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Ground rules in Online Psychotherapy

(Part Two)

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The ground rules of e-mail psychotherapy

E-mail psychotherapy is essentially different from face-to-face and chat room psychotherapy. Actually, except for the technological innovation of the Internet, one might say that e-mail therapy is no more than a correspondence between therapists and clients, as was practised by Freud and is practised by narrative psychotherapists.

E-mail psychotherapy is asynchronous and is not a real dialogue. It can be described as an exchange of written monologues between therapists and clients. However, there is an exception to this statement. Like chat room therapy, e-mail correspondence may be practised in real time, without the stress of rapid dialogue. This means that clients and therapists may decide to correspond, like a traditional therapeutic session, at an agreed time for fifty minutes. I have not as yet found any evidence in the literature or in therapists' web sites that this option has been actually utilised.

While clients are writing their e-mail messages, they are on their own, with no secure therapeutic frame, although they may create their own secure frame for writing. This means that clients of e-mail therapy have a different starting point from any other form of psychotherapy. In a way, they have to be their own therapists in the process of writing. One might say that e-mail psychotherapy is a kind of supervised diary or journal writing.

From my experience, I have found that e-mail clients have unique writing skills, are extremely capable of introspection and have some former experience of traditional psychotherapy. Sometimes these clients feel more secure when writing than when talking. 'I just find it easier to write than to talk. Sometimes I forget words when I talk and I end up stuttering, or I lose my train of thought. If I'm writing, I can look back at what I wrote and pick up what I was going to say' (Chechele & Stofle, 2003: 42). In a way, e-mail clients are performing self-psychotherapy with professional supervision. This can be an advanced stage of a traditional or online therapeutic process, or a therapeutic option for clients who have completed therapy.

The special characteristics of e-mail clients may explain the popularity of this kind of therapy for clients and therapists, in spite of its disadvantages.

1. Emotional interaction. Email writing has the same advantages as diary or journal writing, which is therapeutic in itself. 'Classic studies by psychologist James W. Pennebaker, PhD and his colleagues have proved the health value of personal disclosure' (APA, 2005). Writing as a therapeutic process preceded the modern

form of psychotherapy.

People have always found comfort and connection in writing letters and keeping journals. Emailing and the Internet are a modern form of this. Quietly gathering one's feelings into written communications allows individuals the opportunity to bind their anxiety and gain some distance and perspective from their problems. Email therapy may be considered a sort of "talking journal" where the individual can share his or her thoughts with empathic other.

(Chechele & Stofle, 2003: 39)

In e-mail therapy, the first ground rule of 'Write about your feelings!' is the core of the process, and it generates a therapeutic process even before the client receives the therapist's reply. Since, as in conventional face-to-face or chat therapy, therapists cannot interfere with this process, their responses later serve as support or supervision. 'I like the thought that support is out there when I might need it. My plan will be to contact you as I feel the need. I think that just the fact that I know I can contact someone if I need to is soothing to me' (Chechele & Stofle, 2003: 42). This client adapted the ground rule of 'Write whatever comes to your mind!' to his special needs, and added the words 'when you feel like doing this'.

I met Ron at my clinic in Tel Aviv on a weekly basis for eleven months. He was a businessman, and when his employer asked him to manage the New York branch of his company we decided to finish up the therapeutic process, which was planned to end two months later, by e-mails. Although we agreed on a specific time for sending our e-mails, in the early weeks of our correspondence Ron sent his e-mail a day after our agreed schedule:

I was trying to prepare the meeting all day long, to read all the papers, as I planned to do. Everything went well, but there were some external interventions... my uncle, who is the vice president of XXX, promised to introduce me to some functionaries in the industry, so I will be much relaxed, knowing that my situation here is organized. But as you know, until he calls me and says that everything is OK I don't trust anyone.

For three days I found myself thinking again and again about Margaret. The day after, when I opened the newspaper, I found her spread on two pages of advertisement. She looked great, and I'm sure she made a lot of money, but I kept saying to myself that I'm not going to meet her any more.

In my reply I referred to the changes in our relationship and the delay of his e-mail as the cause for conveying some unconscious messages concerning the end of the therapeutic process.

In your e-mail you write about your wish to continue with your well organised life, and the feeling that external interventions break your boundaries. Although you are expecting a positive change in your life you don't believe in promises and keep being sceptical. You miss Margaret, but you know that you have to accept the separation and not contact her any more. All this is similar to the changes in our contract. I promised you a new kind of therapy but although you agreed you are still sceptical. Instead of meeting you in my clinic, my e-mails intrude on your personal computer. You miss our meetings but you know that this is the time for termination and that you have to get on with you life. Maybe this was the reason for the delay in your last e-mail.

Ron didn't refer to my communicative interpretation, but in his reply he told me about the successful meeting with his uncle, about a meeting with an American businesswoman, which might also be a romantic relationship, and about finding a flat which was exactly what he was looking for. This was a positive text, which could be interpreted as a confirmation of my interpretation, referring to the communicative approach (Smith, 1991: 147). The e-mail ended with the words: 'I think that I'll read your e-mail every day, since it makes me feel stronger'.

2. The use of psychotherapeutic methods and tools. Since e-mail therapy is asynchronous, it lacks the characteristics of a simultaneous interaction and the sense of 'here-and-now'. The session usually consists of an exchange of e-mails, i.e., the client's e-mail and the therapist's reply. This kind of psychotherapy is different from any other kind of 'talking cure', since there is no therapeutic dialogue in the common sense of the term, and the use of the term 'psychotherapy' has to be considered carefully.

The most common therapeutic tool, listening, is delayed in e-mail psychotherapy. Therapists are not listening while clients are writing their e-mails, and clients are not present during their therapist's act of replying. Paradoxically, since clients have no expectations of listening taking place during the process of writing their message to their therapists, they experience the delayed reply from their therapists as listening. 'I like the thought that support is out there when I

might need it.' (Chechele & Stofle, 203: 42).

The unique characteristic of e-mail psychotherapy has some therapeutic qualities that may serve as therapeutic tools, if therapists are aware of them and develop personal tools to cope with them.

4. Asynchronous communication (e.g., e-mail, message boards)

4.1. The ability to delay responding in e-mail and message boards is useful in enhancing impulse control, self-reflection, and cognitive assimilation.

4.2. A client's issues about boundaries (separation, individuation) may be expressed and therapeutically addressed in asynchronous text communication which provides easy access to the therapist and is not restricted to the limits of a time-specific "session."

4.3. Some clients may experience the opportunity to send e-mail to the therapist as a kind of "holding environment." That contact can help clients with needs for object constancy (even if the therapist does not reply to the e-mail).

4.4. The therapist can use e-mail to be present "in vivo" with the client as a way to monitor and guide the client's attempts to understand and modify their behavior.

(Suler, 2000A)

Since there is no 'real' therapeutic dialogue, therapists have developed several types of email responses, which represent different kinds of interventions. Many therapists grasp e-mail therapy as a reproduction of a traditional correspondence, in which they reply to their clients' e-mail by focusing on the main subject, presenting their own view of the matter and integrating therapeutic techniques (support, mirroring, interpretation, etc.). Bob Rich's example of e-mail therapy may demonstrate this kind of response.

