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COVID-19 POLICY - FACE-TO-FACE COUNSELLING

Dear Client and/or Parent,

Government guidance with regards to Covid-19, has allowed for businesses providing services relating to mental health to remain open during lockdown. As lockdown restrictions start to ease, the guidance from both the Government and the BACP continues to inform any decision that may be made by The EmPOWERed Mind in terms of providing in-person services. The decision to offer face-to-face counselling will be considered on a client- by-client basis and made collaboratively between the client and The EmPOWERed Mind (the counsellor).

This policy outlines the steps I am taking to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of you and/or your child before, during and after their face-to-face counselling session. As part of our work together, The EmPOWERed Mind kindly asks that you too take care to stay updated on current restrictions and follow the guidelines in taking the necessary precautions to help stop the spread of the virus.

This policy will be updated as and when required in accordance with the relevant guidance issued by both the Government and British Association of Counsellors & Psychotherapists (BACP).



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The Premises

Your/Your child's face-to-face counselling session will take place at "the counselling room" which is located at: **Suite 12 Park Mews, 15b Park Lane, Hornchurch, RM11 1BB**. The EmPOWERed Mind has carried out a risk assessment of the premises and deems it safe to facilitate in-person counselling with appropriate safety measures in place, as outlined in this policy.

Common areas and surfaces in the building are routinely and thoroughly cleaned. As an extra precaution, the building is treated with an industrial anti-viral product every 72 hours.

Common touchable surfaces (such as intercom entry system, door handles, parking pass, surfaces, handrails etc.) within the building and room are cleaned with an anti-viral product before and after every session.

Any resources used within the counselling room during a session will be cleaned with an anti-viral product before and after every session.

Before attending your session at the Practice

Prior to your first initial appointment, you will be sent a "Covid-19 Questionnaire". It is essential that you complete the questionnaire and return it to me at least 24hours prior to your appointment time. Failure to return the questionnaire will mean that your counsellor **will not be able to provide face-to-face counselling**. In this instance, the terms of the cancellation policy will apply.

It is considered the client's/parent's responsibility to inform the counsellor of any changes in circumstances with regards to Covid-19.

Your arrival at The Practice



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Entry to Park Mews is via an intercom entry system. Please alert your counsellor of your arrival by pressing the button for “Suite 12”. Your counsellor will meet you at the front door. You will enter the premises through the main door. Once inside the entrance porch, please sanitise your hands using the sanitiser provided. Your counsellor will direct you upstairs to Suite 12, opening any doors for you as you proceed.

Inside the Room [Suite 12]

Once inside the room, please sanitise your hands using the hand sanitiser provided for you.

We will sit at least a one-metre distance from each other.

The counsellor holds responsibility for sanitising touchable surfaces and resources in the room before and after each session with clients. This will have been done before your arrival.

The counsellor holds responsibility for sanitising any resources used during a session. Again, this will have been done before your arrival.

Leaving the Premises

At the end of your session, your counsellor will escort you to the exit. Please sanitise your hands as you leave the building using the sanitiser provided in the entrance porch. Your counsellor will hold open any doors for you as you exit. Please do not remove your face mask until you are outside the building and in the open air.

Waiting Area

There is a small waiting area in the building which can be used by a maximum of two people. You are welcome to use this area whilst your child/young person is in



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their session. There is parking available at the premises and a parking permit will be given to you to display on your dashboard.

Use of Face Masks

The Government have announced that from Monday 17th May 2021: -

- We can socialise indoors with one other household.
- The wearing of face masks is no longer mandatory within schools.

I have carefully considered the impact of these changes to my practice and the potential risk to both myself and my client. As such, I consider that it is no longer necessary for the wearing of face masks in sessions to be mandatory. This is of course client choice and if you prefer we may continue wearing masks, I respect your choice and will act accordingly. We will continue to follow social distancing guidelines as far as is possible within the counselling room.

At the moment, the Landlord of the premises has not made it mandatory for the wearing of face masks whilst moving around the building corridors. Should this change, I will update my policy and advise accordingly.

Parental Consent

The counselling room can only safely accommodate two people whilst allowing for social distancing. Where it is required for parents to attend the initial appointment and give consent, this first appointment will be carried out online via Zoom.

Confidentiality

Should I or my family develop COVID-19 symptoms, I will let you know via text or email as soon as possible. If I or a family member test positive for COVID-19, I am obliged to inform the NHS Track and Trace of people that I've been in contact with. This will require me sharing your/your child's name and family contact details. It is



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not necessary for me to share, however, the context in which I know you or them. If this concerns you, please let me know and we can discuss this.

If you have Covid-19 symptoms on the day of your session...

- Please telephone your counsellor on 07436 228 885 as soon as possible to cancel your face-to-face appointment.
- If you have been notified by NHS Track and Trace that you should self-isolate, please also telephone me on 07436 228 885 to cancel your face-to-face session.
- If you are well but are having to self-isolate, your session will revert to online via Zoom (this will be discussed with you in your initial appointment).
- If you are feeling unwell, your session will be cancelled. Please contact your counsellor when you are feeling well again to book in your next session. My usual cancellation policy applies (please refer to my terms of engagement).
- Your session will also revert to online via Zoom in the instance that your counsellor has to self-isolate. You will be informed as soon as possible via text and email.
- Should you not wish to engage with online counselling via Zoom in the instances described above (and it is absolutely fine not to do so), your session will be cancelled until such a time that we are able to return to face-to-face.

This policy will be discussed with you during your initial appointment. If you do have any questions or concerns, you can also contact your counsellor on 07436 228885.