of a confidential space and uninterrupted communications are especially important for all counselling sessions.

Before...

Equipment
You will need one of the following devices for the call, most of which have built-in cameras, though you may prefer a separate camera that sits on top of a desktop screen or laptop:

- A desktop or laptop computer
- A tablet or iPad
- A smartphone – not ideal but a pragmatic compromise
- Alternative phone (landline or mobile) to use if the video call stops working

It can be helpful to use a personal headset with microphone such as the one that you may use with your mobile phone.

Preparing your space
It is important that you are able to speak freely and confidentially, so please ensure that you have:

- a quiet space where you will not be disturbed or overheard
- uninterrupted time negotiated with any people who share your space
- placed your device on a steady surface, e.g. solid table or a tablet/iPad stand
- exclusive use of your broadband (if possible), to minimise dropouts and glitches
- moved close to your wireless router (e.g. in the same room) rather than several rooms away.

And for your comfort:

- A place where you can sit comfortably
- A glass of water
- Tissues
- Your diary for arranging your next appointment, if appropriate.

During...

Getting started
At PF counselling we use a system known as Attend Anywhere, which you might already be familiar with as it is used widely by the NHS for remote appointments.

Go to: **pfcounselling.org.uk/online**

You can enter the Waiting Area at any time before your session is due, and your counsellor will join you at the agreed appointment time. When asked, please enter your **first name and surname initial only**, *not* your date of birth or phone number. You will need to go through the short logon procedure each time.

Initial Assessment Appointments
Online sessions are a different experience from meeting face-to-face. Your initial appointment will explore not only whether the counselling you are looking for can be offered by the PF, but also whether it will be appropriate and possible for you to attend online in the future. For these reasons, the appointment may need longer that the normal 50 minutes. You should allow up to 75 minutes for the session.

Connection Problems
Things can and do go wrong with connections and broadband signals. If you find the videos 'freezes', or you get cut off for any reason, try reloading the page in your web browser. This saves you having to go through the login procedure again. If the problem persists then you may be able to use the text 'chat' facility to message each other about how you want to proceed. If difficulties continue, call the PF Office on 0131 447 0876.

After...

Your confidentiality
You may want to remove your browser history after your call, especially if you share the computer or laptop. Attend Anywhere does not store any contact or other details.

All our usual arrangements for confidentiality (risk of harm, supervision, record keeping, etc.), donations, cancellation policy and professional ethics still apply when working online.

Working Together on the Telephone

This page summarises the main things you should consider before, during and after telephone sessions.

The creation of a confidential space and uninterrupted communications are especially important for all counselling sessions.

Before...

Equipment

You will need a reliable telephone:

- A landline phone
- A mobile with strong signal

It can be helpful to use a personal headset with microphone such as the one that may have come with your mobile phone, so that you are not holding your phone to your head for 50 minutes.

Or you may prefer to use the 'speakerphone' option, but be careful that there is no-one who will be able to overhear the conversation.

Preparing your space

It's important that you are able to speak freely and confidentially so please ensure that you have:

- a quiet space where you will not be disturbed or overheard
- uninterrupted time negotiated with any people who share your space
- made sure you are not in a spot where your phone signal is weak or variable, if you are using a mobile.

And for your comfort:

- A place where you can sit comfortably
- A glass of water
- Tissues
- Your diary for arranging your next appointment, if appropriate.

During...

Receiving or Making the Call

We will have agreed an appointment date and time with you in advance. Be ready for your counsellor to call you at your appointment time.

Initial Assessment Appointments

Telephone sessions are a different experience from meeting face-to-face. Your initial appointment will explore not only whether the counselling you are looking for can be offered by the PF, but also whether it will be appropriate and possible for you to attend remotely in the future. For these reasons, the appointment may need longer that the normal 50 minutes. You should allow up to 75 minutes for the session.

Dealing with problems

Things can and do go wrong with phone signals. If you get cut off for any reason then whoever originated the call should wait for two minutes and then try to connect again. If the problem persists then you may be able to use text to discuss how you want to proceed. If difficulties continue, call the PF Office on 0131 447 0876.

After...

Your confidentiality

You may want to remove the PF contact details from your phone after your call, especially if others have access to your phone. Your counsellor will remove your details from their contact list once you have ended all your counselling sessions.

All our usual arrangements for confidentiality (risk of harm, supervision, record keeping, etc.), donations, cancellation policy and professional ethics still apply when working online.