

Guidance for clients about remote (video) sessions with your MCPS therapist

Please note that MCPS is a face-to-face service and remote sessions are only permitted under specific circumstances (for example, when it is not feasibly possible for either you or your therapist to come to Metanoia for a face-to-face session). Remote sessions MUST BE PLANNED IN ADVANCE and your therapist may not offer you a remote session if this has not been approved by the service.

Before you agree to work with your therapist remotely (i.e. online via a video session) there are a few things that it is important for you to consider:

1. Do you have a room you can use that is suitable for therapeutic work?

As you won't be in the clinic for your session, it is important that you can access an alternative space that is suitable for therapeutic work. This needs to be a quiet, confidential space where you won't be disturbed or overheard.

2. Do you feel that working remotely will be helpful to you at this time?

Some clients feel that they will be able to make good use of therapy when working remotely. However, if you have concerns that remote sessions may not give you enough support then you can talk with your therapist about ways to support yourself better and other sources of support you could access at this time.

If you decide to work remotely with your therapist you'll also need to:

1. Discuss all of the arrangements with your therapist:
 - It is important to be clear on all of the practical arrangements before you have a remote session with your therapist. For example, you need to know how you will connect with your therapist for the session, and what to do if there are any problems with connecting.
 - All of the normal MCPS policies around fees and cancellations will still apply.
 - Your therapist will discuss all of these arrangements with you before you work together remotely.
2. Treat your remote session in the same way that you would approach face-to-face sessions:
 - Your therapy session will be at your normal session time.
 - Similar to face-to-face sessions, each session will last 50 minutes.
 - You should approach your remote session in the same way that you approach face-to-face sessions – i.e. you should make sure that you are dressed appropriately, arrive on time, and that there are no distractions in the room.

3. Get ready for the session before it starts:

- Make sure you are warm and comfortable in the room.
- Charge up your laptop or tablet and phone (in case you need a backup device) and position it so that it is at eye level.
- Quit your internet browser, email system, and every app possible - it is easy to get distracted by an email or calendar notification and disconcerting for your therapist to hear an email arrive or the phone ring.
- Turn off your notifications and alerts — it's easy to be distracted by an email or calendar notification popping up in the corner of your screen.
- Remind anyone else who uses the WiFi that they must not stream or download large files (e.g. video games, movies, YouTube, etc) when a session is in progress.
- Tend to pets and/or family members, so there's no risk of being disturbed in session.

What to expect when working with your therapist remotely:

Working remotely is likely to feel different from face-to-face work. Some clients find that it feels easier to talk when working this way, and others feel the opposite. Similarly, some clients find that working remotely can mean that they connect to the work more readily, and others will find that it is hard to tune in to what is going on under the surface.

It can be really valuable to speak with your therapist about how you are experiencing the remote session — this can help your therapist to adjust the way that they are working (for example by pacing the sessions differently) and help you to feel safe and supported during the session.