

## Assessment – Online Counselling Services

ACT is following recommendations for physical distancing during the current COVID-19 pandemic. We are not offering counselling services in-person but will continue to support our communities through phone and online counselling options. The following document is intended to help service users identify the most appropriate mode of counselling for them. We offer:

Phone: more accessible in terms of technology, requires access to private space for open and uninterrupted conversation. Maintains standard appointment structure.

Video (through Zoom for Telehealth): requires smart phone/computer with working camera/audio, headphones, good internet connection, and access to private space for open and uninterrupted conversation. Maintains standard appointment structure.

Private Conversations (through PrivacEmail, e-mail style communication): best suited for computer use but can be done on a smartphone. Internet connection required to sign in and to send (content can be added without a connection). Service users complete responses between appointments, and therefore have 1-2 weeks to read and respond to counsellor messages.

Live Chat (through PrivacEmail, instant messaging): best suited for computer use but can be done on a smartphone. Requires consistent internet connection, ideally in a private space. Maintains standard appointment structure.

Ask service users which mode of counselling they are interested in accessing. Review the listed questions with them to ensure the counselling mode they are interested in is appropriate for them.

### Phone Counselling

- 1.) Do you have a personal phone or is your phone shared?
- 2.) Do you have a private space to attend a counselling session?
  - a. Could you safely discuss the topics you need to out loud?  
**If NO, Private Conversations or Live Chat may be best.**  
**If YES, video or phone counselling is an option.**
  - b. Are you likely to be interrupted during a session (50-minute period)?  
**If NO, any platform is an option**  
**If YES, Private Conversations may be the best option, with live chat being secondary.**
- 3.) Are you seeking crisis/emergency support?  
**If YES, re-direct to a crisis service. Online counselling is not appropriate for crisis/emergencies.**

## Video Counselling

- 1.) Do you have regular access to a computer? Smart phone?
  - a. Is this a private or shared computer/smart phone?
  - b. If shared, do you know how to erase your browser history?
  - c. Do you have headphones that can connect to your phone/computer?
  
- 2.) Do you have reliable internet access?

***If NO, phone counselling or Private Conversations may be the best options. In Private Conversations connection is only needed for signing in, starting and saving/sending the message. This is manageable but not ideal for mobile use.***

***If YES, any online option is available.***
  
- 3.) Are you comfortable/experienced with video-based platforms (i.e. Skype or Zoom)?
  
- 4.) Do you have a private space to attend a counselling session?
  - a. Could you safely discuss the topics you need to out loud?

***If NO, Private Conversations or Live Chat may be best.***

***If YES, video counselling is an option.***
  
  - b. Are you likely to be interrupted during a session (50 minute period)?

***If NO, any platform is an option.***

***If YES, Private Conversations may be the best option, with live chat being secondary.***
  
- 5.) Are you seeking crisis/emergency support?

***If YES, re-direct to a crisis service. Online counselling is not appropriate for crisis/emergencies.***

## Email Counselling (asynchronous) and Live Chat (synchronous)

- 1.) Do you have regular access to a computer? Smart phone?
  - a. Is this a private or shared computer/smart phone?
  - b. If shared, do you know how to erase your browser history?
  - c. Do you have headphones that can connect to your phone/computer?
  
- 2.) Do you feel comfortable online and using new websites?
  - a. Comfort/experience with e-mail?
  - b. Comfort/experience with instant messaging?
  
- 3.) Do you feel comfortable reading, writing, and expressing yourself in English?
  - a. Are you comfortable with typing?
  - b. Are you able to type quickly enough to support an instant message conversation?

***If YES, any platform is suitable.***

***If NO, video or phone may be more accessible.***

- 4.) Are you seeking crisis/emergency support?  
***If YES, re-direct to a crisis service. Online counselling is not appropriate for crisis/emergencies***