

## **ONLINE THERAPY INFORMATION**

### **Ludwig Esser Psychotherapy & Hypnotherapy: client information for online therapy sessions**

Due to the Corona Virus (COVID-19) restrictions I can only offer online therapy via Zoom, VSee, Signal or WhatsApp video calls until further notice. Even though there are a few interventions that cannot be done online, the quality of therapy is not influenced by this. The application of hypnosis is still possible and has been used with good results.

However, there can be some significant differences between therapy online and in a therapy room. Some of these may not be immediately obvious and I hope that this information will help to clarify and minimize the impact these differences could have on your experience of this form of therapy.

## **PRIVACY, LOCATION AND PREPARATION**

When we have face-to-face sessions, I always do my best to ensure your that your privacy is maintained. You have a safe space in my room, and you can rely on this every session. In a setting of online therapy, I can still provide the level of confidentiality on my side, but I can do nothing to protect your privacy in the environment you're in.

Therefore, please take any steps you need to ensure that you are in a private space where you can't be overheard and won't be interrupted (preferably using headphones for the audio). In a shared space you may need to ask others to respect your privacy by listening to music or television in another room. If necessary, make a note on your door. Please also give some consideration to the level of protection your computer has in terms of anti-virus/anti-spyware, and, if using a shared computer, note that some personal information is likely to be stored locally.

Just as I prepare the room for every client in face-to-face sessions, I do so for online sessions. It would be helpful if you could do the same. Please have the equipment set up and ready for each session. As far as possible, please try to arrange to be in the same location for your sessions.

If using a handheld device try to fix the device in a position about 30-40cm away from you, so that you can be clearly seen by the camera. There may be times in a session when you'll need to have your hands free, and it's also very tiring to watch an image that's constantly moving and shaking for a long time.

## **INTERRUPTIONS & DISTRACTIONS**

Please use flight mode or turn off any devices not being used for the online session. Also, quit programs and turn off notifications on the device you are using for the connection: It can be very

distracting to receive a message or phone call in the middle of a session. It's best to avoid that possibility.

## **COMFORT**

Ideally, select seating that is firm but comfortable, very much as you might find in the therapy room. Posture has an impact on how we feel, how alert we are, and so on. It's best to avoid lying stretched out on a couch or bed. Have a glass of water and a box of tissues close to hand, but avoid having snacks or meals; have these before or after your session.

## **CLOTHING**

Please dress as you would if attending a session in person. Again, how we dress has an impact on how we feel, and it's best to have the intention to approach each session just as you would if you were attending a face-to-face session.

## **TIMING**

Try to give yourself a little time before and after each session. This will allow you to be prepared for the work that we're doing. In a face-to-face setting this tends to happen when travelling to an appointment, even when we're not aware of it. After the session, give yourself time before engaging in another activity that requires your focused attention. Writing down some thoughts about the session, perhaps taking time for a short walk, or to do some gentle stretches.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES**

The therapy session is intended to be a safe space in which you can "unpack" difficult thoughts, feelings, memories, urges, and so on. One aspect of this is experienced through the physical space in which the therapy takes place. When leaving, it can feel as though this difficult material is "left behind" within this safe space. The online session presents quite a different dynamic, which is one reason why it's preferable to consider the location beforehand, maintain the same location when possible, and allow time afterwards, perhaps for a short walk outside or a grounding exercise. We can talk about this in more detail during the session.

## **WORKING WITH ZOOM AND VSEE:**

To use Zoom you need to have a camera, microphone, ideally a headset, and broadband or 4G signal that is strong enough to maintain a good connection.

I will invite you to connect with me by sending an invitation either via Zoom or VSee. With a link, just click on the link and follow the instructions. Keep your login details for your Zoom or VSee account safe and at hand when for when you sign in. Please create the account in good time before the

session. Once you have created your account, all you need to do is to have signed into your app and I will call you directly to begin the session.

The apps may take a while to get the session up and running, so please be patient. If something seems to go not as intended, give me a call and we will sort it out.

Please do not sign in with Google or Facebook as this does compromises your data privacy.

### **WORKING WITH WHATSAPP**

As an alternative to Zoom we can also use WhatsApp as a safe connection. In my experience the quality of the video call is less reliable, even with a good signal. Wi-Fi or a stable and strong enough 4G connection are required. You will need a smartphone or tablet for this. It does not work on laptops. The software can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google.