Client's e-mail:

Subject: relationships

I feel very nervous about writing this, but i feel to move on & up i need help; My boyfriend of 6 years just broke up our relationship. We were living with each other for 3 months. Had some teething problems but i thought this was to be expected and that we would work them out. He went out and phoned me constantly declaring his undying love. And he returns 6 hrs later saying it was all over. He said he met a girl who displayed a great attitude to life and he felt that we were just soldiering on through this relationship to the advantage of neither of us.

He said it had nothing to do with her. But of course i had my doubts. I moved out and after a week i begged him to tell me the truth as i felt i deserved it and

needed it to move on. I asked him how important this girl was to him. He declared "If you can fall in love in such short time well then i have. I was so hurt that a 6yr relationship could be ended so quickly because of a 6hr encounter. But now i know that these things can and do happen. I am sick with pain and want desperately to move on to a happier plain." He promised that he would tie up all bits and pieces to save me the pain of doing it but of course he has not done so. I am hassled by landlords & others who cannot locate him as he is not answering his phone. ANd i am left to deal with all this because he is spending time with this new woman.

I feel insulted by this and very angry as i am the one that needs to get over him while he enjoys bliss with this woman. I want him to sort all these things out so that i can remove all contact from him. I hope that one day we will be friends as does he (he wants that NOW) but i am beginning to hate him because of his immature running away behaviour. Can anyone give me advice and help to ensure me that I will get over this, i am better off without him and he did not deserve me anyway.

Bridie

Response:

Dear Bridie,

I am not surprised that you are so upset. Who wouldn't be? You feel that you have wasted six years of your life on this fellow, and are now left holding nothing while he is enjoying some other woman's love.

If he had been hit by a truck and killed, you would be grieving him, and furious with the truck driver. This is the same situation: he has killed perhaps the major part of what was important in your life, and you are grieving for having lost him ... and at the same time, you are furious with the person who did the killing, and that was him!

Of course you are angry!

Just the same, your message shows a remarkable degree of maturity, and I can see that already you are working on getting over this situation. Already, you are ready to move on, as shown by your last sentence: "i am better off without him and he did not deserve me anyway."

My dear, this realization is the start of your healing. But let me try to answer your questions.

I only have your description of the situation, and of your ex-friend. He may very well have quite a different story to tell. However, I have come across many couples with a story similar to yours. One possible explanation of what happened

to you is something I've seen many times. It may not be true for you -- I cannot tell without a lot more information -- but see if you find it to fit.

A healthy partnership is based on mutual respect, and equality in some senses although not necessarily in all. But many relationships have an unhealthy basis. One of the partners acts as if s/he was the child of the other. Reading between the lines it seems to me as if for the past six years you have been a sort of a mother to this man. To you, he was an equal partner. To him, perhaps, you were a source of emotional support, advice, practical organizational direction, a shoulder to cry on and a hand to hold. And he was immature enough that, like a teenager, he resented the fact that he was so reliant on you. This would explain the many minor tensions you suffered. And he is not dealing with the practical details of the separation, because such real-life things are what he had always used you for. Breaking a long term relationship for a brief infatuation is consistent with an immature personality like that. And so is the wish to "stay friends" -- having it both ways. Of course he'd like you to continue to run his affairs, and wipe his nose and bum!

So, perhaps you can look on the past six years as an apprenticeship for the time when you have teenage children of your own.

Not all men are like this. Grief, including the grief of separation, is a wound that heals with time, and as a result of the kinds of thinking that you have already been engaging in. It will definitely help if you decide to find something good from it. One thing is, now you are free to find a man who DOES deserve you. But you can gain a lot more.

If you were an ongoing client, I'd set you a "homework" task: to keep working at an answer to the question: "In what way have I become a better person because of this?" When you have found the answer, you might even have the strength to forgive this fellow. [However, don't bother to go back to becoming his mother.]

All the best,

Bob

(Rich, 2005)

Another kind of e-mail response integrates the therapist's response into the client's original e-mail. This may bridge the gap of time and space and create a sense of a 'real' dialogue. At the same time some clients may feel invaded by such an intervention in their own statements. The next segment of an e-mail response exemplifies this technique (the bold text was inserted by the therapist).

Subj: The important thing is somehow to begin – Henry Moore

Thanks for the response... **That's why I'm here.** Well, it's nice to be the perfect candidate for something... ha... what do you think would be the most effective way...email, chat or phone? I am stretching it financially to do this at all and as much as I like chat, I'm afraid I would be too "aware" of the "time" passing, and I don't want to be thinking about money during our sessions...**I agree starting with a series of emails sounds like a good way to begin...you can use them as you feel the need. Chat does seem to fly bye [sic] and I wouldn't want to see you spend that time thinking about dollars and not dynamics**

Five sessions contracted to start sounds reasonable. It should give both of us a chance to see if we can move forward with this. I expect, however, that I'll be doing this the rest of my life. I really want one person to work with, as I 'think' it will be easier for the therapist to understand what is going on with me at different times if they know me better...and that takes time. **Yes it does take time to get to know someone and although taking care of ones mental health is a life long concern, I believe we can make some good progress in the days ahead.**

I 'think' chat is effective because you don't have time to think...you would be getting first thoughts rather than contemplated thoughts...am I wrong? **There are pros and cons to each way of communicating...the immediacy of chat does seem to limit the amount of self censorship, whereas email allows you time to organise your thoughts so as to better communicate your ideas. They're both good for each of these reasons. And, because I flip-flop so much, I wonder if what I present in my email might be irrelevant by the time I get an answer. If it is immediacy you are after then chat would meet that need, however keep in mind that any chat session should have to be scheduled and an issue you are grappling with today might be better dealt with through email than waiting for a chat session we have scheduled for two days from now**

Well, I feel like I'm just chattering and not making any sense...**your making perfect sense, it's normal to be a little self conscious and scattered at the outset of therapy...relax we'll eventually bring this all together. so, let me know what you think.**

(Chechele & Stofle, 2003: 50)

This kind of response, in which the therapist's text is enmeshed in the client's text, is an extreme example of such a technique. The missing spaces between words and the grammatically abridged style of the therapist enhance the sense of density and trap. This could have been avoided if the therapist had written his comments in new paragraphs and formulated them in a literary style different from that of the client.

In another kind of response the therapist utilises the technique of 'cut and paste', inserting parts of the client's e-mail into his response.

I don't want to become dependent upon you, or anyone else, for my emotional well being. That in itself is frightening.

Yes it can be quite frightening putting your trust in others. Whereas an infant has no control over the disposition of their caregivers..an adult certainly does. It's a scary proposition making yourself vulnerable to possible rejection. You were hurt bad once...maybe it's easier to protect yourself from future hurts by keeping others at a distance?

My friend can call the therapist any time he needs or wants. He doesn't, other than regular sessions, unless he is in a crisis and without an appointment. Maybe that fact makes me feel less valuable.

Although I can't be available any time you need to talk, I'm wondering what I can do to help you appreciate your true value?

You are doing a wonderful job. I am so happy that I found you. If our relationship ends today (and God only knows, I hope it doesn't), I will be grateful for what I have reaped from it.

Along with feeling warm and cuddly inside when I hear this, I also am struck by the extremes in your perceptions of me. It seems I'm all good or all bad.And I'm really somewhere in between.

(ibid.: 53)

These kinds of responses are, actually, parallel to traditional types of listening and intervening, and they reflect therapists' reactions to the lack of 'therapeutic silence'. The first example may represent the therapist's confidence in the new

therapeutic frame and the gap of time and space, while the second may reflect the therapist's endeavour to compensate for the lack of 'real' dialogue.

