

Index of themes covered in - Coronavirus: Considering our Responses and Responsibilities

Week 1

Secure and Effective **platforms**: What is available? Exploring the use of Zoom, in particular.

Insurance - checking in with your insurance company, to ensure you are covered online

Considering your **environment** when engaging online - exploring ways of approaching this

Making individual, **informed choices** around how best to continue engaging with individual clients (online platforms, telephone, taking a break, offering 'holding support' as valid use of the space and time)

Preparing your clients to engage online - providing helpful information before starting: eg issues of confidentiality, back-up plans in the case of technological failure, payment of fees.

Additional contracting: how to gain your clients' agreement and commitment to new processes (without abandoning your existing framework).

Safe and ethical practice online

Where to find **useful documents** relating to **competencies**, additional **ethical guidelines** etc.

Advice and guidance from a range of **professional bodies**

Introduction to recognising and working with the '**Online disinhibition effect**'

Supervision needs when working online

Week 2

Re-evaluating ourselves and our clients

Helping clients to find a **confidential space** in a noisy/crowded household, or an alternative source of support if that is impossible and/or unsafe

Self-care: what **workload** can I manage when working online (and is this different from face-to-face)? What **toll** does this approach take on us, physically and psychologically?

Continuing to hold clients, contain and set **boundaries** (even if the boundaries need to be different from usual)

Setting **fees** - what do I need to consider?

Ongoing work with **existing clients vs** taking on **new clients** (whom you have never met) - additional thinking around **assessment**

Beginning to think about **risk** in online environments and during period of social isolation, safety plans. Risks to confidentiality and addressing these.

Web-cam interaction vs text-based interaction. Working without visual or auditory cues. (Need for additional training?)

Online counselling **training organisations** - finding the right one for you

Students on placement - exploring creative possibilities with your training organisation to continue gaining counselling hours

Telephone therapy

Social media, immediacy and anxiety. Transference and countertransference in social media. **Netiquette** (online etiquette guidelines)

Poem: Breath of Life by Dana Faulds

Week 3

Considerable information regarding **using Zoom** - exploring the ongoing concerns around **security and privacy** with Zoom. Offering some informed responses to some of the queries being raised. Looking at the action Zoom is taking to respond. Encouraging **reflection** and emphasising **personal agency** in using platforms. Using the available settings **responsibly**

Being reflective and thoughtful vs being reactive - working together to support each other

Providing **additional contracting and information for clients:** looking at a **sample document** theme-by-theme

How to gain **consent** from your client

Beginning to think about **assessment** and **taking on new clients** - what issues will you need to consider, what are your **training needs** and how can you address them?

Ending piece: "Welcome to Holland" by Emily Perl Kingsley

Week 4

Emotional regulation systems and how this situation is impacting on each of us as practitioners

Updating the situation re **Zoom**. How have Zoom continued to respond to criticism? Engaging with new platform settings etc.

How do we respond to **media** reports?

Risk management in online settings - further information (managing the impact on each of us as well as taking practical steps). What **additional information** do we need from clients **when contracting**? What can we do if we suddenly identify risk in an ongoing situation? Accepting and discussing **limitations** with clients. Managing unexpected loss of contact

Exploring the **evolving** picture with **client needs - resources and training** becoming available to help prepare therapists to carry out assessments. Particular challenges relating to managing **bereavement** and **trauma**.

Using some 'quiet time' now to prepare ourselves for the inevitable demands that will lie ahead. Using community for **support and self-care**. **Anxiety** within the profession and **projection** within professional spaces. Assessing our own 'fitness to practice'.

NHS support sessions and **volunteering**.

Poem: If You Would Grow - Shine the Light of Loving Self-Care on Yourself by Daniel F Mead

Week 5

The importance of feeling '**grounded**'

Revisiting weeks 1 - 4: the '**index**' that is now available to help you navigate these sessions.

Reflecting on the **volume of work** (or otherwise that people are experiencing). The variety of EAP responses to the crisis and what may be driving these (including '**fee structures**'). **Clients returning** to therapy (after taking an initial break whilst things moved online). Letting former clients know we are still working?

