



Counselling | Mediation | Supervision

| Virtual Services Indemnity

12 Victoria Road, Plumstead
Cape Town, Western Cape 7945
South Africa

kaylatesspattenden@theconnectgroup.co.za
079-513-7015

In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, The Connect Group is offering all clients access to virtual counselling services.

ABOUT VIRTUAL COUNSELLING

- Virtual counselling is a form of psychological service provided via internet technology, which can include consultation, treatment, emails, telephone conversations and/or education using interactive audio, video, or data communications.
- The purpose of virtual counselling is to promote psychological and social wellbeing, to maintain good mental health and protect child-clients.
- I understand that virtual counselling involves the communication of the client's medical/mental health information, both orally and/or visually via video call, text or phone call.
- I understand that virtual counselling based services are different to face to face sessions and therefore have their own limitations and benefits.
- Virtual counselling sessions will take place via an agreed-upon video calling or messaging service such as Zoom Video Conferencing, Whatsapp Chat or Whatsapp Video Call.
- These sessions will take place at a time agreed upon time suitable for both the client and the counsellor.
- Our counselling team has tried to make the online platform as engaging as possible. Play therapy tools, slideshows, videos and music will be used to make it as fun and engaging as possible for child clients.
- It is recommended that a legal guardian or alternative caregiver joins a child-client for the first tutorial session with the counsellor wherein the client will learn how to navigate the online platform.
- There is a risk that services could be disrupted or distorted by unforeseen technical difficulties. If the technical difficulties are too bad to recover the session, a new session will be scheduled.
- I understand that I/ my child may benefit from virtual counselling, but that results cannot be guaranteed.
- All virtual counselling services will be provided by qualified and registered social service professionals trained in virtual counselling methods.



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SESSION FINANCE

These services are charged within the same financial brackets as face to face sessions. Please review The Connect Group Terms & Conditions for these financial brackets and discuss an affordable rate therein with your counsellor.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Virtual counselling sessions are confidential so far as the counsellor and client can make them.
- Practices applied which promote confidentiality of the session include but are not limited to:
 - Counsellors will use encrypted platforms for counselling.
 - Invitations to the counselling session will only be made available to the counsellor and client.
 - Clients and counsellors will sit in a private room during the session.
 - I understand that there is a risk of the session being overheard by anyone near them if they are not in a private room while participating in virtual counselling.
 - Clients and the counsellor are encouraged to wear earphones so that the counselling dialogue is private.
 - Counsellors will not video record or voice record the session.
- Confidentiality is only broken if harm to self or others is suspected. Additional helping professionals and caregivers will be notified to ensure the clients safety and wellbeing.
- Reports are therapeutic in purpose. They are not forensic reports and therefore may not be used as evidence in a court proceeding without a Court Order. Forensic reports of any nature and for any purpose should be requested and discussed with your counsellor in advance.

RECORDING OF SESSIONS

- Audio and Video Recording of the sessions is prohibited.
- Written session notes will be made during and after counselling sessions to help the counsellor reflect and plan effectively for future sessions. These notes will be



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stored electronically via an encrypted online Drive. Only the counsellor and supervisor will have full access to this Drive. All notes will also be password protected to prevent unwanted access to these confidential notes

EXCLUSIONS AND TERMINATION OF COUNSELLING

- I accept that virtual counselling does not provide emergency services. If I or my child are experiencing an emergency situation, I understand that I can access emergency services via my local police station, hospital or via the SADAG emergency counselling hotline.
- Clients who are actively at risk of harm to self or others are not suitable for virtual counselling services.
- If a client is not suited to or struggles to successfully engage via virtual counselling, the counsellor may terminate services with him/her and may refer them to a better suited counselling service.
- Session absenteeism and frequent cancellations will result in the counsellor terminating services and referring the client for alternative counselling services.
- I understand that as a client of legal age and of sound mind and body/ as the legal guardian of the client, that I have the right to withdraw consent at any time without affecting my right to further care or treatment.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

I am responsible for ensuring the following conditions are in place, enabling me to access the virtual counselling services:

- o Telecommunications equipment including a computer, laptop or cell phone with internet access.
- o Arranging a location with sufficient lighting and privacy that is free from distractions or intrusions for my virtual counselling sessions.
- o Arriving 5 minutes early than the session start time to ensure a prompt start at the allocated session time.
- o To cancel any session that I am unable to make as timeously as possible.
- o For parents of child clients: To avail myself for the initial tutorial session, helping my child learn how to make the most of their online sessions.
- o For parents of child clients: To avail myself for virtual meetings with the counsellor whom will update me on my child's progress



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- I have read, understand and agree to the information provided above regarding virtual counselling.
- I understand that by signing the above, I am consenting to receiving virtual counselling from The Connect Group Practice.
- I understand the risks involved in virtual counselling. I acknowledge the protocols and procedures that The Connect Group has put in place and requested my cooperation in to mitigate the risks of virtual counselling.
- I hereby accept the possible risks and will not hold The Connect Group, my counsellor or any other organisation affiliates liable.

Client Name:

Client Signature:

Date:

Practitioner Name:

Practitioner Signature:

Date:

To voice any questions or concerns, please contact your Connect Group Counsellor via kaylatesspattenden@theconnectgroup.co.za