3. Language. There is a soundless difference between chat room therapy and e-mail therapy, which also manifests itself in the practice of a common language. In e-mail therapy 'the body of the message contains the meat of the communication' (Suler, 2004: 37), and by that it 'captures the connotation of the physical self' (ibid.). If this is true, language is the main source of emotional exploration and the therapeutic relationship.

An email message is a tiny packet of self-representation that is launched off into cyberspace. Some people experience it as a piece of themselves, a creative work, a gift sent to their online companion. They hope or expect it to be treated with understanding and respect. Clinicians might look for how these skills and preferences for writing versus speaking might be associated with important differences in personality and cognitive style.

(ibid.: 20)

While in chat therapy, both client and therapist are present at the same time simultaneously reading and writing in the same chat room, in e-mail therapy quite the opposite is the case. Therapist and client are not addressing each other at the same time and 'place' and they are not reading and writing at the same time. Each of them can spend as much time as is needed to write the e-mail, all at once or in segments. They can reread it, check it, edit it and delay sending it. The same is true regarding the reading of a received e-mail. They can read it once or twice, leave it for awhile and read it again. Although most online therapists warn their clients of the danger of misunderstanding written communication, this process may actually prevent misunderstandings and enable deep emotional involvement. Dr. Paul Hannig claims the opposite: 'Many misunderstandings and misinterpretations that occur in face-to-face therapy may be minimized with online treatment' (Hannig, 2005).

I was re-reading some of my earlier emails to you. When I wrote these and read your responses I felt you didn't care for some reason. But now that I re-read them I do see that you did care a lot. I guess I couldn't feel anything but the pain back then. IT seemed so deep and anything you said to me seemed superficial at the point in time, but now it doesn't seem that way.

(Chechele & Stofle, 2003: 43)

Just as tradition and habits still prevent most therapists from engaging in online therapy, most online therapists stick to habits acquired in the first days of online psychotherapy. This explains why online therapists integrate linguistic chat tools into the language of e-mail therapy.

Human are curious creatures. When faced with barriers, they find all sorts of creative ways to work around those barriers, especially when those barriers involve communication. Experienced e-mail users have developed a variety of keyboard techniques to overcome some of the limitations of typed text – techniques that almost lend a vocal and kinesthetic quality to the message. They attempt to make e-mail conversations less like postal letters and more like a face-to-face encounters. Some of these strategies include the use of emoticons, parenthetical expressions that convey body language or "sub vocal" thoughts and feelings (sigh), voice accentuation via the use of CAPS and *asterisks*, and trailers.... To indicate a transition in thought or speech. Use of "smileys" and other commonly used symbols can convey not only facial expression but also a variety of emotional nuances. Color and font can be used both for impact and to separate one writer's words from the other's.

(Fenichel, 2002)

John Suler, whose book, *The Psychology of Cyberspace*, is the first e-book dealing with online psychotherapy, demonstrates the technique of writing e-mail in chat room style:

What follows is an example of a "before" and "after" message. The two are similar in terms of the surface content of what Susan is saying to Joe. However, the second one illustrates the variety of e-mail composition techniques discussed in the previous sections of this article. It shows a balance between spontaneity and thoughtful organization; empathic attentiveness to the recipient; and the expressive use of quoted text, caps, special characters, spacing, trailers, parenthetical thoughts and actions, and smileys. As such, it conveys an entirely different range of meanings and feelings than the first message:

version 1

Joe,
Quoting text in e-mail is something we all have to learn at some point or another.
No problem. If your e-mail program doesn't automatically set up a new message

with the quoted text in it, there are other ways to do it. One way is like this. Open the e-mail I sent to you. Create a new (blank) e-mail to send to me. Use your mouse to select and copy the text from the e-mail I sent you. Insert that copied text into the new e-mail message. Add in whatever new text you want into the message to send to me. This is easy to do on a Mac. I think you're working on a PC, right? It should be pretty easy for you too, though the steps might be slightly different. Let me know how it works out. Have a great time on your vacation. We were supposed to leave for vacation last week, but our car broke down. Something to do with the transmission. It's at the dealers now being fixed. It will probably cost an arm and a leg. But that doesn't matter. You know us. We have lots of money.

- Susan

version 2

Hello Joe!

>>Working on the paper together through e-mail is a great idea. My trouble is that I don't know how to add onto your e-mail, though I've seen others respond to my e-mails by just writing below what I had written. I'm sure it's a 1-2-3 type of thing, so if you give me a hand I'd really appreciate it. I'm such a dolt!<<

LOL! Hey! It's something we all have to learn at some point or another. No prob. If your e-mail program doesn't automatically set up a new message with the quoted text in it, there are other ways to do it. One way is like this:

- open the e-mail I sent to you
- create a new (blank) e-mail to send to me
- use your mouse to select and copy the text from the e-mail I sent you
- insert that copied text into the new e-mail message
- add in whatever new text you want into the message to send to me

Voila. This is easy to do on a Mac. I think you're working on a PC, right? It should be pretty easy for you too, though the steps might be slightly different. Let me know how it works out.

>> Otherwise all is going well here. We're headed to the beach for our vacation next week. We're looking forward to it. We need some time off from work.<<

Have a GREAT time! :-) (feeling jealous).... We were *supposed* to leave for vacation last week, but our car broke down. Something to do with the transmission. It's at the dealers now being fixed. It will probably cost an arm and a leg. But that doesn't matter. You know us....we.... uh... (cough)...have LOTS of money. ;-)

hands in holes in pockets,

Susan

Simply Susan
msmith@newnet.com
"Life without art isn't life."

Actually, it is not necessary to use abridged chat room language in e-mail psychotherapy. Written communication can present the whole spectrum of the

human emotional world, as demonstrated by the millions of books that have been written throughout literary history. Emoticons and abridged words are part of the common language of chat room communication, but they cannot represent a personal and individual writing style. E-mail writing enables therapists and clients alike to attune themselves to each other, change their style and create a unique common language, parallel to the development of the therapeutic process.

Writing an e-mail message provides clients and therapists with technical devices that are more convenient for use in e-mail than in the chat room.

- a. Word processing. Clients and therapists can write their text offline using their Word software (which is the common word processor worldwide), and design it according to their personal style (typography, spacing, etc.). Writing a message in Word and sending it as an attached document via their e-mail provider may feel more personal to some clients.
- b. Hypertext. E-mail text enables writers to highlight meaningful words and terms as hypertext with links to other sites on the web. The use of hypertext enriches the textual content, while at the same time deviating from the therapeutic frame and enabling 'third parties' to intrude in the therapeutic relationship. Some clients share their personal web pages or online blogs with their therapists through links connected to the contents of their e-mails.
- c. Images, photographs and audio files. Personal photographs, art works and graphics can be added to e-mail messages, as well as personal recording. These options enable clients to share their personal lives with their therapists in a way that has never been possible in face-to-face therapy.

The therapeutic relationship and the creation of a common language is influenced by the writing style of each participant. 'Concrete, emotional, and abstract expression; complexity of vocabulary and sentence structure; the organisation and flow of thought – all reflect one's cognitive/personality style and influence how the other reacts' (Suler, 2004: 21). In e-mail psychotherapy clients choose their writing style according to their writing skills and therapeutic goals.