Self-care and **taking breaks** - weekends and holidays

Working with **trauma** (especially with those on **the front line**). 'Wobble rooms'. The triggering of traumatic memory responses when in isolation..**Therapeutic writing** and journaling with traumatised clients Also work with **body movement**

The use of **questionnaires** and **measures** when working online

Thinking about **experiential training** to complement self-directed learning programmes

Data protection and the ICO

Revisiting **how to use Zoom safely** - finding the relevant resources

Taking on **new clients, contracting, assessment** etc - how to prepare yourself for this

Poem: Forget about Enlightenment by John Welwood

Week 6

Acknowledging the hard work that has been put in by practitioners and in many services that has enabled client work to be transferred online safely and ethically. **Thinking systemically** about all the complexities involved in 'keeping things going'

Fatigue beginning to set in - recharging our batteries, achieving **a sustainable level of practice**

How to send out and ask clients to return **consent forms** securely - eg using '**snail mail**' - is it ok? (How do we make these judgements?) Verbal **agreements**; agreements shared in emails

How safe is **WhatsApp**?

Setting up, facilitating and contracting **online group work in sensitive settings**

Tech - managing/minimizing **screen freezes and other glitches**. Exploring the possible impact of our psychological processes on the performance of the tech

How to optimise **eye contact** in order to facilitate relational connections

Poem: It Couldn't be Done by Edgar Albert Guest

Week 7

What is happening to our **energy** and **motivation** at this point? Working with low energy levels. **Zoom fatigue** and its relationship with general fatigue (physical and psychological) : practical suggestions and considering the bigger picture.

Evaluating our own **capacity for practice** at the present time and acknowledging our individual sense of **loss**. Knowing ourselves and **working to our strengths**

Self-care: gathering ideas from the group. Taking responsibility for our own wellbeing in order to meet our ethical responsibilities. Putting together our own collection of '**brief self-care ideas**'.

Ending Zoom sessions well for both counsellor and client.

Managing **disrupted connections**

Virus protection for computers and other devices.

Poem: She Let Go by Safire Rose

Week 8

Thinking about ourselves as '**hidden key workers**'.

How do we think about any possible relaxation of the lockdown measures and what do they mean for us as therapists? The **ethical and practical dilemmas** raised by beginning to come out of lockdown. '**Internal**' **ethics vs external expectations** and requirements. Different **interpretations** leading to some conflict?

Safety vs economic necessity?

The 'quietness' of lockdown - is this welcomed by some?

Human **connection** online - is the nature of relationships changing? Can online relationships facilitate different qualities of relationship and will this affect face-to-face relationships in the future?

What does it mean for the therapeutic relationship if we meet the client in their own home?

Revisiting the **security issues** relating to different **platforms**.

Keeping in contact with clients who have paused their counselling.

Story: Too Soon to Tell (Anon)

Week 9

Coming to terms with the **long-term changes** to our lives, both personal and professional. How to **adapt** and **change**? Our own experiences of **bereavement, loss and grief**, as well as that of our clients.

How to navigate **confusing advice** about what is safe (in terms of social distancing) and what isn't. The difficulties in translating this into our very individual practices. **Short-term planning** and adaptation **vs long-term changes** to our practice.

Professional ethics/personal ethics ("first do no harm")

Charging **fees** for sessions where there may be a **technological difficulty**, especially if this leads to a need for rescheduling. (Including **quick tips** for getting round some of the connection problems).

The use of **head-sets** - what to use and why?

Assessing new clients for online therapy - what kind of **training** do therapists need in order to feel sufficiently equipped for this? (Further information about training that is currently available). **Competencies** that are considered necessary for working online at all stages.

Not Smart Enough for a Smart Phone by Nandita Shailesh Shanbhag

Week 10

Context: beginning to move towards having to take more decisions and choices. Being bombarded with information, 'advice' and strong opinion. Feeling we may be making mistakes.

Reflecting on our **energy levels** internally and also the energy levels within society. What is the impact of shared anxiety; what kind of energy is generated by anxiety? And how do we attend to this within ourselves and the impact it has on clients?

Signposting: our need for leadership, but an acceptance that 'nobody has the right answers'.

Remembering to listen to **the client's voice** as well as all the other 'loud voices'. What has happened to the clients who asked to be put 'on hold'? (Do we go back to them?)

Going back to face-to-face work? What are the implications within the space, beyond the space? How can a workplace be made 'safe'? (Is it possible?).

What about carriers of the virus, with no symptoms (clients and therapists). Implications of **track and trace**? How will this work and what are the **implications for confidentiality** etc.? Revisiting the terms of your contract and perhaps adding a further clause relating to this.

Weighing up one **risk** against another. Life is full of risks; we have to **make informed choices**.

Working with clients overseas - how to check out whether or not its ok. (Checking with **insurance companies**).

Beginning to take on new clients: how to incorporate the medium of meeting itself into the assessment. Different **goals**?

May some therapists have found a new space they like when working online - might you want to continue offering online sessions even when you don't 'have' to? The changing face of **training**, now and in the future.

Poem: "Lockdown" by Devon Simkin-Samways aged 8