



A word from the editor

As we step in the technological world, internet counselling is an alternative to traditional face to face counselling. There are many benefits to internet counselling.

Some of these are:

- **Accessibility.** Those individuals who live in rural areas, or those who are unable to leave the home due to physical illness can now have access to counselling services from the comfort of their own home.
- **Convenience.** The hassle of scheduling and driving to appointments are removed from counselling. Internet counselling also allows access to clients who would otherwise be uncomfortable in a face to face appointment.
- **Affordability.** It is generally more economical as overheads of rent, commuting and administration procedures are decreased.
- **Anonymity.** Clients are able to communicate more openly without concerns for bias of race, gender, age, weight or physical appearance. This may lead to an increased level of honesty.



In this newsletter, we will continue to discuss internet counselling, its benefits, advantages and uses.

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Modes of Counselling

Psychological trauma has an impact on the individual that fractures their thought processes and effects biological functioning. As a consequence, most times the person needs therapy to put the experience into a perspective which allows them to heal and live a full-life.

Therapy is available in different forms. For example, there is face-to-face, telephone, and online. Face-to-face therapy begins with making an appointment with a therapist. Telephone therapy is possible through phoning Lifeline or Beyond Blue, to mention a couple, and talking to a therapist over the phone. Online therapy is a little different as the client is required to work through the process of identifying the problem before reaching a therapist.

The Trauma Centre of Australia offers therapy in all three forms which can be found on the website. When an individual or organisation needs immediate psychological assistance it is available by appointment, telephone, or online. The online service of the Trauma Centre of Australia offers a twenty four hour, seven days a week, online chat facility.

The online chat facility will establish the clients' need for immediate trauma counselling. When the need for high priority aide is established the client will receive therapy immediately, from a trained mental health professional.



Lynette Hovey
Undergraduate Counsellor

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*“The internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow
- Bill Gates*

*“I’m on a constant path of self-discovery and change. I’m trying to become a better person, a nicer person. I love therapy—it’s brilliant”
- Julia Sawalha*

*“I realised going back and writing and explaining in details the difficulties I had lived actually became emotional again. It’s like therapy be painful. But it’s part of life and part of the autobiography so I’ll have to finish it sooner or later”
- Jenni Rivera*





Trauma Online. Treatment Approaches

Online trauma counselling is growing at a rapid rate for many reasons. These include: being readily accessible to the wider community; the immediacy of access; the fact that it is inexpensive; and the anonymity that online counselling provides – this may prove to be appealing to many clients who may not necessarily seek professional help in a traditional setting.

Brief therapy is a treatment approach that can be used for online trauma counselling as it can be conducted in a short amount of time. Clients calling in or using the internet to connect with a counsellor could be supported by the use of basic counselling skills in order to identify the client's problem and help them find a solution rather than trying to understand the cause. It is also essential for the online counsellor to be able to recognise when callers are at risk of harming themselves or others and have knowledge of emergency services and referral services details.

When counselling online careful considerations must be observed: the font used must be readable, spelling checked, correct grammar, correct punctuation and an overall tone in the writing to ensure empathy is conveyed to the client. These considerations will help build the therapeutic alliance between the counsellor and client. Checking that you are understanding what the client is saying and seeking constant confirmation that you are on the right track with them is important given that there is no visual or verbal signs of expression to help with assessments. Brief, simple answers are recommended when communicating to clients online in order to keep the flow of communication going.

Serafina Alesci
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Counselling: Technology Era

In many instances there are impediments to meeting a Trauma therapist face to face. For many counsellors online interaction is another vital tool toward connecting with people in difficult circumstances. There are many benefits for those seeking help; searching is easy and connection can be instant. Trauma Centre Australia has embarked on a new venture of providing interactions via the net, using email, chat rooms and teleconferencing. While there are many pitfalls there are also many positives.

There is little empirical evidence suggesting that on-line counselling is better or not than face to face. Results from Young, K.S (2005), report positive support from users whom were tertiary educated, citing anonymity, convenience and counsellor credentials as reported evidence for the use of this modality. Online therapy is still contentious, however looking at research in writing therapy as a medium of communication, appears to flag many positives in reducing symptoms of trauma and stress. Macmillan, I (2004), states that writing can make you feel better, can make you feel more like the person you want to be. Bolton, G (2004), states that writing is different than talking; it has a power of its own.

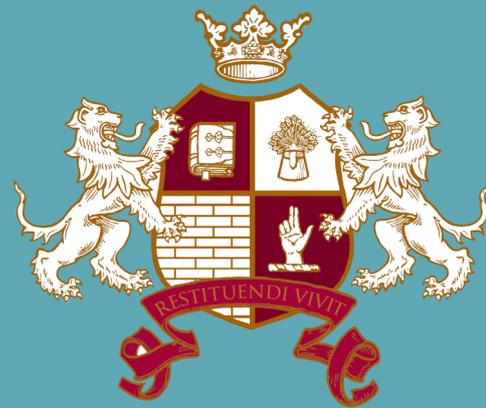
The therapeutic interchange does not always require a need to be listened to by another, they can – to an extent – by reading what you have written – is a way to listen to themselves and work on their own understandings on their own. The extent of online communication is often the means of bringing client and therapist together. An act of writing causes reflection prior to a message being sent, that act promotes insight, reflection and a thought process of how the message is perceived.

Therapeutic writing of emails is the new frontier, an adventure into as yet largely uncharted waters. What emails do, in the very act of writing is to enhance the psychotherapeutic process, increasing the client's control of and activate engagement in the process. "There is no other system of psychotherapy in which the client has so much control over the rate, depth and intensity of his or her personal therapeutic work" (Rasmussen & Tomm, 1992). Much considered thought is needed to see the benefits of email based intervention. As you ponder the nets possibilities, reflect and perhaps you can see the untapped opportunities that lay in the simple email.

Peter Horton
Psychologist



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Trauma Centre Australia is happy to introduce the introduction of the Trauma Institute. We are the leading educational provider in trauma counselling. It has been a long time coming and we have developed the Advanced Certificate of Trauma Counselling. If you would like more information please visit our website www.traumainstitute.com.au for more information.