- a. Associative style. Some clients choose the ground rule of psychoanalysis, the rule of free associations, as their writing style. They write 'whatever comes to mind' and send it without rereading or editing. This kind of writing is authentic and enables both therapist and client to establish trust in a short time.
- b. Journal style. Clients can describe their daily life, including their feelings

and relationships, as an ongoing journal or diary. In this way they can share their everyday lives with their therapists.

- c. Narrative style. Some people prefer to describe their inner life in a metaphorical style, as a story. By distancing themselves from their direct feelings they may have a better understanding of their emotional life, and discover a better way to communicate these feelings with their therapists.
- d. Academic style. This option is a way of externalisation, in which clients see the therapeutic interaction as a learning process. Through objective theoretical exploration such clients try to touch on painful points in their emotional life.

Although writing style is personal, changes in writing style also reflect changes in the therapeutic relationship. A productive therapeutic process may create a new common writing style for both therapist and client.

- 4. The contract. The contract in e-mail psychotherapy is quite different from the contract in chat room therapy. Whereas in chat room therapy, as in face-to-face therapy, the immediate interaction enables both sides to tune in to each other, clear up misunderstandings and create 'mini contracts' whenever they are needed, in e-mail therapy renders this impossible. Each participant receives a 'ready made' message that he cannot change, therefore it is impossible to bargain about the means of communication.

While in chat room psychotherapy, the 'pre session contract' enables the participants to initiate their communication and define their mutual contract together as a continuous process, there is an unwritten contract that precedes the first e-mail exchanges. This unwritten contract is open to interpretation in different ways by both sides according to their personal expectations, and this incompatibility is the impetus for discussion and definition of a mutual contract.

- a. The ground rule of free association. Since the public identifies this ground rule with all sorts of psychotherapy, clients might believe that they are expected to write 'whatever comes to mind' in their e-mail. But the adaptation of this fundamental psychoanalytic ground rule in e-mail therapy is not self-explanatory. Since writing is different from talking and involves conscious thinking and critical introspection, clients are aware of the paradoxical meaning of 'free association'.

This stage of the therapeutic process may provoke clients' frustration and resistance. In future discussion about the contract, therapists will have to help

their clients choose a writing style, while focusing and defining their own expectations with regard to reading clients' messages. The next quotation resembles a typical reaction that I receive from new clients.

I am not so sure about it. I am not experience with any kind of psychotherapy, and I don't want to find myself sitting in front of my screen for an hour and have nothing to write about. Please give me some hints, so I know how to start. What should I write? What if I have nothing to tell you? What if a writer's block stops me from writing? I look forward to read your advice.

- b. Write at your own time and convenience. This is one of the advantages of e-mail therapy. Clients can write their e-mails whenever they wish and reread them again and again before they send them. But this freedom of writing is sometimes confusing and it arouses certain questions: Is it better to write the e-mail spontaneously on the agreed day and send it without editing it, or is it better to write it as a journal during the week? How long should it be?

Sometimes clients have to practice until they discover the best time for writing, as one of my clients wrote:

Dear Dror,

When we started I liked the idea of writing every Sunday, just before I send you my e-mail, so I can look back and review the whole week. But it doesn't work. It is only Wednesday today, but I'm scared of being so busy on Sunday and won't have enough time for writing, or have no privacy, or have friends for dinner, so I'm writing today.

- c. Someone is listening to you. All clients, who choose to engage in e-mail therapy expect the therapist to read and understand their messages, but this may lead to disappointment. Although online therapists do their best to read their clients' e-mails and understand them, it takes time to create a common language and co-ordinate expectations.

Martha Ainsworth's therapist ended his e-mail with the words: 'I will stand by your side as you travel that way, respecting your silence as needed' (Ainsworth, 2002: 201). For the outside reader such a sentence may appear to be a warm and supportive message, an excellent way to end an e-mail. The therapist also plainly demonstrated his care and attention in the double meaning of the words 'as you travel that way' (ibid.), which related to her

inner journey and her travelling in the world. However, such a sentence in an early e-mail might be interpreted differently by a client who has other expectations, since there is as yet no common language. Martha's reply exemplifies such a case.

No! Now I **am** angry. I **don't** want you to "respect" my silence, dammit, I want you to break into it. And no, **I** don't know what that means, I need **you** to know. You say you will "stand by"? I don't know what I want from you, but please don't abandon me here, don't stand by and watch.

(ibid.)

Such typical misunderstandings are as typical of e-mail psychotherapy as of any other encounter, such as a first face-to-face meeting. But while in face-to-face interaction one can identify the problem and rectify it immediately, in e-mail exchanges such a procedure takes time, sometimes as long as 24-72 hours, which is the average response time of most online therapists. The delay may cause anger, confusion and frustration. The process of 'being with the frustration' and mutual efforts to identify the problem and rectify it, which are part of the process of creating a common language, may be productive and therapeutic, but some clients are not ready for such a process. My personal conclusion, in reference to this question is that e-mail psychotherapy is efficient for experienced clients as the next stage after face-to-face therapy. For such clients e-mail therapy serves as supervised self-psychotherapy.

To help clients cope with such difficulties, therapists have to refer to the question of misunderstandings in the actual mutual contract and suggest options for dealing with them. For example, in such cases therapists may ask their clients not to wait for their next scheduled e-mail, but to send a special e-mail with an agreed title (i.e., 'help'). They can also ask their clients to contact them by chat or by phone so that they can clear up the misunderstanding.

- d. The therapist will seriously respond to your e-mail. This part of the unwritten contract may provoke deep frustrations, as long as the sort of reply is not discussed by both sides as a central component of their contract.

A few years ago an Israeli student who lived in London corresponded with me for a few weeks, checking on the possibility of starting e-mail

psychotherapy. He told me that his girlfriend had left him and that he felt abandoned and needed ongoing support. I offered him either a weekly scheduled e-mail session or bi-weekly ones if he needed more frequent correspondence, but he wanted me to be available for him whenever he needed me. In these e-mails he kept telling me details about his relationship with his ex-girlfriend, although we had not yet agreed upon starting therapy. When I explained that I was very busy and referred him to other online options, he became angry.

Do you expect me to sit and wait until you finish lecturing in the university and go back to your clinic?! The whole idea of Internet psychotherapy is that there is a continuous communication. If this is the situation you'd better buy a laptop or I find another therapist. You didn't refer to my dream. Is it an evasion or does it mean that you are trying to renounce your duties as a therapist?

This sort of expectation, which exists to a lesser or greater degree with most new online clients, emphasises the importance of the detailed contract in the first stage of therapy or even in the first contacts with new clients.

Clients' expectations are enormous, and their fantasies about someone who listens and understands and will respond in detail to every written (and unwritten) word in the e-mail always exist, whether consciously or unconsciously. In their contracts, therapists have to lower these expectations and define in detail the structure of their future responses. There are therapists who determine a limited number of pages or words in their reply, while others set the amount of paid time they will devote to each reply.

This is not enough. Clients need to be aware of the boundaries of the reply. Therapists have to clarify the form their replies will assume according to their therapeutic approach. Are they going to refer to all the details in clients' e-mails, in order to clarify them and help clients to acquire self-awareness? Are they going to interpret parts of clients' messages in order to reveal unconscious motives? Are they going to ignore the details and give their clients practical advice on how to improve their lives? Each option carries its own implications, and it is important that clients co-ordinate their expectations with their therapists' capabilities.

e. Email therapy involves an intimate therapeutic relationship. Since there is

no physical interaction between therapists and clients, transference in e-mail psychotherapy is very fast and usually starts before the first contact. Clients create their private image of the therapist according to their needs and personal situation. The combination of this phenomenon and therapists' declarations concerning the unique therapeutic relationship may create a false image of the therapeutic alliance and endanger the therapeutic process.

