

Sligo Arts Psychotherapy Centre

Contract and consent form for Online Therapy

The current Covid-19 crisis has precipitated therapists the world over to close their face to face practices and move to online platforms until it is safe to meet face to face again. At Sligo Arts Psychotherapy Centre, we have had to adapt to alternative ways of working in order to continue your child's/adolescent's ongoing Play, Art or Drama therapy sessions.

In order to continue to practice ethically under our professional bodies IACAT and IAPT guidelines, we had to engage in training for temporary online therapy. We have now all participated in an up to date training in Tele-Play Therapy for children and adolescents.

With this as our working model, we will use and adapt it to conduct temporary online therapy sessions during the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a temporary measure until the HSE and state social distancing restrictions permit or are over, then we will return to Sligo Arts Psychotherapy Centre. Here Play, Art and Drama therapy sessions will resume as face to face therapy sessions in our therapy practice rooms.

Due to this new method of working a new informed contract and consent form needs to be agreed and signed. Please read this form carefully. It needs to be signed by both parents/carers and if your child is an adolescent aged 16+, they will also need to sign it. Please return this form to your child's/adolescent's therapist as soon as possible so that their therapy sessions may recommence. Thank you

Questions and Concerns

You may have questions and concerns about your child/adolescent accessing online video technology as they may have not engaged with online video calls before. You may be concerned about your child's/adolescent's safety accessing the internet for online therapy and for data protection and confidentiality.

We will set up a video consultation with parents/carers to go through any questions or concerns you may have around online therapy sessions. At this consultation, the therapist will discuss with you all the concerns and benefits of online therapy and how they will try their best to minimise any possible risks.

Online Therapy Concerns and Benefits

Concerns

- It is not possible for us to make a complete guarantee that data will not be breached while working with your child/adolescent on the internet.
- As the parent/carer, it may not be possible for you to provide an appropriate, safe and confidential online therapy space for your child/adolescent to have their online therapy sessions in.
- At times the internet connection or technology may not work and the therapy session may get cut off. If this should happen alternative methods will need to be used and consent given by the parents/carers and the adolescent beforehand for the child's/adolescent's therapist to call

the adolescents phone or the parents/carers phone for the use of text, email or a phone conversation to continue your child's/adolescent's online therapy session.

- Your child/adolescent may not want to engage in or have the attention span for their online therapy session.
- During your child's/adolescent's online therapy sessions, confidentiality can inadvertently be breached if someone else enters their therapy space/room or if someone can hear what they are saying from this therapy space/room.

Benefits

- Therapy sessions can continue even though we are all experiencing the unprecedented emergency of COVID-19 and while we are being directed to follow social distancing restrictions.
- Families have to travel less to appointments and can use that time to complete other familial tasks.
- Children's routines are less impacted
- Travel costs decrease
- Therapy and support can be provided regularly.
- Children who experience more anxiety symptoms as a result of emergency events occurring around them can obtain necessary intervention.

Location of Online Therapy.

The platform we will be using for online therapy is Zoom. It adheres to the HIPAA and EU GDPR standards for data protection. It is recommended by our professional bodies IACAT and IAPT.

The parent/carer will need to download the Zoom app and sign up to a Zoom account to receive your child's/adolescent's therapy session. Please familiarise yourselves and your child/adolescent with how Zoom works and how to join a meeting before their online therapy session.

In the parent/carer video consultation, your child/adolescent's therapist will discuss with you how they will set up your child's/adolescent's zoom therapy session at the scheduled time. This Zoom link may need to be sent through the parents/carers email.

The parents/carers will need to provide an appropriate, confidential and private space where your child/adolescent can attend their online therapy session. Your child/adolescent will need to turn up for their online therapy sessions appropriately dressed and on time, just as they would coming in person to their face to face therapy sessions.

The scheduled appointment day and time set for online therapy sessions will be the same day and time every week, just like face to face therapy sessions. If this needs to be rescheduled, this needs to be done with your child's/adolescent's therapist beforehand. If your child/adolescent does not turn up to their online therapy session at all, this session will still be charged for.

Confidentiality

Due to the nature of working online, we cannot control all aspects of confidentiality as we can in face to face therapy sessions in our own therapy practice rooms. We have chosen to conduct online therapy sessions through Zoom because it adheres to the HIPAA and EU GDPR standards for data protection. It is also recommended and endorsed as a safe online platform by our professional bodies IACAT and IAPTP.

We ask you as parents/carers to please maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality for your child's/adolescent's sessions now, as you did before.

