



Ros Best Counselling
Effective Online and In-Person Counselling for Couples, Individuals and Families

Informed Consent – Online Counselling

Client Name(s): _____

Online Counselling via Zoom Pro:

Zoom Personal Meeting ID: 899 477 5893

Password: 529927

Ros Best has training in online counselling. Here are the findings the trainers recommend therapists share with you (Sources: May 2020 webinars by Lawrence Murphy; Arianne Struik; BCACC “Complying With Applicable Privacy Law”, March 16, 2020; WorkSafe BC, May 2020):

Zoom:

- Ros Best has adjusted the Zoom settings to require a password to enter, and a Waiting Room from which Ros brings clients into the virtual office (no Zoombombers!). Ros does not record the sessions, nor are clients enabled to record sessions, because...
- Zoom is an American company, which means that information flowing through Zoom and Zoom’s Cloud is subject to the American Patriot Act, as I understand it. Further, electronic communication is parsed during transmission, with the parts being sent via whichever system and country has space in that milisecond. It cannot be guaranteed with any server that all electronic communication resides only in Canada. This said,
- Zoom Pro, which Ros uses, is PIPA-compliant, that is, is compliant with protection of privacy legislation for private practice in British Columbia. Ros uses the setting that requires end-to-end encryption, including on the client’s end. If parts of our session were intercepted, the encrypted bits would be useless to hackers (or authorities?).
- **Zoom requires, as of May 30, 2020, that clients have downloaded and installed the Zoom version 5 update.**

Essential to Online Therapy:

- Online therapy is only appropriate when the client is able to find a private, safe space where they can’t be overheard, even if that is the car, the bathroom, or ??? It can be tough maintaining privacy in the home with kids and/or a partner at home. Let your kids know that during your session, it would help you out a lot not to be disturbed.
- Turn your screen away from the room entrance if possible.
- Have the room ready, with tea and tissues perhaps, so you are prepared mentally to get the richest benefit from our session.

Online Counselling Therapy (Avoiding trouble...)(Source: BCACC Safeguards)

- Any devices used for mobile or online connection must be protected with passwords or better
- Use a private window when using online applications:
 - Open an Incognito window on Chrome or
 - Open a private window on Safari and Firefox, before opening the application.
- Use devices that only you have access to, not ones you share with others, if possible
- Be extra cautious when using personal devices that have many free applications installed on them (Social network websites, etc.); privacy settings should be set to maximum protection.
- Ensure any system upgrades for devices are installed immediately for security patches
- Use only private WiFi connections, not café free internet services.
- If you have access to a Virtual Private Network (VPN) or can set up one, use this to ensure that you have encrypted connections
- Clients using Zoom on their phone need to close other apps, especially free apps that have permission to monitor other phone app activity. Clients need to ensure that they have current anti-virus protection, and have all the current updates.
- Use a headset or Bluetooth device to improve sound quality.
- If the connection is poor or intermittent, please leave the meeting and log back in, and, of course, close down all other programs running in the background, draining bandwidth. If this is a frequent problem, consider plugging in your computer directly to the Wifi box.
- Clients and therapists must adjust expectations for therapy. We cannot read each other's full body language. Further, if the connection is unsteady, words can get garbled, visuals can drop out or be distorted, and so can interfere with doing depth work. Ros will check in with you more frequently, to make sure I am on track with you throughout the session. (Source: Webinars by Murphy, Struik)
- Occasionally it is necessary for the client to reconnect entirely. In this instance, Ros will wait for you to enter the waiting room again. Cell phone texting can be helpful for us to figure out how to handle the disconnect if it is approaching the end of session.

Research About Online Therapy:

- Research (done before Covid-19) shows that online therapy is just as effective as therapy in person.
- Some clients find it easier to explore deeper topics online, some find it harder. What suits you best?
- EMDR is possible online, but it is challenging to do deep work in EMDR online, according to EMDR specialist, Arianne Struik.

Your personal information from the Couples Counselling, Family Counselling or Individual Counselling Form, as well as this form and/or the In-Person Informed Consent form, in the short term will reside on paper in Ros' locked filing cabinet at her office (which locks), but new forms will reside on the Jane App, which also is PIPA compliant. The new forms will request less personal demographic information (for your security). All documents are deleted/ shredded after 7 years. ICBC documents require more information; we will discuss how you wish me to deal with ICBC and your privacy.

If you do not wish to use Zoom Pro or in-person therapy during the pandemic, we can do therapy over the phone. Landlines are more secure than mobile phones. Let Ros know your preference.

The Zoom meeting room number and Password will always be the same (see Header for this document), though I will send you the link the evening before.

I have read and understand the above, and with this information, I consent to participating in online therapy with Ros Best, using Zoom Pro.

Signature of Client A

Signature of Client B (if applicable)

MM/DD/YYYY

Signature of Therapist (Ros Best Clark)

MM/DD/YYYY