A client who is not aware of the difference between their inner image of the therapist and the professional behind the e-mail might become involved in exaggerated emotional overflow. 'Your words didn't address the intense emotions from those emails. Its like I came up to you and just got hit by a truck and my guts were hanging out and blood everywhere and you basically said ... hope you are happy, have a great day' (Chechele & Stofle, 2003: 41).

One of a psychotherapist's duties is to be sensitive to such phenomena and explore the role of the therapeutic relationship while formulating the therapeutic contract. This can be done in the pre-therapeutic correspondence or while discussing the contract in preliminary e-mail exchanges.

Since Email psychotherapy is based on conscious writing with no interference, the discussion surrounding the therapeutic contract is more detailed and deeper than in any other type of therapeutic encounter. Both clients and therapists have enough time to consider their interests and formulate them in the best possible way. They can also review the agreement, change and amend it in the process of writing, since all the details are available and documented.

Peter Chechele demonstrates a preliminary contract in a first reply to a new client.

In many respects what I do in my office face to face (f2f) is similar to what I do online with my clients. Namely I strive to help my clients in the following ways: (1) Helping my clients better understand themselves through questioning them about their beliefs and behaviors; (2) asking them about their personal history as it relates to the problems in question; (3) determining what your strengths are and who you can count on for support; (4) figuring out what things need to change in order for you to get back on track; and (5) strategizing with you ways we might tap into your strengths and support system to move you in this direction. Does all this make sense? I suggest that we contract for a month of unlimited email support so that we can begin this process. After the 30 days we will evaluate how we are doing and if additional work is needed. I believe we'll be able to make quite a bit of progress in a relatively short period of time. If you have additional questions

feel free to ask...

(Stofle & Chechele, 2004: 184)

E-mail therapy provides practical ways of maintaining the contract. Since the process of determining the contract and the final version is documented and available at any time, both parties can check it when a misunderstanding occurs and change it according to the present situation.

The presence of the written contract in e-mail therapy provides a sense of a secure frame that maintains the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship, which is both stable and flexible at the same time.

5. The setting. If the setting is a mutual environment for the therapeutic process and relationship, it then follows that there is no setting in e-mail psychotherapy. Without a shared time frame and simultaneous interaction, it seems as if there is no shared environment that can function as a therapeutic setting.

However, if this were true it would be difficult to understand the popularity of e-mail therapy. About 83% of online therapists are practising e-mail therapy, and this is the preferred mode of online therapy by most therapists and clients. There might be two explanations for this strange phenomenon.

- a. that the ground rules of the setting are not as significant as most writers believe.
- b. that an imaginary setting is as effective as a 'real' setting (physical or virtual).

The analytic frame is not confined to the room where the therapy is done. It is ideally tacitly in the minds of both therapist and patient all the time. It is there when you open the door or speak on the phone. It is carried with the patient (or not) between sessions: it is internalised.

(Young, 1998)

Young (ibid.) claims that the image of the therapeutic setting and the actual interaction allow both therapist and client to follow along their private paths between therapeutic sessions. This is a reasonable conclusion, which may hold true for any kind of relationship. The various aspects having implications regarding the ground rules of relationship (trust, empathy, intimacy, love) do not disappear in the intervals between the interactions in physical (home, office) or virtual settings (telephone calls, letters). People carry with them these images of a secure frame

even if they rarely meet. In the same way, transference may take place without any physical contact.

If it is true that a physical trigger of a setting may evoke an internalised image of a secure frame, one may also assume that the opposite is also true. An image of a secure setting may be created without a real interaction. Therapists and clients may create, in their minds, a virtual image that is a combination of the two separate e-mail settings, and attribute to it the characteristics of a secure setting. A similar phenomenon is well-known in acoustics. When sounded together, a combination of two tones, creates imaginary frequencies that are 'heard' without actually existing. They are called 'resultant tones' (Owen Ward, 1978: 11) or 'combination tones' (ibid.).

The phenomenon of 'combination settings' replaces the original presence of the physical setting, which is an actualisation of the metaphorical secure frame, with a metaphorical setting. This metaphorical setting creates a greater sense of a secure setting and resembles the power of transference in online and telephone psychotherapy. Some clients become addicted to this kind of communication and feel more secure in e-mail communication.

Strangely, when I finally did sit down with him in his therapy office, it wasn't the same. He was just as caring, just as warm, just as insightful. But because he was there in person, I found that there were things I could not say. And predictably, when I got home from that visit, all the things I had been unable to say in person came out in e-mail.

(Ainsworth, 2002: 202)

The absence of physical interaction is the best platform for the imagination. But this phenomenon is fragile and any misunderstanding or changes in the ground rules may provoke insecurity and resistance. To secure this fragile setting, the therapist has to be aware of the special architecture of e-mail messages.

The message body is the most complex component of the communication. Messages can vary widely in length, organization, the flow of ideas, spelling errors, grammar sophistication, the spacing of paragraphs, the use of quoted text, caps, tabs, emoticons and other unique keyboard characters, as well as in the overall visual "feel" of the message. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the structure of the email body reflects the cognitive and personality style of the

individual who creates it.

(Suler, 2004: 37)

Since the setting of e-mail therapy is metaphorical, the architecture of an e-mail message is in fact a 'control panel' which enables the therapist to keep this setting secure in a remote mode.

- a. Location. There is no location for e-mail exchanges. The e-mail itself is transferred from therapist to client via the net and there is always the risk of 'losing' the e-mail (sending it to someone else by mistake) or that the content will be exposed while on its way.

There are certain possibilities in adapting the ground rules of confidentiality and privacy to this insecure situation. The first option is to use a secure or encrypted message, which is accessible by a password to therapist and client only.

The other option is to keep the correspondence in the therapist's secure site. Some therapists offer this option, which prevents any transmission that can be tracked on the net. This option also maintains the ground rule of privacy, since clients would not have to hide their private therapeutic messages in their home or work computers, thus avoiding any risk of exposure.

- b. The design of the e-mail programme. Each programme has its own design and functions, which influence the content of the e-mail. When client and therapist use different programmes, the content of each party's message may be distorted. Font types, size and colours could be changed, paragraphs could look different and graphic elements could be concealed. This censorship may be experienced by clients as a frame deviation that violates the ground rules and the sense of a secure frame.

It is the therapist's responsibility to inform the client about this aspect of e-mail communication and to suggest other options. One option is to agree to use the same e-mail programme. In other cases one may ask clients to write their messages using Microsoft Word, which is the built-in word processor in most computers, and attach them to their e-mail. There are advantages and disadvantages to this option. Most clients are used to this programme and feel secure when using it to express themselves, whereas e-mail programmes are less sophisticated and create a sense of a cold technological setting. On

the other hand, the use of attached files weakens the role of the e-mail as a therapeutic setting and emphasises the distance between the two sides.

- c. The message body language. The sense of body language is replaced in e-mail psychotherapy by the presence of the 'message body' (Suler, 2004: 37), and the editing options through the HTML editor. 'The body of the message contains the meat of the communication. I like the metaphor of 'the body' because it captures the connotation of the physical self – how people appear, move, their sound and tone, their body language, even the elusive and rather mysterious dimensions of "presence".' (ibid.).

