

## Preparation for Online/Phone Counselling with Protem

All Protem counsellors are professionally qualified (or in training) to work with clients face to face. In response to the situation with Covid 19, the counsellor you have been allocated has undertaken some additional training to ensure some core competencies in being able to practice professionally over the phone or online. We wish to inform you that we are not experts in practising this way, but are doing our best to continue to offer a service in the current climate, looking forward to a time when we can resume counselling face to face.

This information sheet has been sent to you ahead of your first session to try and make the process as smooth as possible.

We have chosen to use the platform Zoom for online work. This platform has been adopted widely by other counselling professionals at the present time. We request that you follow the advice given in this sheet and adhere to the points that pertain to this in the Counselling Contract, to ensure as much security as possible. Thank you.

- Your counsellor will ring you ahead of your first session to arrange a date and time and, if the work is to be online, discuss the process of how to join the Zoom meeting, the details of which will be sent to you in advance.
- If you are working with your counsellor online, please download Zoom ahead of your meeting, to be able to join the session using the meeting ID and password your counsellor sends to you (rather than via an email link)
- Please consider where you will have your phone/online session: it needs to be a quiet, uninterrupted space, where you are not concerned about being overheard. You may want to consider using earphones so that the counsellor cannot be heard speaking.
- Check notifications are turned off in settings – pop ups and/or alerts will interrupt your session.
- Check the device you are using is sufficiently charged/that you have a charger nearby.
- Check your virus protection/firewall is updated on the device you will be using.
- You may want a soft drink to hand.
- The first session will feel different to subsequent sessions because your counsellor will go through the counselling contract and GDPR form with you (this describes how we keep information about you) and answer any queries you may have.
- After the end of the session, it may be helpful to have something pleasant lined up to do, even if only for a few minutes, before you return to the offline/off phone world.