

Joanna Online Therapy

jonline@pm.me

+44 (0)7342 963 405

Potential Hazards of Online Therapy - and How to Minimise Them

Unlike in-person therapy where I, the therapist, would be in control of the space in which we meet, online sessions require us both to think about the suitability and confidentiality of the space in which we each sit. Below are the sorts of things you'll need to think about. I hope you find it helpful. Please feel free to contact me if you'd like to chat any of this through.

INTERNET ACCESS

- Ensure you are in an area with good internet connectivity strength. You will need a minimum speed of 1.5 Mb/s for video calls. To check your internet speed you can visit this site and run a quick test: <https://www.broadbandspeedchecker.co.uk/> There are plenty of other similar sites available for you to test your internet speed.

DEVICE SECURITY

- Ensure the device you use for sessions is password protected and that your password is strong and kept secret.
- Install Anti-Virus software on your device which should include firewalls for extra protection.
- Ensure any software you have is up to date.
- If you are using a shared device, think about who else has access to it and whether they might be able to track your usage. For example, automated storage of message and back-up files of visited internet sites can lead to a history of use being stored on your device. Suitable software can be used to counteract this. Also, companies - and some individuals - install key-tracking software on their computers which enables them to monitor how the device is being used.
- Close any windows on your device relating to our sessions, once our session ends.

BEING SEEN OR OVERHEARD

- If having a session from shared premises, find a quiet spot where you are confident you cannot be seen or overheard. Think about whether there are windows behind you or, if in a public building, whether there are cameras anywhere nearby.
- Consider whether interruptions may occur and think, ahead of time, about how you could prevent them from happening during our session. I am always open to exploring alternative times for sessions if that helps.
- Let others know you are not to be disturbed for the duration of our session.
- I do NOT record sessions or allow clients to record them as this would breach your confidentiality and mine. If you ever feel you would like to record a session, please let me know so that we can explore, together, your reasons for asking. Explicit and prior consent would be crucial if we agreed to go ahead.

- Many smart phones and other smart devices including games consoles are primed to listen for vocal cues. For this reason it is a good idea to switch off any listening devices in the room you have chosen for sessions.
- Please have your phone to hand before sessions so that I can reach you in the event of a technical hitch. Once we have connected online and are beginning the session you should switch OFF your mobile if it is a smartphone.

PLATFORM SECURITY

The platform I have selected for sessions is doxy.me, a telemedicine platform with end-to-end encryption and 24/7 security monitoring. Doxy.me is recommended by the Online Therapy Institute.

For more information about doxy.me and your security, click on the following link :

<https://doxy.me/en/security/>

To use doxy.me you will NOT need to download any software, create an account or password or any other trackable information. You will just need to click on a link and allow access to your camera and microphone.

If you have any concerns at all about the privacy and security of our online sessions, please don't hesitate to talk to me about them.

IN THE EVENT OF A TECHNICAL HITCH

It is important to acknowledge that internet issues and technical hitches are always a possibility, even with all the above precautions in place.

For this reason, we should both keep our phones on, and to hand, until we have connected online for the session. Once we have established connection, we should switch our phones off in order to minimise the potential for disruptions, and for added privacy.

If there is a technical hitch *during* a session, we will both log out and then back in again and attempt to re-connect. If re-connection is not possible, we will switch our phones back on and I will contact you by phone, subject to prior agreement.

If the disruption is severe, we can either finish our session by phone, or discuss re-scheduling.

I will not charge for any session that is ended early as a result of technical hitches my end.