



## Online Video Counselling and Support Client Instructions

Welcome to video counselling and support with Open Arms. In most respects video counselling or support is the same as in-person counselling and support at the office or rooms of your Open Arms worker. However, there are also some important differences. In order for your video counselling and support to provide you with the greatest benefit, it is important to follow these instructions. Remember, if you have problems with any aspect of these instructions, please contact Open Arms 1800 011 046 for assistance.

### Consent

Before we can begin video counselling and support please read, understand and agree to two consents: the *Consent for Open Arms to Provide Services* and the *Online Video Counselling and Support Consent*. Signed consent (returned to Open Arms by email) is preferred but verbal consent is sufficient.

Someone from Open Arms may phone prior to the first session to take you through both consents. Alternatively, you will discuss these at your first session with your Open Arms worker. Please ask as many questions as you need to, to ensure you understand both consent forms.

### Online Video Counselling and Support (OVC&S) Technology Requirements

For home-based video counselling and support to be successful it is important that the flow of conversation is as close to natural as possible. Both device capability and internet speed/bandwidth play important roles in achieving this.

#### **Device requirements**

You will need access to a PC, laptop or tablet/iPad with a camera, speakers and microphone (built in or separate) and that is running a current or recent version Operating System (Windows XP or newer/Apple OS X/Android OS). A computer/tablet processor minimum of 1 GHz is needed and for best results a 1.8 GHz processor (or similar) is recommended.

#### **Internet requirements**

A broadband internet connection is required (with minimum speeds of 512kbps down / 128kbps up). High speed broadband (4Mbps down / 512kbps) is recommended. The time of day may impact the speed and reliability of your internet. Make sure your other devices (phone and tablet/iPad), and other people in the house, are not using the Wi-Fi network if the connectivity is poor. You need to have password secured Wi-Fi. Do not use unsecured Wi-Fi in shopping centers, airports and other free Wi-Fi access. Make sure you have a backup plan in the event of connectivity failure. You can 'hot spot' to your phone and use 4G if the Wi-Fi is poor.

#### **Software/App requirements, where to find, how to download and activate**

Open Arms may use a range of Apps, including Zoom, CoviU and Skype to conduct video counselling or support and you can discuss preferences when your Open Arms worker contacts you to book your initial appointment. Links to information on the setup of these platforms are here:

COVIU: <https://help.coviu.com/en/>

ZOOM: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/sections/200704559-Installation>

SKYPE: <https://support.skype.com/en/faq/FA11098/how-do-i-get-started-with-skype>



## Online Video Counselling and Support Preparation

### **Testing**

We will test the connection between your Open Arms workers device and yours, so any problems can be identified and resolved. Open Arms may phone you first to prompt you to log on and then they will attempt to connect with you.

### **Preparing Yourself**

Ensure you have checked your email for any documents your Open Arms worker wants to use with you during the session. These might include:

- Forms or questionnaires to complete and email back before or after the session;
- Homework to complete between sessions;
- Resources that your Open Arms worker wants to discuss during the session.

You will need to do this well before the session starting time. Where it is impractical for you to scan and email your forms back to Open Arms, your worker can work with you to read out your responses.

### **What you need to set up in your environment for your online session**

The on-line space is different from face to face sessions in that you are not meeting at the Open Arms office or rooms. You will need to have a few things prepared before you have your online session:

- You need to be in a safe, private and uninterrupted space.
- This should not be in a public area, such as a café or park.
- If in a private outside space, make sure there is no wind (audio outside is often a problem if it is windy).
- Have access to a device which has good internet connectivity and reliability. If using Wi-Fi make sure it is password secured.
- It is recommended that you use a desktop, laptop or tablet/iPad as the screen is small on a phone.
- The device you use must have a camera, or a webcam that you can connect to.
- Make sure the picture is clear. Use a 'clear wipe' to clean the lens of the camera.
- You need ear buds or a headset so you have greater confidentiality and clear audio (so no one in the area can hear what your Open Arms worker is saying and so that you get clear sound).
- Prepare in advance by checking your sound system:
  - Clicking on the Zoom link sent by Open Arms and clicking on test computer audio
  - Or test your audio on Skype by opening Skype, clicking on 'audio & video'
- You will need a full hour for the session, so make sure you have put that time aside.
- You need to have a family member or a friend available to contact in an emergency or if you need further support at any time. You need to ask that person/s if they are OK to be available to support you while you are engaged in counselling and support services. You will need to write these contact details in the Client Information Form or give them to your Open Arms worker over the phone.

### **OVC&S boundaries**

- If you have not connected online within 5 minutes of the scheduled start time the Open Arms worker will call you on your designated telephone number.
- The Open Arms worker will finish the appointment at the scheduled end time, regardless of the session start time, as other clients also have scheduled appointment after yours.
- It is agreed that clients will discuss all therapeutic or support issues during their online consultations. Counselling and support services via email or chat/text will only occur if it has been arranged between the client and Open Arms worker and if deemed appropriate by the Open Arms worker. Email and text may be used for administrative purposes such as making or cancelling appointments.
- Email, texts and phone calls will be answered within 24 hours. If you are in crisis please call 1800 011 046 for free and confidential 24/7 support. For emergency assistance please phone 000.



- If you are using Skype, the Open Arms worker will be waiting for you to call them through the Skype app, at the scheduled start time.
- If you are using Zoom the Open Arms worker will be waiting for you to click on the Zoom link, sent to you in an email, at the scheduled start time.
- If you are using CoviU the Open Arms worker will be waiting for you to click on the CoviU link, sent to you in an email, at the scheduled start time.

### **Trouble shooting**

- If connectivity is poor you can turn off your video and use audio only, until good connectivity returns.
- If your internet drops out using Zoom:
  1. Click on the Zoom link again in your invite email to reconnect
- If your internet drops out using Skype:
  1. Call the Open Arms' worker again using the Skype app to get back to the session
- If your internet drops out using CoviU:
  1. Click on the CoviU link again in your invite email to reconnect

If you can't get back into the session within 5 minutes the Open Arms worker will call you on your phone to continue the session until you can resume connectivity.

Experience has shown us that the best outcomes are achieved when clients feel comfortable and safe.

Try to find (or create) a suitable space at home that:

- Is quiet and confidential (a room away from others with a door you can close)
- Is uninterrupted (if you have young children at home try to arrange for someone to mind them)
- Is well lit – don't sit with your back to a window as this will result in a silhouette
- Is comfortably cool or warm
- Has a comfortable chair facing the screen (if you are using a laptop or tablet/iPad try have this on a table in front of you rather than holding it or resting it on your lap); and finally
- Check that when you are seated, you are in the camera's view (try for your head and upper body).

### **Connect with your Open Arms worker**

If you are using home-based counselling and support services, please be mindful of the time and be connected a minute or two before the scheduled start.

### **Required Information**

Please complete the included *Online Counselling Client Information* form and if possible, return to Open Arms (by fax, mail or email) or give this to your Open Arms worker information by phone, prior to the first online session. This information is important to ensure that the video counselling is safe as well as successful.