The HTML editor of e-mail messages is more sophisticated than that of a chat room and enables users to control the typography and the design of the message body in their own time, thereby allowing them to express their personal and unique style.

Suler (1998) identifies six components of an e-mail message: '(1) the sender's name as indicated in your inbox, (2) the subject line, as indicated in your inbox, (3) the greeting that introduces the body of the message, (4) the body of message, including quoted text, (5) the sign-off line and name, and (6) the signature block' (ibid.). The combination of these components constructs an image of each participant, which is grasped by the other participant as the writer's style. Any change in one of the components or in the 'style' may be experienced as a frame deviation. For example, if the therapist, who always quotes a line from a poem in the subject line, forgets, and leaves the client's subject line (e.g., Re: 'another fucking day') the client may feel abandoned and lose his trust in the therapist's attentiveness.

In face-to-face psychotherapy, the setting enables therapists to practice the ground rule of empathy through body language. In the case of e-mail psychotherapy, therapists have to learn how to be empathic through textual body language, which is not always obvious:

You know, as I sit here and think about you, Martha, I find myself wanting to go into that lake with you, swim around awhile, check out all its features, see how clean the water is, or isn't and then maybe call the Army Corps of Engineers and tell them the lake is a flood hazard, so we need to build some drainage.

(Ainsworth, 2002: 202)

There is no setting in e-mail psychotherapy, but there is an alternative metaphorical setting that enhances the sense of a secure or insecure frame. Psychotherapists must be very sensitive to clients' responses and interpretations and to the effects of their written text. The whole process of e-mail psychotherapy is conditioned by therapists' ability to maintain the ground rules and secure the frame.

6. Time management. While chat room psychotherapy is different from other kinds of psychotherapy due its unique setting, e-mail psychotherapy is characterised by its lack of setting and time frame, in the traditional sense. Online therapists define an e-mail session as the exchange of a message from the client and a reply by the therapist, or as the exchange of several messages that refer to the client's original message. But although the therapeutic session in e-mail therapy is asynchronous (i.e., does not take place at the same time), one cannot ignore the influence of the expanded time frame on the therapeutic relationship.

There are certain time definitions with regard to e-mail psychotherapy; since they differ from the traditional therapeutic time frame and are spread out over a broader range of time, therapists must stabilise the ground rules of time in order to create a secure time frame. Since there is no shared time dimension in e-mail therapy, scheduling details play a central role in creating the secure time frame.

- a. Scheduling of client's messages. In face-to-face psychotherapy, the exact time of each session (the exact day and hour) is one of the fundamentals of the therapeutic relationship and the same ground rule may be adapted to e-mail psychotherapy. When I started practicing e-mail therapy in 1999, I agreed with my clients on the exact day and hour each week at which they would send their e-mail. They could however write and prepare their message before the agreed time, as I will explain later.

Surprisingly, most e-mail therapists ignore this option. On their web sites only five therapists (2.5%) out of the 197 surveyed present the option of agreed times for receiving their clients' e-mails. This time frame violation, concerning the exact time for receiving clients' e-mails, which signals the beginning of each session, has significant implications for the therapeutic relationship and the sense of a secure time frame. It changes the power relations between therapists and clients and diminishes therapists' authority since clients can send their e-mails whenever they choose to do so, thereby intruding on therapists' privacy. This 'free' choice of time may enhance the

phenomenon of 'false expectations' regarding therapists' response time.

Drastic drops in the pace, or an apparent failure of the partner to respond at all, throws you into the "black hole" experience. The partner's silence may be a sign of anger, indifference, stubborn withdrawal, punishment, laziness, preoccupation with other things... But you don't know for sure. The ambiguity inherent in the no-reply easily can become a blank screen onto which we project our own expectations, emotions, and anxieties.

(Suler, 1998)

Although many therapists do define their response time, the lack of agreement concerning the exact time of receiving client's e-mails may evoke such 'black holes' and false expectations.

- b. Scheduling of therapist's reply. When I practised Email psychotherapy, I committed myself to replying at an exact hour, 12 or 24 hours after receiving my client's e-mail. Now I believe that I could improve upon this. Since I am supposed to devote 50 minute to my reply, there was no reason not to do so when I received the client's message, sending my response exactly an hour later (leaving 10 minutes for transportation time).

But although nothing stops therapists from scheduling the exact time of their reply, almost no one does so. Only 15 therapists (7.6%) out of 197 promise to reply within a short time (4-12 hours). 76 therapists (38.6%) promise to reply within 24-48 hours, 15 therapists (7.6%) promise to reply within 48-72 hours and 91 therapists (46.2%) do not refer to this subject.

Many online therapists recommend a response time of between 24 and 48 hours. Clients find it comforting to know when they might anticipate a reply – if too much time lapses between exchanges the anxiety of the client and/or the clinician may negatively affect the work.

(Chechele & Stofle, 2003: 45)

The main characteristic of almost all the therapeutic web sites with regard to time definition is a pale and flexible definition of therapists' reply time. Whether the response time is short or long, it is never accurate, and it allows therapists a margin of at least 12-24 hours.

- c. Length of each session. E-mail session equals at least two sessions: the client's writing time and the therapist's writing time. Although the sense of time is subjective, face-to-face therapy engenders a common perception of

the length of each session, whereas e-mail therapy involves two separate and different time settings.

Most therapists limit their writing time to the conventional time setting of fifty or sixty minutes, to which they refer in evaluating their fees. Actually only 7 therapists (3.6%) out of 197 refer to the writing time. Since they have to reply within 24-72 hour, it might be better if they wrote their response in one sitting, although they could divide it into two or three parts. Each writing style may influence the content of the e-mail and the relationship between therapists and their clients. Other therapists might evaluate their time according to the number of pages or words, but all therapists have to limit the length of their responses and focus on certain parts of clients' e-mails:

Wow, when I asked you to tell me a bit about your history, you certainly were not at a loss for words. My reaction was one of being overwhelmed with the enormity of your story. My guess is that this may also be the way you're feeling... overwhelmed and full of emotions. There was so much I wanted to respond to but I've decided to narrow our discussion down to what I believe are the major themes of your email.

(Stoffle & Chechele, 2004: 186)

The differences between clients' e-mails and therapists' replies can reflect a conflict of interests. While therapists endeavour to maintain the time frame in accordance with their fees, clients may feel that they have to write as much as they can to get the most out of what they have paid for. They may invest many hours in their text and even if they are limited to a number of pages or words they may try and compress as much as they can into a few words. They may write their e-mail throughout the week, spending hours writing and rewriting their messages.

Sometimes the difference between the time investment of therapists and clients is out of proportion, creating tension and unrealistic expectations from the therapist.

- d. Frequency of e-mail exchanges. The convention of weekly scheduled sessions is easily adapted to e-mail therapy, but most e-mail therapists (97.5%) do not offer their potential clients this option. Only five therapists (2.5) present the option of a fixed day for Email sessions on their web sites.

The disregard for fixed regular sessions seems on the surface to allow clients more flexibility, but at the same time it lacks a sense of permanence

and security.

- e. Duration of the therapeutic process. An agreed length of treatment and date of termination may strengthen the therapeutic relationship and the productivity of the therapeutic process, similarly to short-term psychotherapy, for instance, Freud's decision to end Sergei Pankejeff's treatment within twelve months (The Wolf Man, Freud, 1918).

