How to get the most out of your Online Therapy Session

Online therapy gives **us** the opportunity to do meaningful therapeutic work together from your own environment.

Creating enough privacy, comfort and freedom from distraction can help us focus on the work we have chosen to do together.

A useful way to think about it is to **create a therapy space at home**. For the time we're working together, wherever possible, we want to create enough space for you to simply be "in" therapy.

Here are a few things that can help us do that.

1. Create a Space That Works for Us

Choose somewhere you can speak openly, feel comfortable and are unlikely to be overheard or interrupted.

Wherever possible, **avoid doing your therapy session from your car or a public space**, such as a café or workplace common area.

If other people are around, let them know you need some uninterrupted time. Close the door and, where possible, use headphones for additional privacy.

We just need a space that is **private enough and comfortable enough for us to do the work.**

2. Reduce the Outside Noise

Online therapy happens in the middle of everyday life, so creating some separation from what's happening around you can help us stay with the work.

Before we start, consider:

- turning off phone, smart watch and other smart devices, and online notifications
- closing emails and messaging programs
- turning off additional screens or monitors
- putting work aside
- letting other people know you're unavailable.

If deliveries are common, you might put a sign on the door:

"Online appointment in progress. Please leave deliveries at the door. Thank you."

These small things help us create a boundary between **therapy time and everything else.**

3. Get the Technology Sorted

A quick check beforehand means we can spend more of the session focused on our work rather than troubleshooting technology.

Check your internet connection, camera, microphone and session link. Make sure your device is charged or plugged in and position your screen so you can sit comfortably.

Where possible, have headphones available. They provide additional privacy and allow us to use bilateral sounds, music or other audio resources during therapy.

Keep your phone nearby as a backup way for us to reconnect, but otherwise have it on silent or **Do Not Disturb**.

Sometimes technology simply doesn't cooperate. If the connection drops out, we'll usually try to reconnect through the session link and use your phone as a backup if needed.

If we're in the middle of deeper therapy work, having this simple plan means **we know what we'll do and how we'll reconnect**, rather than needing to work it out in the moment.

4. Get Comfortable & Have What We Need

Set yourself up so we have what we need once we've started.

Have **water and/or snacks nearby**, particularly for longer sessions, along with practical things such as tissues, glasses, a notebook or any worksheets we've been using.

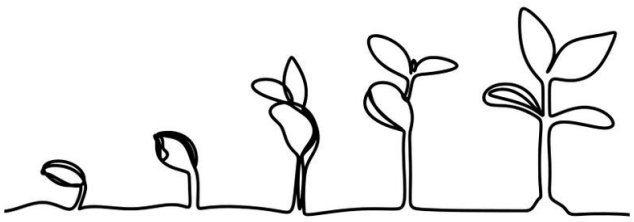
If sensory or grounding items help, have those within reach too. This might be:

- a teddy or favourite soft toy
- a soft blanket or cushion
- something with a comforting texture
- something you can hold or squeeze
- a cold drink
- another familiar object that helps you connect with the here and now.

There isn't a “right” grounding object. **If it works for you, bring it.**

Depending on what we're exploring, there may also be a particular therapy resource we've agreed to use. If we decide to use something different during the session, we'll work that out together.

Give yourself a little room to move as well. At times we may work with movement, body sensations, grounding or different ways of engaging with what you're noticing.



5. Don't Forget the Fur Babies

Fur babies can be a great source of comfort during online therapy.

If yours is happy curling up beside you and helps you settle, that's absolutely fine. If they're more likely to decide halfway through that it's dinner, walk or urgent cuddle time, consider what they might need before we begin.

For longer sessions, **we can arrange breaks for food, fur babies or essential check-ins** rather than trying to manage everything while we're working.

6. Give Yourself a Few Minutes to Arrive

If possible, having a few minutes between a work meeting, household task or another commitment and the start of therapy can help us shift into the session.

We might begin by simply noticing:

How are you arriving today?

What's been happening for you?

Is there something that feels important today?

We don't need to begin with a set agenda. Sometimes noticing **where we're starting from** is enough.

7. Our Working Topic & Using a Curiosity Lens

We may already have an **agreed working topic** — something we've identified that we would like to understand, explore or work through.

At other times, we may begin with what you're noticing and use a **curiosity lens** to see where the work takes us.

We can be curious about whatever shows up — thoughts, emotions, memories, beliefs, body sensations, images, reactions or different parts of yourself.

We will agree on the **deeper therapy technique** we use either before the session or together during the session. This might include **EMDR, DBR, Brainspotting, body-based work, parts work or another therapeutic approach.**

What we use can be guided by our agreed working topic, what is showing up, what feels useful and what we are curious to explore.

We don't need to know exactly where the session will go or explore everything.

Sometimes we're following what we already know. Sometimes we're curious enough to discover something we hadn't noticed before.

8. Stay “In” Our Therapy Session

When we meet in a therapy room, there is a natural separation from work, emails, household jobs and many of the other things competing for attention.

Online, they're still right there.

So, wherever possible, **we want to create the space to stay “in” our therapy session while we're here.**

Leaving emails, messages, other screens, household jobs and conversations until afterwards can help us stay connected to the work.

If something genuinely needs your attention, let me know. For longer sessions, we can intentionally take a break, attend to what needs attention and then come back to the work.

We don't have to try to do therapy and everyday life at the same time.

9. Breaks Are Part of the Process

Particularly during longer or intensive sessions, we can deliberately build in breaks.

We can use them for food or a drink, the bathroom, stretching, checking on a fur baby, completing an essential check-in or simply resetting.

An intentional break allows us to attend to what is needed and then **come back to the work with our attention available again.**

10. Have a Simple Safety & Support Plan

As part of our preparation for online therapy, you have had the opportunity in your **pre-workbook** to nominate a trusted person who can be contacted if assistance or additional support is needed.

If you haven't nominated someone, **we can check this when we begin** so we have a plan available if we need one.

We may also confirm where you are for the session, the best number to reach you if our connection drops out, and what we'll do if we need to pause, change direction or stop the deeper therapy work.

Having a support person nominated doesn't mean we expect to need them. It simply gives us **another option if additional support is required.**

If at any point there is a concern about immediate safety, we can talk about what support is needed. If there is an immediate emergency, contact emergency services or attend your nearest emergency department.

11. Give Yourself Some Space Afterwards

Your processing and reflections don’t doesn't necessarily stop the moment the screen closes.

Sometimes you may finish feeling settled and clear. At other times, thoughts, emotions, memories or body sensations may continue to shift afterwards.

Where possible, creating a little breathing room before moving into the next part of your day can be useful, particularly after deeper therapeutic work or a longer session.

This might include having something to eat or drink, taking a walk, sitting quietly, journalling, grounding, spending some time outside or connecting with someone supportive.

If you feel tired, distracted, activated or unsettled, take that into consideration before driving or doing something that requires concentration.

12. Making the Space Ours

Online therapy doesn't require a completely quiet house, seamless technology or a particular frame of mind.

Real life still happens.

The aim is to create enough space for us to turn our attention towards the work, reduce outside distractions and stay curious about what's happening.

And, wherever possible, **create the space for us to simply be in therapy while we're here.**

A little preparation beforehand helps us settle in, switch off from everything else and make the most of our time together.