

## **PARENT/CARER & YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO INTERIM TELE-HEALTH ADOLESCENT COUNSELLING SERVICE**

### **Overview**

“Telehealth is the provision of health care remotely by means of a variety of telecommunication tools, including telephones, smartphones, and mobile wireless devices, with or without a video connection. Telehealth is growing rapidly and has the potential to transform the delivery of health care for millions of persons (E.R. Dorsey, E.J. Topol, 2016)”.

During the Covid19 world pandemic, and in the interim of resuming face-to-face counselling, Wexford Rape Crisis provided Tele-Therapy to young people as well as all associated parent/carer consultations via telephone and/or online face-to-face platforms. We have continued to offer telehealth service where it is a suitable medium for young people.

### **Tele-Health Therapy**

Tele-Health Therapy is provided when children, adolescents or families cannot attend therapy and parent consultation sessions in a more traditional counselling office. The recent Covid-19 pandemic precipitated therapists the world over to close their face-to-face practices and move to online platforms until it is safe to meet face-to-face. All Wexford Rape Crisis Centre psychotherapists were involved in up-to-date training in this model of therapy.

Parents and indeed young people themselves may have concerns about the effectiveness of engaging in therapy via online platforms and/or telephone. It is worth noting that research indicates that tele-health counselling can be just as effective as traditional counselling.

### **Risks and Benefits of Tele-Health Therapy**

#### **Risks**

1. Data could be breached
2. Technology may not work
3. Young person may not engage in therapy
4. Confidentiality can be breached inadvertently

Parent/s and Carer/s are asked to attend the beginning part of their son/daughter's first tele-health counselling session. The psychotherapist will discuss steps being taken to mitigate these risks and answer any other questions that you may have. Parents and Carers will be asked to verbally confirm to the counsellor that they have read the information contained in this important document. At any stage of therapy, your son/daughter's psychotherapist is happy to have a phone call or video conference with you. Please note that Wexford Rape Crisis Centre's psychotherapists' electronic devices have been screened by our IT Consultants to ensure that necessary security systems are installed however it is the responsibility of parents and carers of young people to ensure that their own

electronic devices have up-to-date security protection too.

### **Benefits**

1. Therapy can continue even though community members are directed to follow social distancing
2. Families have to travel less to appointments and can use that time to complete other familial tasks.
3. Young people's routines are less impacted.
4. Travel costs decrease.
5. Young people who experience more anxiety symptoms as a result of emergency events occurring around them can obtain necessary intervention.
6. Parents & Carers can continue to receive parent support.
7. Research indicates that tele-health counselling can be just as effective as conventional psychotherapy.

### **How will the Telephone/On-line Counselling Work?**

- Contact will be made by either the Adolescent Counsellor or Manager to set up a telephone/online session. This may involve requesting your e-mail address (this will only be used for the purposes of setting up this service and for no other purpose).
- A date and time will be agreed by the counsellor and parent for the young person's session.
- Parent/parents will be requested to be present for the beginning part of the first session to outline how this service will work. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with this document prior to their son/daughter commencing tele-health counselling.
- Confidentiality and the limitations thereof will be explained (as per the assessment).
- Child Protection guidelines will also be explained and agreed upon (as per the assessment).
- Guidelines for the tel/on-line service will also be reviewed to include:
  - Suitable environment for the session
  - Use of technology/technological issues
  - Privacy
  - Support after a session
  - Guidelines for support between sessions and the limitations thereof
  - Emergency numbers for out of hours support
  - Communication between Parent/Guardians
  - Cancellations of sessions

