

## Signpost Counselling Service: Plans during the Covid-19 crisis

At Signpost our number one priority is to keep all our clients, staff and counsellors safe.

During this challenging time we are endeavouring to keep all our efforts focused on continuing the service, both to our existing clients and to those needing counselling or coaching support in the future.

In order to keep the service running we have made some changes. The main change is the way in which we offer counselling to our clients. All of our counselling is now being offered remotely. This means either by phone or by video calling. Zoom is the video calling option we are offering.

If you feel worried about online counselling we can arrange for you to have a ten minute meeting with a counsellor who will explain how things will work. This will also be an opportunity for you to see how you feel about working with this particular counsellor. As with our face to face counselling, if for any reason you don't feel comfortable with the counsellor you have been given or met online, please tell us and we can arrange for you to see someone else. It is important that you are happy with your counsellor and we do understand that different counsellors suit different clients.

If you decide to go ahead with counselling, your counsellor will talk to you about the options and to offer reassurance if you need. Your regular weekly appointment will continue to be on the same day and at the same time unless there is a reason why this is unsuitable for you.

If you choose to go ahead with Zoom you will need to download the app or sign up online. We will either provide you with a link to click on or will call you on your preferred contact number at the start of your counselling session. We can help you with this on the telephone if you need.

Our admin team are still hard at work, picking up emails and taking phone calls so if you have any questions or need to cancel your remote counselling session for whatever reason, you can do so by calling or texting the Signpost mobile phone on 07444 768078

### **Confidentiality**

Keeping your counselling confidential remains fundamental to our service and is a critical part of supporting you. Ideally we will need you to find a private space that is quiet, safe and secure with no interruptions. We are fully aware that for some this may not be appropriate and could be a significant challenge – particularly if you are self-isolating with family.

If finding a private room in your house is not an option, can you find an alternative private space?

It may be that you can find a private place to go outside if suitable/possible. One client reported that they sat in a car on the driveway of their home for their remote counselling session. The important thing is that you feel safe and reassured that your session is private.

If a regular 50 minute session is just not possible we can also offer you a ten minute (or however long you choose) check-in session by phone or video call just so that you continue to have support.

If you are able to continue with your 50 minute counselling sessions these are some of the things that will happen:

- Your counsellor will call you at the allotted time.
- If there is no answer or you are unable to take the call they will call you again five minutes later.
- Your counsellor will also be calling you from a secure/safe space where no one will be able to hear any of the conversation they are having with you.
- You will need to let your counsellor know where you are when you are taking the call
- The counsellor will call you from a private number which adheres to our policy
- Check you have enough battery power in your phone, tablet, laptop, PC etc. for the session
- Agree at the start of the call what will happen if the call is to lose signal or cut out during the session
- Agree at the start of the session how you will end the call quickly if you feel that confidentiality could be broken – If possible, it will probably be easier/clearer to use earphones rather than to rely on the laptop/phone loudspeaker. This will also mean a greater level of confidentiality.

Our aim is to return to our usual face to face service as soon as it is practical to do so and with the guidance we are all following at the present time. The situation is being monitored as we go along and we will develop services as and where we can. If anything changes we will let you know.

Thank you so much for your understanding and helping us to keep Signpost going in this difficult time.

Please let your counsellor know if you have any questions about anything at all or you can contact the admin team on [info@signpostcounselling.co.uk](mailto:info@signpostcounselling.co.uk)

Many thanks

*From all the counsellors and staff at Signpost*

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