

Coronavirus (Covid – 19) UPDATE 19th March

Your service user contract and online therapy

Members have asked for help with regard to what extra detail to include in a service user agreement when working online.

The below suggestions offer some ideas for you to consider in respect of your individual work circumstances. It is not possible to give you a proforma as you all work in different environments and some of those are guided by the professional requirements of other bodies such as the NHS.

However, here are some suggestions that you may want to make explicit within your agreement when working online:

- The session should take place in a private secure room where there will be no interruption from other household members, children or pets. Ideally it should not be a bedroom. Many platforms enable the use of a neutral background to block the home environment out, this is very helpful.
- It is very important that the session is considered in the same way as a face to face session. Dress and behaviour should be appropriate, professional and timekeeping punctual.
- There should be no eating in sessions or drinking other than a beverage you might normally offer e.g. water.
- You should make sure all parties understand the technology and have a backup plan if the technology malfunctions e.g. moving to telephone
- If you are seeing a couple make sure they can equally share the screen or access from two separate computers.
- The session timing should be clear and how you will notify the service user regarding the start of the session. You may have to email a login link so give

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specific instructions as to how you will interact. Some platforms do not allow others to join until you are in your seat and this may be helpful.

- There should be no recording of sessions even if the platform allows this.
- Be clear about the payment method, how and when you will expect to be paid. Normally BACS transfer is the easiest.
- How you store notes should be clear, and how data is used articulated within your GDPR statements

Please remember that while working online can be very helpful, especially in these difficult times, it is not for everyone. Some service users whose presenting issues are around online compulsive behaviours may be triggered by the use of webcams for example. As such it may be more appropriate to use the telephone.

Please use your judgement.

If you require further help please contact jo.coker@cosrt.org.uk

Jo is running a zoom seminar on 23rd March at 16.00 to help with any questions you may have about online work. This is free, just email Jo for a link and instructions as to how to join the session.