One may assume that the prevalence of time-limited psychotherapy is associated with insurance companies being interested in diminishing the expense of mental health treatment. The same can be said about online psychotherapy but, surprisingly, most e-mail therapists (90.9%) do not refer to length of treatment in their proposed contracts. 'While contemporary face-to-face treatment models have diverse treatment lengths (from one-session crisis intervention to traditional long-term psychoanalysis), online therapy offers a fresh perspective on the duration of treatment' (Zelvin & Speyer, 2004a: 166). Only eighteen therapists (9.1%) offer their future clients a choice of options (1-3 e-mails, 1-6 e-mails, 5-8 e-mails, bi-weekly correspondence, monthly contract, etc.).

The lack of a common traditional setting may enhance the sense of time differences between clients and therapists. In order to overcome this sense of distance and its effect on the therapeutic relationship, therapists should clearly define the ground rules of time. However, this is not the situation in contemporary e-mail psychotherapy and it may contribute to the poor image of e-mail therapy, conveying the impression that it is not 'real' psychotherapy.

7. The message. While in face-to-face psychotherapy the therapeutic message is improvisational and conditioned by the therapist's experience and professional competence and in chat room therapy the therapeutic message is limited by the fast pace of the dialogue, e-mail therapy is almost exclusively a therapeutic message exchange.

On the one hand, the special characteristics of e-mail therapy enable therapists, to perfect their therapeutic messages writing technique. On the other hand, there is a risk of turning these messages into the main theme of e-mail therapy, thereby diminishing the role of other therapeutic procedures.

Therapeutic e-mail messages have some advantages that do not exist in chat room or face-to-face psychotherapy. As stated earlier, it is fully documented, enabling therapists to refresh their memories at any time, or even use parts of it for

research. For example, they can perform a linguistic analysis of the text and discover categories that they hadn't previously identified. Secondly, therapists have enough time to review the documentation of the therapeutic process and refer back to meaningful parts of their messages. The perfection of the therapeutic message in e-mail therapy relies on the written documentation of certain stages of the therapeutic process.

- a. Pre-therapeutic communication. Online psychotherapy usually starts with e-mail communication and negotiation concerning the terms and expectations of the therapeutic process. This pre-therapeutic communication reveals clients' communication skills and hints about the future therapeutic relationship.

E-mail therapists have the time to search for this preliminary communication and refer to certain points in their therapeutic messages. Oren was thirty years old, a successful systems analyst in a well known company, who had difficulties creating relationships with women. Two months after starting e-mail therapy, he told me about a woman whom he'd met on the net. He corresponded with her twice a day and even developed a warm attachment to her. When she asked him to meet her face-to-face he withdrew, feeling threatened. In my therapeutic message I referred to our preliminary communication.

Dear Oren,

I know that some people make acquaintanceships through the Internet, and meet face-to-face the same evening. But most people don't do that, and for some people it takes more time to trust a stranger. I remember our correspondence before starting psychotherapy. It took you about two months to start trusting me, and I know that you are still testing me. Aren't you? I know that you like Y', and that you take her very seriously, and I believe that you are not going to fail yourself. I am also sure that if Y' is patient she'll find that behind your armour there is a kind and sensitive human being, as I have found.

Yours,
Dror

- b. The contract. The therapeutic contract is the platform for the therapeutic relationship. It introduces expectations and defines the terms and boundaries

of the relationship. The contract may serve as a practical instrument for examining the therapeutic relationship during crises and changes; adapting to the changing situation of the therapeutic process could strengthen the relationship.

In my negotiation with Gil I offered him, in accordance with my therapeutic approach and belief, a contract for eleven sessions. He tried to bargain and asked to start with two sessions in order to examine this new kind of therapy. Finally he accepted my terms and we agreed to re-examine our contract during the tenth session, when we would decide together either to terminate or start a new series of eleven sessions.

During the eighth session, Gil told me how satisfied he was with e-mail therapy and with me and asked to renew our contract for another eleven sessions. Then he told me that his father had been hospitalised and that he had to stay with him at the hospital for four evenings every week. He was upset because this meant he could not use his annual subscription for the cinemateque, which was already paid for. In my message I referred to our contract.

Dear Gil,

I am so sorry to hear about your father. I know how close you two are and how difficult it is for you to spend so much time in hospitals. I'm glad that you want to renew our contract, but I feel that it is too early, since we've agreed to do that in the tenth session. It reminds me of our contract and I learned something from your cinemateque story. I think that there is a bug in our contract, and I suggest that we add this: 'If, for a serious reason, one of us cannot go on with therapy, the advanced payment will be repaid.' What do you think?

Best,

Dror

- c. The previous session. Usually a therapeutic process is a succession of sequential sessions. Most therapists write a few words at the end of each session, to remind them of the main subjects of the dialogue for the next session. But even therapists who document the whole session in writing, a process which takes at least 50 minutes, cannot remember every word that

was said or the actual context of each sentence.

E-mail psychotherapy enables psychotherapists to read the whole text of the previous session before replying to a current e-mail and to address the main themes in their therapeutic message. This may indicate a real concern about clients' words, thus strengthening the therapeutic relationship.

- d. The history of clients' e-mails. If there is an importance in referring to the client's previous e-mail, there is value in the documentation of the whole history of client's Emails. This is particularly important for writing the last therapeutic message, at the end of the therapeutic process.

The last message concludes the whole therapeutic process. It reviews the contract, expectations and terms of therapy in comparison with the actual outcome. It creates a 'secure frame' for clients to continue the process themselves, using their 'inner therapists'. It also defines an option for future interaction, if necessary. Formulating the last therapeutic message is a complicated task, and many therapists refer only to some aspects of their last message.

Dear Barbara,

You don't know how good it makes me feel to read your words. It really is magical what can happen when people take the time to get to know one another. It saddens me to think how many years you spent looking for connection, to be heard, seen and understood. Through our sharing, I've learned a lot about you and myself ... thanks. Now it's time to begin letting others in so that they too will have an opportunity to share your world.

Best,

Peter

(Stofle & Chechele, 2004: 194)

In this last message the therapist is focusing on supporting his client. By using the documented history of the client's e-mails he was able to refer to the whole process and supply his client with more detailed recommendations for her new path.

The advantages of therapeutic messages in e-mail therapy also include some risks, which therapists have to consider seriously:

- a. Overflow of therapeutic messages. Since there is no dialogue in e-mail psychotherapy, therapists may be overwhelmed by therapeutic messages and

their clients may experience them as patronising or preaching. Consequently, therapists may neglect other important parts of the therapeutic interaction.

- b. Counter-messages. The effect of therapeutic messages may influence clients, causing them to replace their narratives with self-therapeutic messages. This is a sort of intellectualisation, which may slow down or impede the therapeutic process and create a kind of resistance.

Therapists may cope with these risks by adapting certain technical guides to prevent such a flooding of therapeutic messages.

- a. Semi-dialogue. Some therapists tend to copy the client's whole message in their reply and integrate their comments between the lines, causing it to resemble a 'real' dialogue. This may be effective, but at the same time it may cause therapists to ignore the advantages of therapeutic messages in e-mail therapy.
- b. Specific guidelines for therapeutic messages. Therapists may determine certain situations in which therapeutic messages are needed: the opening phrase of an e-mail session; the end of each session; the termination of the therapeutic process; crises in clients' lives or in the therapeutic relationship. Maintaining these guidelines enables therapists to focus on other therapeutic tools and techniques.

