

Digital and Remote Working Policy 2020

I have tried to keep this document as brief as possible. Please do take a moment to read it before therapy commences as it contains some important information.

Email and text messages

Emails may be vulnerable to viruses or human error and, as such, I advise you to be thoughtful about what you share with me by email. ***It may be best to keep any confidential, sensitive personal information within the consulting room.*** I may send PDF invoices at the end of each month by email. If you prefer that I do not communicate with you via email, please let me know and I will give, or send, you paper copies of the relevant documents and invoices.

Text is often the easiest and quickest way to communicate, and I may use this in rare circumstances if I need to cancel a session. This may also be the best way to let me know if you are unable to attend a session or you are running late. If you prefer me not to use text communication, please let me know.

Online and telephone therapy

Face-to-face therapy is my preferred and usual way of working, however, I recognise that this is not always possible. This has become especially pertinent in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. There may be other circumstances whereby remote therapy will be considered important in order to offer continuation to your therapy. Sometimes, however, I may consider it unhelpful, or even unsafe, to offer remote therapy. Therefore, a decision to work remotely will be thought about with you, in light of your needs and current circumstances, and this will be continually reviewed to ensure this way of working is in your best interests.

Current thinking around online therapy is continuing to evolve and I endeavour to stay informed with regards to this way of working. My online policy will continue to be shaped by new research and best practice, in line with my registering professional bodies.

Remote working agreement

Your safety and privacy are paramount. By participating in a session via video-conferencing, or telephone, you and I both agree to use a safe, secure environment. We agree not to record sessions, and I recommend that you use headphones where possible.

My preferred platform, at the time of writing, is Zoom. I use the 'waiting room' and 'password' facilities to ensure maximum security. However, no video-conferencing facility or telephone is 100% secure. I do my utmost to ensure your security but no use of technology is completely fail-safe. Please consider whether you feel comfortable using this

Shelley Williams BSc (Hons) PgDip. BPC FPC UKCP
Psychodynamic Psychotherapist

medium before working with me this way. If you change your mind, please talk to me so we can decide together how best to proceed. I may also consider other platforms if Zoom is not an option for you.

I endeavour to limit technological issues, however, there may be unavoidable circumstances where the session is interrupted or may end unexpectedly. In these circumstances, if we are using video, please call me by telephone. We may need to use text or email, if both video and telephone connection fail, to agree on the way forward. However, text and email will not be used for continuing our session.

Please ensure you are able to access a good connection before your session, as I would usually charge the full fee for missed or shortened sessions. However, if my connection fails and we are consequently unable to use either video or telephone, then I will make a fair assessment as to whether I charge a reduced fee or no fee.

Sessions last 50 minutes and begin and end at the agreed time, despite any technological issues that may arise.

The Internet and social media

I maintain a blog on my website through which I aim to share my thoughts and ideas relating to therapy and related topics, including the work and research of others which I deem relevant. I do not use real client material in my writing.

I maintain a twitter account in order to share my blog, ideas and articles, as well as to learn from current thinking and research in the field of psychotherapy and psychology. Boundaries and confidentiality are paramount and, as such, I will not knowingly follow or connect with any client or former client on this, or any other, social media platform.

Questions arising as a consequence of my online presence are best raised with me in therapy so that any issues can be thought about in the context of our work. This is important in order to protect the therapeutic nature of the work.

I will not search my clients on the Internet. If you would like to share anything with me, for example, a piece of writing or art work, we can discuss to ensure your privacy and confidentiality is maintained.

I endeavour to keep myself updated on current thought and research into the impact of technology and the Internet on therapeutic work, and my engagement with technology and online activity may change as my thoughts and ideas develop.