

## JOANNA ONLINE THERAPY

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### **HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF ONLINE THERAPY**

There are two main differences between online therapy and in-person therapy.

When you know what these are and why they matter, you can be more likely to have a meaningful experience of online therapy.

Read on to find out the differences, and what you can do about them.

#### **First Difference - PRIVACY**

If we were meeting in person I would take responsibility for safeguarding your privacy during your session. However, as we are meeting online, I can only ensure that my own setting is private. It will be up to you to prepare your own space.

#### **Second Difference - QUALITY OF CONNECTION**

If we were meeting in person you would join me in a room designed exclusively for therapy sessions. However, when meeting online, it's likely you will be talking to me from a familiar space - one with which you may have many other associations.

This can mean that a therapy video call can sometimes feel like other video calls - social or work perhaps - and this can unintentionally lead to a blurring of boundaries.

### **ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP MINIMISE THESE DIFFERENCES**

#### **Prevent Others Overhearing**

If you can have your sessions when no-one else is around, that's great. If you can't, consider taking precautions such as:

- using a white noise machine. By positioning one of these outside the room you plan to use, you can muffle the sounds from within. There are plenty of reasonably priced white noise machines available to buy, online.

- using headphones with a built in microphone to block your therapist's voice to outside ears and enable you to speak quietly and still be heard.
- asking for a phone session instead, if you would find it easier to control your privacy that way.
- asking others (if you trust them to respect your privacy) to keep their distance while you are having a private call.

### **Close Down In-Vision Distractions on Your Device**

Close all windows or browsers on your device other than the platform you need for your therapy session. Switch off any alarms or reminders that could interrupt the session.

Treat the session as if you were in the same room as your therapist. You would be unlikely to check your phone for messages if you were in the same room, so bring this approach to your online sessions, too

### **Check For Listening Devices In Your Therapy Space**

This is important for protecting your privacy as well as for minimising the potential for disruptions to your session.

Many homes these days contain listening devices, so check the space you will be in for your session and turn off any devices that are primed to listen for voice cues. This can include items such as games consoles and other smart gadgets alongside the more obvious ones like Siri and Alexa.

### **Thing About What You're Wearing**

Check in with yourself before you start your session that you're happy with anything your therapist would see if you had to move around, stand up, or leave the room briefly, perhaps for a comfort break.

### **Set Aside a Few Minutes To Prepare For Your Session**

Because we are meeting online, you are unlikely to be taking time out of your day to travel to your session. While this is handy in some ways, it can also mean you're missing out on a valuable part of being in therapy.

Travel time is an opportunity for clients to think about their upcoming session, what they might like to say, and to generally become aware of how they're feeling as their session approaches.

If you can create an equivalent of this 'journey' for yourself, you can ensure you don't miss out on this valuable prep time.

Think about what's going to work best for you, whether it's sitting in silence for a few minutes, taking a short walk or simply changing your position and moving around before you begin your session. Do whatever works best for you.

### **Have Some Tissues Handy!**

Even if you don't expect to cry, it's a good idea to have some tissues to hand just in case.

### **Make Time to Reflect After Your Session**

As with finding time to prepare for your session, it's important to create a bit of time afterwards, too, to reflect on what's taken place before you transition back into 'everyday life'.

There is usually a kind of 'sorting through' that the mind does after a session and this is a valuable part of the experience of being in therapy. It's a time when new neural pathways may be forming and new connections being made. You may be aware this is happening, or it may take place subconsciously, but allowing space for it is important.

### **Fully Ending Your Session**

As a precautionary measure, I recommend closing your browser after your session. This means anyone else who may come across your device shouldn't be able to track your internet activity.

I hope you find these notes helpful. Please don't hesitate to drop me a line, or to call me, if you have any questions at all about working online. I'm happy to chat them through with you.