- Please ensure that there is an adequate internet connection in your home.
- Please provide a confidential, private space for your child/adolescent to have their online therapy session. Where they can feel secure and confident that they will not be listened into or overheard.
- To provide consistency for their therapy sessions try as much as possible to provide the same location and space each week.
- Please provide headphones, if they are needed for more privacy
- Please set up a laptop or tablet in advance of the therapy session time, so we do not have to spend time setting up technology during the online therapy session.
- Please do not have smartphones in your space during the session but if this is not possible please make sure Siri or other voice activated devices are turned off.
- Please provide, if at all possible, a secure lockable place where your child/adolescent can store their artwork after their therapy sessions. This could be a box, cupboard or drawer. When we meet for face to face therapy sessions the artwork can be brought to your child's/adolescent's therapist for safekeeping at their place of practise.

Confidentiality is maintained between your child/adolescent and their therapist except in circumstances where your child/adolescent is at risk of harm from others, to themselves or to others. If any concerns of this nature arise, you will be informed. We are obliged to report any child protection concerns that may arise during the course of our work with your child/adolescent.

Materials

Due to the current circumstances and the limited time in which we had to provide some play or art materials for your child/adolescent, these will now have to be supplied by you, the parent/carers. It is important to supply your child/adolescent with some materials to express themselves creatively.

They could be whatever you have to hand around your house that your child/adolescent would like to use, do not go to unnecessary expense or effort to buy materials. The materials and what ones make you feel comfortable for your child/adolescent to use can be discussed in consultation with you and your child's/adolescent's therapist.

Your child/adolescent may want to use these materials between therapy sessions but it is helpful to store them in a separate container so you can access them quickly for the online therapy sessions.

Recording Sessions

To maintain confidentiality, it is important that sessions are not recorded without the mutual agreement between both parents/carers, your child/adolescent and their therapist. Any recording made must be mutually agreed upon beforehand by all parties mentioned and will only be used for the mutually agreed purposes.

Costs and payment of sessions

The cost and length of the online therapy sessions will be the same as face to face therapy sessions. Due to the nature of online therapy with children and adolescents, sometimes the length of a session can vary, this may be reflected in the cost. The length and cost will be decided by your child/adolescent's therapist before their online therapy session. This will only be applicable while the temporary online therapy sessions are in place due to the COVID-19 HSE and state social distancing restrictions.

When social distancing permits or is over, we will return to Sligo Arts Psychotherapy Centre. The cost and length of face to face therapy sessions will resume as before the restrictions.

Online therapy sessions need to be paid for the day before the scheduled online therapy session, via a bank transfer or Paypal. Please be mindful that some transfers can take a few days.

If this is not possible then a postal order or cheque is acceptable and can be posted to your child's/adolescent's therapist at their given address.

If parents/carers would like to pay for a few online therapy sessions ahead of time that is also possible.

If payment for the online therapy session has not been received the day before, this will be seen as a cancellation of your child's/adolescent's scheduled online therapy session.

As with face to face sessions we have a 24 hour cancellation policy therefore your child's/adolescent's therapist will still need to be informed by text or phone call if you cancel your child/adolescent's therapy session. If your child/adolescent does not turn up to their online therapy session, this session will be still charged for.

Parent/Carer Reviews

Parent/Carer review sessions will continue to occur but we will conduct them via Zoom while the COVID-19 social distancing restrictions are in place. Our online review sessions will follow the same agenda that we usually follow when we meet face to face.

Your child's/adolescent's therapist will schedule an online review session with you by telephone, text or email. The cost of these online review sessions will be the same as face to face review sessions. Please make sure that the review session is paid for, the day before or it will be seen as a cancellation.

Please make sure you set up your laptop or tablet in an appropriate, confidential and private space before the meeting so that time is not taken up sorting out technology.

As before Parents/Carers can text, telephone or email their child's/adolescent's therapist to schedule an online review session at any time during their child's/adolescent's therapy process.

Supervision and notes

During the Covid-19 emergency, as therapists, we will continue to engage in supervision, as we are ethically obliged to do so. As with face to face therapy sessions, after online therapy sessions short, concise and factual clinical notes will be kept by your child's/adolescent's therapist. These will be kept confidentially. Some material from the online therapy sessions may need to be used solely for the purposes of supervision or training. This will be used anonymously and confidentially.

Art/Drama/Play Therapists working at Sligo Arts Psychotherapy Centre work in accordance with Children First Guidelines and the code of ethics of their associations and are obliged to report any child protection concerns that arise in the course of their work. They adhere to EU GDPR guidelines in the storing of data.

For Parents:

I have read all the above information and I consent for my child

..... to engage in online therapy sessions with

..... within the guidelines outlined above.

Parent/Carer

Parent/Carer

Signed.....

Signed.....

For Adolescent Clients 16 + only

I,have read all the above information and as the

client and being 16 years and over, I consent to engage in online sessions with

..... within the guidelines outlined above.

Signed..... Date.....