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Coronavirus (COVID-19) Statement

In the light of the latest government guidance regarding the Coronavirus pandemic, and my ethical commitments and responsibilities, this statement sets out my current policy regarding availability of face-to-face counselling.

I am now able to offer face-to-face counselling sessions for clients in situations where remote working is ineffective or impossible and face-to-face counselling forms an essential form of contact to support mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Controls

Adjustments I have made in line with current public health advice include:

- Introducing a pre-session Covid risk assessment questionnaire.
- Maintaining a social distance of 2 metres in the counselling room and for entry/departure.
- Avoiding all hand-shaking or other physical contact.
- Washing my hands thoroughly before and after each session and providing facilities for you to sanitise your hands immediately on arrival / departure.
- Asking you to bring your own water or soft drink as water will not be provided in the counselling room.
- Asking you to fold any outer wear inside your own bag when you are in the therapy room or place it on the floor.
- Providing tissues in individual batches to cover your mouth and nose if you cough or sneeze so you can "catch it, bin it, kill it".
- Providing a bin to dispose of tissues which is emptied between sessions for appropriate hygiene if you do not take your tissues home for disposal.
- Ventilating the counselling room prior to and after sessions and maintaining air circulation with open windows. You are advised to bring extra layers if you feel the cold from open windows.
- Limiting the number of face-to-face sessions per day so that adequate cleaning and airing of the environment can be done.
- Cleaning down between counselling sessions including disinfecting all touch points such as door handles, surfaces and changing coverings on seating arm rests.
- Removing therapy resources as far as possible to minimise touch points.
- Encouraging you to use your own toilet facilities before attending a session.

Face coverings

As it is possible to maintain a two-metre distance between seats and upon arrival and when leaving, it is not mandatory that we wear face coverings. If you feel more comfortable wearing a face-covering, I am also willing to do this. However, it may affect the quality of our communication.

I will not be providing masks so please provide your own if you wish to wear one.

Before requesting face-to face counselling

If you are clinically vulnerable in a high-risk group or caring for somebody who is at high risk, please carefully consider the risks of attending counselling including walking, driving or using public transport to get here before making a decision to attend in person. Online and phone counselling sessions are also available. If you do decide to attend, please take all necessary precautions. I reserve the right to ask you to take a rapid flow test before attending counselling.

Contracting Coronavirus

Should I need to self-isolate, I will inform you via our normal agreed method of communication. I will not return to face-to face work until I have tested negative. Please do not attend counselling if you believe you have been exposed to the virus, feel unwell or have Covid-related symptoms. If you need to cancel a session within my normal notice period of 48 hours due to Coronavirus concerns, I will review this sympathetically within my cancellation policy.

If I were to contract the Coronavirus, due to the need to comply with the government Test and Trace tracking system, I would have to break confidentiality relating to the balance of public interest in limiting infection. I would provide your contact details so that you could be approached and tested. Under these circumstances I would disclose the minimum information for health professionals to be able to contact you and I would as far as possible, not disclose details of our professional relationship. More information about Test and Trace is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>.

If you or I are self-isolating as a precaution rather than due to illness, I can offer telephone, text, email or online support depending on circumstances as an alternative to face-to-face meetings. However, if either party is unwell, the best option, in line with health guidance, would be to take a break from therapy until fully recovered. I will continue to review public health and government directives and adjust my working practice accordingly.

This statement is subject to change at any time in line with government health advice.

Further information:

NHS information on symptoms

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Government Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

For more counselling information and resources please visit my website at www.life-chance.co.uk

Sue Seager May 2021