### **Location**

Tele-Health Online Therapy can be accessed by a link that we provide. If a password is required to get into the web counselling space we will advise you of this also. All necessary log-in information will be sent to you in advance of the scheduled tele-health therapy session each week. It is imperative that you store all log-in details and passwords securely, and never share these details with others. Please provide yourself and your son/daughter with the opportunity to set up a laptop or smartphone in advance of their session time so you do not have to spend time engaging in technology set up. We also ask parents to be accessible by phone call during counselling sessions (just as you would be during face-to-face counselling sessions in the office). The psychotherapist will call you (on a withheld number) if they are experiencing technology issues during the therapy time or if it is clear that your son/daughter is struggling in session. All mandatory child protection reporting procedures apply during this interim period of tele-health therapy (reporting information would have been outlined to you during the Intake Consultation

with your son/daughter's psychotherapist). If the psychotherapist has any concerns for your son/daughter's wellbeing, they will contact you immediately on the telephone number provided by you on the referral form. It is imperative that you are available to take a call during the counselling session. This is no different than waiting nearby while your son/daughter attends face-to-face counselling in the WRC office, except that you now get to complete housework, have a cup of tea or make dinner while the counselling session is in progress!

## **The Therapy Space**

Your son/daughter's Tele-Health Therapy space should be away from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the household where possible. A door that closes for confidentiality is important as well.

The psychotherapist will use a headset during telephone/video counselling sessions. We suggest that clients also use earphones/headset too if one is available to them. If not, it is important to ensure that the volume on the device that they are using is loud enough for them to hear their counsellor but not so loud that conversations can be heard outside of the room.

## **Recording Sessions**

Recording of counselling sessions by any means is strictly prohibited.

## **Parent Consultation & Communication**

Parent consultations will continue to occur but psychotherapists will communicate via phone/ online platforms. Parent meetings will follow the same agenda that is usually followed when meeting face-to-face in the office.

### Communication with WRC and your counsellor:

**All** contact regarding your son/daughter's counselling is via the centre on the following numbers: (Freephone number) 1800 33 00 33 or you can text or call 086 1724608. These lines are managed Monday-to Friday 08.30am – 5.30pm.

Cancellations: If you need to change the date/time an appointment please contact the centre on the numbers above.

## **Costs**

**Counselling Fees:** Counselling sessions are charged at €20 per session. Any difficulties with payment, please talk to your counsellor when commencing counselling. A receipt will be issued for all fees.

## **GDPR:**

**Data Protection:** WRC is a Data Controller and complies with the rights of individuals under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

WRC is committed to the principles of Data Protection as follows:

- We collect and process your personal data fairly so that we can fully assess your requirements for our services and will only use it for these purposes.
- We commit to keep your personal data secure, up to date, and only for as long as is necessary.
- We may in certain circumstances share your personal data with third parties i.e. Tusla, General Practitioners, or An Garda Síochána, due to our legal obligations.
- We keep a record of your assessment including your name, address, phone number and record of number of sessions attended.

- We keep separate counselling notes that are brief, anonymised and confidential unless requested by the court system. If this happens, we invite you in to review before sending them to any relevant party.
- All information is kept secured. Client records/notes are kept for 7 years after which all records/notes are shredded. If notes are required for legal or personal reasons they are released through the Manager of the WRC.
- We process your personal data including sensitive personal data in a lawful manner as required by GDPR legislation.

Under GDPR legislation, you have the right to:

- Be informed about any of your personal data held by WRC.
- Access this data through a Subject Access Request.
- Rectify, erase, restrict processing of your data, or withdraw consent.
- The right to Data Portability
- The right to object to the processing of your personal data

Details on your rights can be accessed from the Data Protection Commissioner or at [www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie) (we are also happy to provide you with a copy of this handbook if you so wish).

**Feedback:** We strive to provide the best service that we can and as such we value your opinion on what we do and how we do it. Feedback forms are available to you at any stage and we would love to hear your opinion.

**If you are not happy:** If you are not happy please speak to your counsellor and if this is not possible please contact the Manager on (086)1724608. Our complaints policy and procedures can be accessed on our website [www.wexfordrapecrisis.com](http://www.wexfordrapecrisis.com) or we are happy to give you a hardcopy of the policy and procedure.

**I/We,..... have read the above terms and consent to my son/daughter ..... engaging in Tele-Health counselling with their designated Adolescent Psychotherapist. I also agree the processing of personal data as described. I understand I may withdraw my consent at any time by notifying WRC.**

**Signed..... Date.....**