



Adaptations to Therapeutic services during COVID19

During these unprecedented times of COVID19 like many charities we are having to review and adapt the services we offer to ensure safety for our clients, staff and volunteers.

We recognize an increased need for emotional support for families and therefore have not stopped our therapeutic services but have put in clear measures and adaptations to carry these out safely.

Where possible sessions will take place online or via telephone contact. This will reduce the risk of infection whilst still providing the emotional support clients need. As this is a new way of working, we have set out below the changes and adaptations we are making to the different services we offer. We will be constantly reviewing and updating this document as restrictions and government advice changes.

Therapeutic support for children - virtual:

We have put in the following measure to ensure this is done safely and appropriately:

1. Online and virtual sessions will be offered to children aged 10 and over with consent from parents/carers.
2. For children younger than 10 years old, we will make an individual assessment as to whether this support would be appropriate based on the reason for referral and needs of the client. Where we are already working with a client, we will also take into consideration the engagement within sessions and how this can or cannot be transferred to an online provision.
3. Contracts for virtual sessions with children will be reviewed week-by-week due to the uncertainty around the current situation and the possibility of moving sessions to face-to-face where needed and appropriate.
4. Endings will be discussed as part of the process, and reviewed with the client and referrer/family where appropriate.
5. Sessions will be 30 minutes long for children.
6. As part of the referral process workers will talk to parents/referrers initially and gauge the need for the support, who will be involved in the support i.e whether the parent/carer will be present for the sessions.
7. Due to sessions taking place in the client's home, therapists will be aware of confidentiality and boundaries and discuss this with the client in the first session.
8. Therapist may incorporate different creative and play based activities appropriate to the needs of the client to explore feelings, develop the relationship and enable them to express themselves.
9. Therapists will receive regular supervision to process, reflect and explore the sessions with their supervisor via online supervision.



Therapeutic support for children - Face-to-face sessions:

While we have greatly reduced our face-to-face sessions we still feel that there will be times where this support will be appropriate. Our services provides a core level of support for children, young people and families emotionally. During COVID19 we are aware of an increased pressure, and potential for greater emotional distress for many families, we are therefore continuing to offer face-to-face sessions under the following restrictions:

1. Face-to-face sessions with children will take place within a school setting where the child is currently accessing or is eligible to access the provision.
2. Face-to-face sessions with children will be managed and undertaken in line with our guidance of working face-to-face with clients and all workers and clients MUST adhere to these.
3. Face-to-face sessions with children can take place at our offices where an assessment of need has been carried out and deemed as high for the child to access therapeutic support, where virtual sessions are not deemed appropriate, and where child, worker and parent/carer are able to adhere to our guidance for working face-to-face with clients.

Parental support:

We will continue to offer parental support during COVID19, again reviewing our methods for delivery of these services. This will predominantly take place online or via phone calls to reduce the risk of infection, to ensure the support is available whilst families have limited access to outside services and provide flexibility whilst children are not at school.

1. Virtual sessions carried out with parents will be focused on emotional support, attachment-based parenting and non-violence resistance therapy. Boundaries and confidentiality will be discussed initially and flexibility around session times will be offered to work around homeschooling and work commitments.
2. Contracts for virtual sessions will be reviewed week-by-week due to the uncertainty around the current situation and the possibility of moving sessions to face-to-face where needed and appropriate.
3. Sessions will be 1 hour long.
4. As part of the referral process workers will talk to parents/referrers initially and gauge the need for the support, who will be involved in the support, and how regularly this will take place.
5. Due to sessions taking place in the client's home, therapists will be aware of confidentiality and boundaries and discuss this with the client in the first session.
6. Therapists will receive regular supervision to process, reflect and explore the sessions with their supervisor via online supervision.



7. Emotional education programmes will be offered through webinars and online video resources, which parents can access. No face-to-face groups will be offered at this time.

Systemic family sessions

Due to the current restrictions of COVID19 and social distancing we do not feel we can provide this service face-to-face. Where we have previously supported families, and developed a therapeutic relationship we will consider re-referral for additional family sessions which will take place online. We will not take on new referrals for group family sessions at present as don't feel we can manage this safely with the current measures in place. We will review this and make changes to this when necessary.

Training

Our therapeutic support worker training due to start on the 1st of June 2020 will go ahead. The numbers will be restricted to a total of 4 participants and one trainer. We feel we can adhere to social distancing through this training and have set out guidelines to manage this.

We will still be offering the following training which we will adapt to be accessible online:

- Volunteer befriender training – Church and voluntary projects
- Working with anxiety in the classroom
- Working with anger in the classroom
- Working with traumatized children in the classroom
- Non-violence resistance approaches for school settings

These will be through group zoom sessions, where materials can be presented, discussed and explored together.

We will also offer webinars which will be made available for parents and professionals to access on:

- Anxiety,
- Managing emotions,
- Self-awareness,
- Non-violence resistance therapy,
- Attachment based parenting

These adaptations we will be reviewed regularly in line with government guidance and best practice.