



Therapy provision at The Bridge Foundation during Covid

Since the start of the pandemic, we are pleased to say that we have been able to adapt our services as the situation changes and have developed plans to be able to safely continue to deliver therapy face to face or online.

Your therapist will work with you to establish whether face to face or online therapy is most suitable for you and/or your child's particular circumstances and the current situation.

Guidance for the safety measures for face to face and online therapy are detailed below. We ask that you read and agree the guidance for both when you start therapy with us so we are able to adapt to the changing situation and your needs.

Guidance for Online therapy

Having your and/or your child's therapy sessions online is likely to feel very different to face-to-face appointments, and you will be able to think through these differences with your and/or your child's therapist.

As far as possible, try to treat your appointment exactly as you would treat attending a therapy appointment in person:

Where?

- It is important that (as far as possible) you are always in the same space for your therapy
- Choose a room where there are as few distractions as possible.
- Position the screen in the same place each time
- Make sure there are no interruptions; this would include other people / pets entering the room, phone ringing, answering the door (etc.)
- Choose somewhere you can't be overheard
- Ensure that you're not multi-tasking (close other windows on your computer) & make sure your emails can't pop up on the screen & that your phone is away and on silent.
- Make sure that you're available on time for the start of the session and that you can continue until the end of the session

- Either sit on a chair as you would normally, or lie on a couch if this is what you would usually do in therapy
- Try to stay in one place rather than move around during your session
- Remember you can look away from the camera, just as you might look away if meeting face to face

Other Practical issues

- Make sure your phone / computer is fully charged or plugged in
- Have everything nearby that you might need, e.g. glass of water, tissues
- The therapist will call you using the platform that you have chosen (Zoom, Facetime etc.). If the internet link breaks, the therapist will try to re-establish it (you do not need to try to do this)
- Try to allow some space immediately following the session before you return to the rest of your life, just as you would usually have some travel time to adjust between the two settings.
- Please ensure that you have checked your own privacy settings & that these are set as securely as possible for whichever platform you are using
- Under no circumstances must you / your child record any part of the session or take screen shots, and the therapist will also never record your session.

For children:

- Agree with your child's therapist how they can contact you if they need to during your child's session
- Talk with your child in advance about what it might be like working online & how to manage this, e.g. to stay in the same room, to have everything they might need handy, to try to stay more or less on camera
- For some children having play materials available will be useful, e.g. pen, paper, pens, sticky shapes, cars, toy animals etc., just as they might usually have in their therapy session if meeting face to face – talk with your child's therapist about this
- Make sure your child is familiar with the technology if you will be leaving the room, & they know where to find you if the technology doesn't work properly.
- If your child is using Zoom it would be helpful if they know how to share the screen & use the whiteboard function, if they might like to share their drawings / interact with the therapist in this way
- (young children) Please ensure that your child does not take any portable device (tablet / phone) with them if they need the toilet during the session

Guidance for Face to Face Therapy

We've managed to come up with a plan that helps to reduce some of the risk associated with coronavirus and is in line with current government guidance. As the guidance changes so do our measures.

The key things that you need to know about are listed below. You / the person attending the appointment (e.g. your child) may also have your own concerns – please do discuss these in advance with your therapist before you decide to start or resume face-to-face work. If you are a parent of a child that is attending for appointments then please discuss this document with them or show them the document '[Keeping Safe at the Bridge – Information for Children](#)' – aimed at under 12s.

We have put in place a number of measures to make things safer, including changes to our regular cleaning routine.

Please do think carefully about whether or not you are safe to come for therapy in the building before making your decision. Please note that if your child, partner or another member of your family is attending then all of these things apply to them as well. You will need to weigh up many things including:

- Can you / the person attending the appointment get to & from the building safely?
- Do you / the person attending the appointment fall in a clinically extremely vulnerable or vulnerable group?
- Are you / the person attending the appointment happy to follow the procedures we have put in place to make things as safe as possible in the building?

Confidentiality:

Under the government's track-and-trace system, if the therapist develops symptoms of the virus and has met with you in person then they will need to provide your contact details, and vice-versa (you may also be asked to provide details of The Bridge Foundation & your therapist's name if you develop symptoms).

Illness:

If you / the person attending the appointment are unwell with any of the following, please do not enter the building. If you / the person attending the appointment become unwell with any of the following during your

appointment then we would ask that you leave your appointment. The same will apply to your therapist:

- **a new continuous / persistent cough**
- **high temperature**
- **a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste**

If you / the person attending the appointment receive a diagnosis of coronavirus within 7 days following an appointment at The Bridge Foundation please notify us by calling us on 0117 9424510 so that we are able to take appropriate action to keep our staff and other clients safe.

Arriving & leaving the building:

- It is optional for staff and clients to wear face coverings whilst in the building, including when arriving and when in a session. Please discuss this with your therapist before face to face sessions begin.
- We will be staggering start and end times of sessions so that you're not arriving or leaving at the same time as other people – this is likely to mean that your appointment time & room will change again in the future if we are able to get back to our normal working pattern.
- Unfortunately, there won't be a waiting area, so please arrive at exactly the time your session will start. Your therapist will let you know what to do when you arrive (as these arrangements depend on which room you will be in) – you will need to keep at least 2 metres apart from your therapist as you arrive & leave, so your therapist will let you know how to do this.
- Please wash your hands thoroughly when you arrive in the building.
- If you have attended before, you may be in a different room to normal.

In the therapy room – things will look a bit different:

- The chairs will be at least 2 metres apart.
- Unfortunately, we will not be able to provide water – please do feel free to bring your own.
- Where weather permits, the window will be open & in the smaller rooms there will be a fan by the window to help with air circulation.

Hand washing etc.

- Please follow any directions that we have put up in the bathroom for your own & others' safety.
- We will provide hand gel in each of the therapy rooms – please use it, especially after coughs & sneezes.

- We will be following the “catch it, bin it, kill it” message in relation to using tissues for coughs & sneezes, please use the tissues & bins provided.

Other

- Please pay by direct debit or bank transfer. We will not be accepting cash. If there are exceptional circumstances as to why you need to pay by cheque, please contact our Finance Manager Annabelle Patel: info@bridgefoundation.org.uk

Online therapy agreement: While the therapist will take all steps regarding privacy of appointments in terms of adjusting settings to the most secure settings possible, I accept that using an online platform may always carry some risks in terms of breach of privacy that would not be present in face-to-face work.

Face to face agreement: I accept that while every step has been taken to reduce the level of risk, The Bridge Foundation cannot guarantee that there is no risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus (or any other virus) on its premises. I agree to follow the measures outlined in this document, and understand that face- to-face appointments can only continue as long as these measures are followed. I accept that as government guidance and guidance from professional bodies is updated then the steps that clients at The Bridge Foundation must follow will also be updated.

I have read the guidance on face to face and online therapy and wish to proceed with therapy at The Bridge Foundation on that basis.

Name:

Name of person attending (if different, e.g. your child):

Date: