



ADAPTING COUNSELLING TRAINING FOR ONLINE PARTICIPATION DURING COVID 19

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Aims and Structure of the Webinar

- **Do we want to / do we have to?** Surfacing/Rehearsing our personal responses to this idea and identifying what might get in the way of being open to making this shift
- **What might be lost?** Considering how / whether we can provide an equivalent or at least 'good enough' experience of each of the elements of professional counselling training online
- **Where to begin?** – Practicalities of making the adaptation and what might be some principles of good practice?
- **Examples** of counselling practice development online and group process/ personal development
- **Discussion Forum**

From Face to Face to Online

The aim in a short session is not to change how as tutors we 'teach' but to help consider how we might adapt what we already know to this new environment

Together sharing good practice and developing guidance

A good outcome would be as tutors to have greater confidence to trust our own knowledge and abilities

Good teaching is good teaching, whether F2F or online

A good F2F lesson plan can be adapted to 'work' engagingly for 'live' online delivery



Personal Considerations - Pause for Reflection

- **Take a moment to reflect on your own relationship with technology. Are there things about working online that you are worried about or looking forward to?**
- **How might these aspects be a block or a support to you engaging with students via this medium?**



Personal Considerations - Pause for Reflection

STUDENTS

Hopefully our students can feel empowered to **choose** to continue online BUT, as with us:—

- What is their relationship with technology
- With training in their own home (a place of safety OR the place where problems are felt most acutely, where there is no privacy etc)

Additional Equity Considerations during Covid

- **Temporal Equity** – Lockdown has been very different for some of our students than for others – those who are critical workers, with caring responsibilities or children now have significantly less time
- **Spacial Equity** – Lockdown for some students might compromise their ability to have a private space to participate or study for the course
- **Technological Equity** – Some students might not have access to a computer and sufficiently stable internet connection
- Covid exposes and may exaggerate existing inequalities

Professional counselling training has to be **experiential, relational, contactful, focused** in large part on the self development of the trainee and on 'aware' practice development

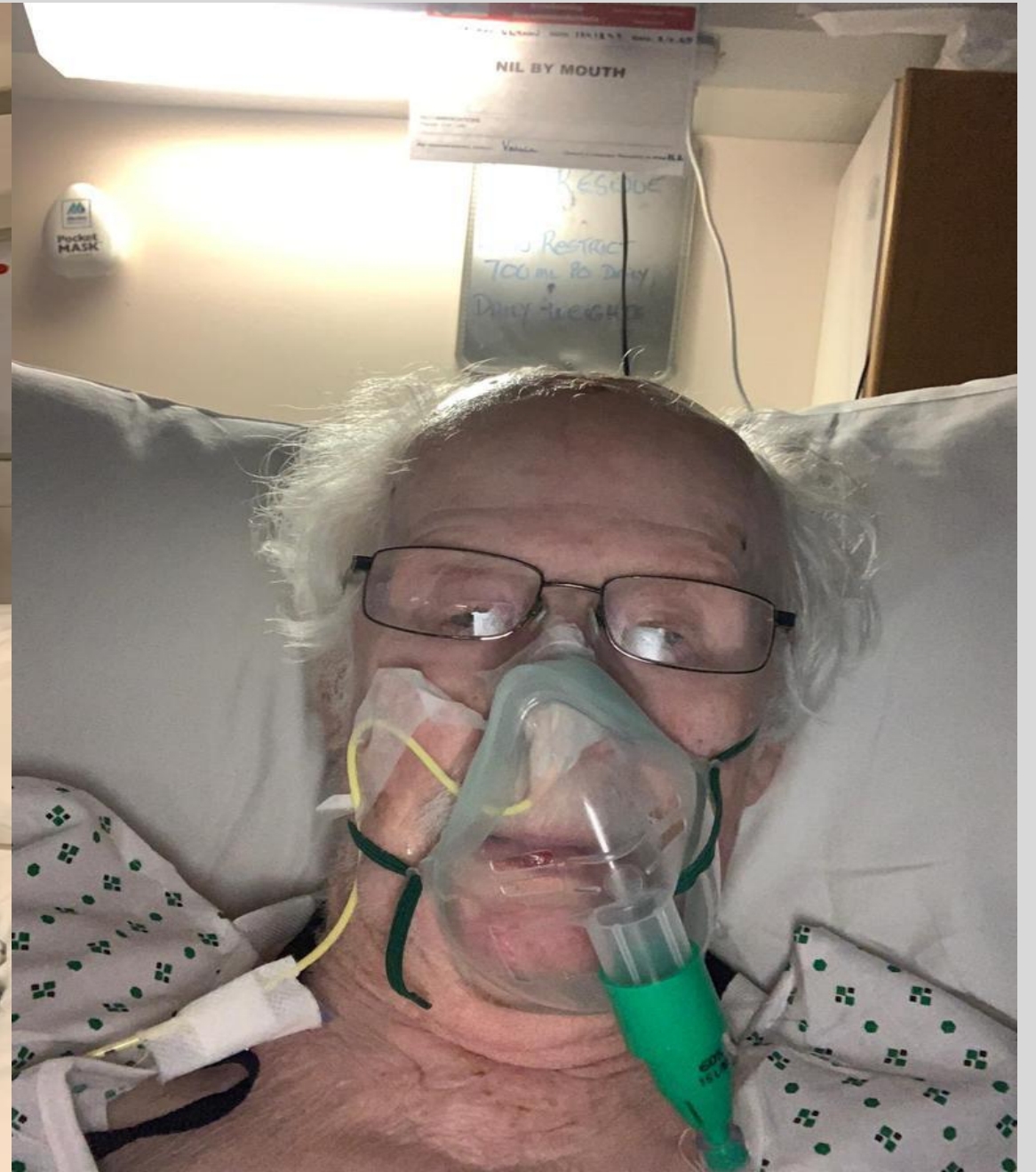


So then how to replicate these key aspects online?





A Personal Covid Story of Online Contact









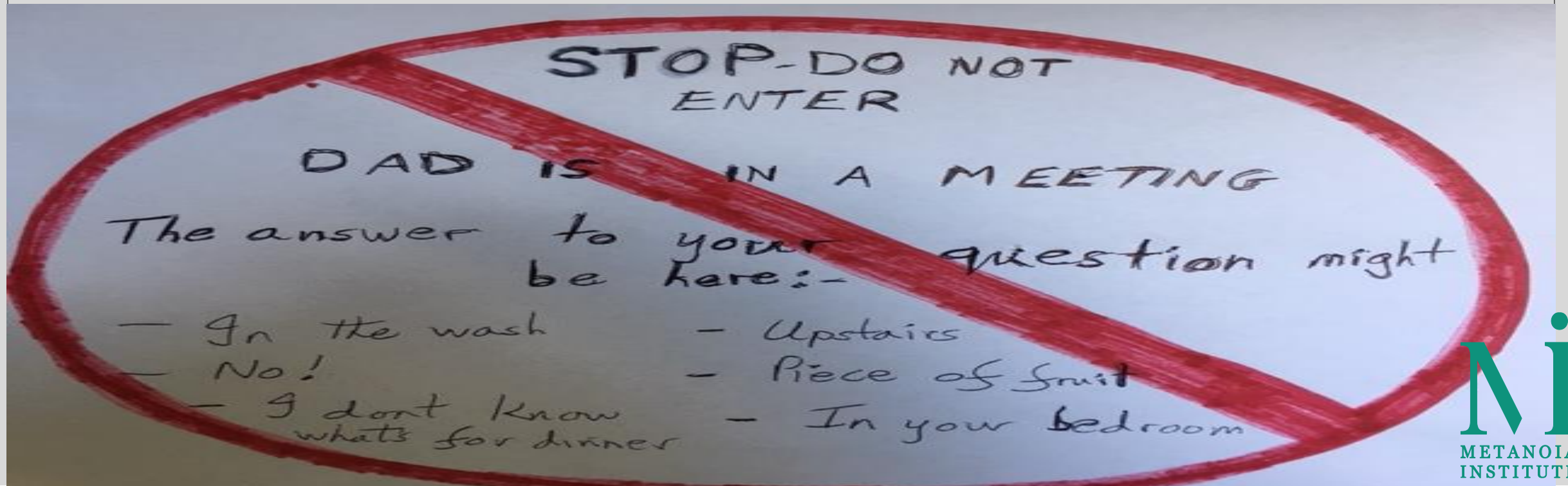
Well Begun - Half Done (RE)Setting the Training Space Together – Practicalities-

- Aim to emulate as closely as possible the elements that participants would experience in a F2F situation
- Support participants to identify somewhere private /undisturbed /safe where they can feel free to talk/ emote
- Consider having as consistent as possible a place to allocate for their training somewhere they might even go to and check in with themselves between sessions
- Suggest people have water and tissues on hand to avoid any interruption
- Check screen view/ volume etc.

(RE)Setting the Training Space Together

– Boundaries

Collaboratively re-negotiate (Online) ground rules /boundaries (time /respect/ eating / turn-taking – (issues of likely overtalking etc –recognize we are all in the same situation)



(RE)Setting the Training Space Together

Re- Contracting

Online Contract might include additions like :

- Connection/ disconnection strategies
 - Full engagement (no catching up on emails etc)
 - More short breaks for posture support/ community time (in absence of social breaks)
 - Self support in group
 - Confidentiality / Data protection issues for any recordings
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- If some interruption possible/ unavoidable, ask participants to highlight this in advance and develop a collaborative plan as a group for how to handle this
 - Encourage participants to raise challenges or concerns during each session

(RE)Setting the Training Space Together

– Re-contracting

- Discuss strategies for any IT failures, ICE - Eg. share your number? / email
- Ironically, as the building structure no longer physically signals the boundaries – they will need to be held much more **relationally** by the group opting_in to **commit and collaborate – which might create an opportunity for cohesion – ‘shared purpose’**

Setting the Training Space Together – Transparency/ Collaboration

- Transparency re the difference , F2F v online – discuss ways to manage the limitations of the tech -gaps in/ misunderstandings in communication online
- Agree on aiming to work with principles of Transparency / Collaboration / Equality – *How can we make this work well together*
- Encourage, ‘entry into’ and ‘exit out’ of training session strategies
 - (10 mins before 10 mins after ?)

Training Online

Adaptations and Good Practice

- Might want to think with participants about proximity to the screen / camera
- How each participant can pay attention to posture/ gestures /tone of voice / energy levels/ silences/ 'music behind the words'/ our own felt responses
- Check out any uncertainty in communication
- Negotiate ways to come in without talking over others

Training Online

Adaptations and Good Practice

Tutor Prep

- Download an app like Krisp that takes background noise out of your delivery
- Encourage students to have documents printed or open on their laptop
- Have files you are wanting to 'share on screen' open on laptop ready
- Encourage use of whiteboard function to share ideas

Training Online

Adaptations and Good Practice

Self care – Tutors and students

- Have regular short breaks away from screen and to support students attention /energy span
- Use simple standing stretching exercises to break up the sedentary nature of the day
- Leave room open for social catch up for an hour after the end of the day, during breaks and as people 'arrive' to allow something of the important, informal peer contact of F2F

Training Online

Adaptations and Good Practice

Teaching Strategies

- Use video clips/ live practice / student presentation/discussion groups / break out groups / quiz to avoid powerpoint overload
- Group view for PD groups to keep sense of the group
- Focussing exercise/ guided fantasy to support students self awareness
- Encourage self-dialogue- journal writing/drawing/self letters – change in format from screen time
- Invite students to be creative with resources in their home in experiential exercises

Training Online

Adaptations and Good Practice

Teaching Strategies (Continued)

- Encourage group members to stay in contact with the group if distressed/ in the room at least / pick one person to make contact with in the moment– grounding and avoiding dissociation
- Triad work – observers to mute and stop their video and counsellor/client switch to speaker view for best 1:1 experience
- Group view for feedback
- Use mobiles for Triad work sometimes- different format offers break from screen time and opportunity to tune in auditorily

Training Online

Specific Issues

- **The ‘Online Disinhibition Effect’ (Suler, 2003)**
 - Communication online may be different than F2F and this has been researched as ‘online disinhibition’ – people may say or do online, things they might not in person – How much this might apply to ‘live’ video conferencing is unclear as this may be because of greater felt anonymity ; a lack of social, contextual, visual, auditory cues; or the asynchronous communication in some settings

Training Online Specific Issues

- This effect can be:
- **Benign and even therapeutic** – participants being more willing to express themselves openly
- **Toxic** – like harsh social media responses and cyberbullying
- But highlights the issue of '**digital empathy**' for trainers (Terry and Cain, 2016) and the therapeutic alliance in videoconferencing (Simpson, 2014)

Training Online Specific Issues

- ‘**Online presence**’ (Garrison, 2006)
 - ‘Three Presences’ – **Social, Teaching and Cognitive**
 - **Social** – the ability to project yourself socially and affectively in a virtual environment (how do you make yourself known to your students and become a 3D person?) –may need more active emphasis on getting to know each other online without the informal cues, being proactive about both formal AND informal communication
 - **Teaching Presence**- both group and for individuals- how do you signal support and encouragement – feedback
 - **Cognitive Presence** – ‘Construction of meaning through sustained communication in a climate of trust’

Group Development - Developing a supportive community -

Training Online Best Practice

- **Group Development** - Developing a supportive community – Balanced dialogue helps build community - members of a community care about each other and their learning successes, share a sense of belonging, a sense of being connected to others and to ideas and values
- **Developing a Set of Clear Expectations** – A holding structure / framework may be more important as the building and social cues don't provide this – you may need to organise the online environment more
- **Providing a Variety of Learning Experiences** – large group, small group, individual etc may need to support /encourage participation more
- **Ask for Informal Feedback Early** – What would help, invite suggestions, observation, collaboration
- **Presence, Community and Personalisation**
- **Perhaps Opportunity to Use Synchronous and Asynchronous Experiences**

There's something very grounding being at home and not having the anxiety of physically presenting (hair-dos, clothing, trains running late, lunches) but to just focus and engaging with the learning part of the experience '

'As I'm thinking about it..in some respects it's even more personal because they're seeing my home'

'If you feel slightly removed that's something you might end up talking about..and that of course is group process!'

Participant feedback on PCE-CfD Training Online

'There are distractions when you're in your own home and you have to create another set of boundaries'

'I don't think I've got an answer about whether its better or worse, just different'

'As much as I worried about technology and sceptical about the idea of zoom role plays, if I can be honest, my experience has changed my perspective entirely!'



OPPORTUNITIES / 'SIDE-EFFECTS' OF OUR NECESSARY MOVE ONLINE

- **Collaboration** – the bonding impact of thinking together about how we make this work
- **Flattening the tutor – student hierarchy** – We certainly aren't experts in the technology
- **Encouraged reflection on usual practice** – helping prevent the 'complacency of experience'
- **Increased access for some participants** – those with hearing impairments, mobility problems, health issues
- **Encouraged creativity and innovation**



Q. How we make the most of our ‘live’ time – Flipped Classroom ideas

- Definition - a teaching approach in which *“direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter”*
- (The Flipped Learning Network, 2014)

In the Flipped classroom:-

- Students have more flexibility about when and where they learn
- There is a shift to a learner-centred approach with, 'in-class' time dedicated to exploring topics in greater depth with students actively involved in knowledge construction
- Tutors determine what they need to teach and what materials students can explore on their own
- Tutors strive for continuous observation and feedback
- Students engage in Blooms higher cognitive levels of learning with peers and tutor present

Why Do It ?

- **Students can pause and rewind their tutor**
- **Can increase student-tutor interaction**
- **Can enable tutors to know their students better**
- **Can increase student-student interaction**
- **Can support differentiation**
- **Can help both busy and struggling students**

Strategies that can be used for in-class activities include:

- **Active learning** Enable students to apply concepts in class where they can ask peers or tutors for feedback and clarification
- **Peer instruction** Students can teach each other by explaining concepts or working on small problems
- **Collaborative learning** could increase student engagement and enhance student understanding
- **Problem-based learning** Class time can be spent working on real world problems
- **Discussions or debate** Giving students the opportunity to articulate their thoughts on the spot and develop arguments in support of their opinions or claims



THANKS FOR LISTENING!