A survey of therapeutic web sites

In order to compare the potential adaptation of traditional ground rules or the definition of new ground rules in online psychotherapy and the actual situation in the practice of online therapy, I carried out a survey of therapeutic web sites at the end of 2005.

The purpose of this survey was to review the therapeutic web sites found on the Internet and explore their ability to create a 'secure frame' for potential clients according to the seven categories of ground rules. The survey includes a thorough examination of therapists' declarations concerning their work, the contract they present on their sites and their personal philosophy regarding online psychotherapy. I also scanned the structure of these sites, their proposed setting for online interaction, their design and the information and services they offer.

I didn't interview therapists about their views on the question of ground rules,

because I wasn't interested in therapists' subjective views. I preferred to examine the result of their actual practice as reflected by the impression conveyed to prospective clients by a first or second glance at their web sites.

I was assisted by the following sources for online therapeutic sites:

- a. The members' list of ISMHO. The International Society for Mental Health Online (ISMHO, 1999) 'has over 200 members active in many counties throughout the world' (ISMHO, 2005), but they include professional and non-professional members, including 'researchers, students and ordinary people interested in the mental health topics' (ibid.).

Actually, in December 2005, ISMHO has 264 members. Only 124 members have web sites, and only 59 of these web sites offer online psychotherapy.

It was interesting to discover that many of ISMHO founders, who are the authors of most of the papers concerning online therapy, are not practising online therapy, or at least they do not mention it in their writing or present it on their sites. Martha Ainsworth, who was president of ISMHO, represents online therapy client's. John Suler, the author of the online book *The Psychology of Cyberspace* (Suler, 1996), is a clinical psychologist and researcher but is not practising online therapy. Jason Zack, a president of ISMHO and one of the editors of *Online Counseling* (Kraus, Zack & Stricker, 2004), is a psychologist and researcher and a consultant for jury research. He does not practise online therapy. Azi Barak, a professor of psychology who has specialised in the psychology of the Internet, a Member-at-Large of ISMHO and a member of ISMHO's clinical case study group, is not a psychotherapist. Michael Fenichel is a clinical psychologist who is a founding member and former president of ISMHO and a member of ISMHO's clinical case study group and who has published papers and book chapters on online therapy, does not practise online therapy. John Grohol, a past member of the board of ISMHO who coined the term 'eTherapy', and who runs a behavioural Internet company, does not practise online therapy. Adrian Skinner, the Secretary of ISMHO and a clinical psychologist, does not practise online therapy. Leonard Holmes, a clinical psychologist and fellow of ISMHO, believes that 'you can't do psychotherapy on the net' (Holmes, 1997). Storm King, a former president of ISMHO and an expert on the psychology of virtual

communities, does not practise online therapy.

- b. Online search engines. There are many search engines online and I tried most of them while searching for online therapy sites: Google, Yahoo, Alta Vista, MSN, Lycos, etc.

I searched for almost all possible variations of online therapy: online therapy, online psychotherapy, E-therapy, e-therapy etherapy, cyber-psychotherapy, cyber therapy, online counselling, online counseling, E-counseling, ecounseling, cyber counseling, webcounseling, virtual therapy, etc.

- c. Links from online therapy sites. Some therapists add links to those colleagues' therapeutic sites with whom they have shared interests (friends, group of online therapists, graduates of the same online course). Gil Jones, for example, recommends four other British therapeutic web sites on her site (<http://www.gjcounselling.co.uk/links.html>).

- d. Online therapy lists. There are some sites that propose a list of online therapists. Martha Ainsworth, the famous online client who was the president of ISMHO, created her famous site, 'Metanoia, ABC's of "Internet Therapy"' (<http://www.metanoia.org/imhs/ongoing.htm>) in 1996, which presents a list of 33 therapeutic web sites. She has reviewed these sites and described their therapeutic style, response time, confidentiality and costs. She even scores them between 1 and 3 stars, and rates their checked or unchecked credentials.

Another list can be found at eTherapyWeb.com (<http://etherapyweb.com/>), the 'National Directory of Online Counselors'. They present national and state listing of therapeutic web sites.

- e. Books and articles. Books and articles about online therapy include several links to online therapeutic sites. Naturally, since online sites are dynamic and constantly changing, many sites no longer exist.

It is impossible to present an accurate current review of all therapeutic web sites. The list of sites is dynamic and constantly changing. Every time I edited and checked this list I found new sites, whereas other sites had disappeared. Therefore this survey is ephemeral, but it gives an indication of the general nature of online psychotherapy.

In my first list, I collected hundreds of web sites (about 700) that were associated with e-therapy. I screened all sites that were not purely therapeutic: self-help groups, sites of therapists that didn't offer online services, sites that offer non-professional

services, etc.

On my final list compiled at the end of 2005, there are 236 sites devoted to online psychotherapy. I have not included my own site in this survey.

1. <http://www.merzconsulting.homestead.com/>
2. <http://www.kalimunro.com/>
3. <http://www.stofle.com/>
4. <http://www.netcounselors.com/>
5. <http://lifempowerment.com/>
6. <http://psyche-online.at/>
7. <http://www.choose2change.com/>
8. <http://www.headworks.com/>
9. <http://www.addconsults.com/>
10. <http://redpsy.com/>
11. <http://www.visyon.org.uk/>
12. <http://www.counselor.quillweb.com/>
13. <http://www.thenetcounselor.com/>
14. <http://robertfsmith-lsw-cac.com/>
15. <http://www.lzcybershrink.com/>
16. <http://counsellingresource.com/index.shtml>
17. <http://www.ronkraus.com/pages/1/index.htm>
18. <http://www.helpinghandcounseling.com/>
19. <http://www.comfreycounseling.co.uk/>
20. <http://www.rebt.cc/>
21. <http://www.audreyjung.com/>
22. <http://www.tridentfoundation.net/>
23. <http://www.gracetreecounseling.com/>
24. <http://www.theinternetcounselor.com/>
25. <http://donnapeddy.com/>
26. <http://peace-joy.net/>
27. <http://www.christinasteinorth.homestead.com/>
28. <http://www.theplacetotalk.com/>
29. <http://www.personal-counselor.com/>
30. <http://www.e-sextherapy.com/>
31. <http://www.active-counseling.com/>
32. <http://www.psycholoog-online.be/>
33. <http://www.joames.co.uk/>
34. <http://www.results-counselling.com/>
35. <http://www.cognitivetherapist.net/>
36. <http://www.reachtoday.com/>
37. <http://russellcounselling.com/>
38. <http://www.hopeallianz.com/>
39. <http://www.iwebcounselor.com/>
40. <http://www.counseling4change.com/>
41. <http://etherapy247.com/>
42. <http://www.itstherapy.co.uk/>
43. <http://www.lifequestcounseling.com/>
44. <http://sgpositivetherapy.com/>
45. <http://www.dearshrink.com/>
46. <http://www.counsellingjane.co.uk/>
47. <http://www.marciastarkman.com/>
48. <http://www.mental-health-therapy.com/>
49. <http://www.radgivningonline.se/>
50. <http://www.psychcafe.net/index.php>
51. <http://www.gilljones.net/>
52. <http://onlinecounselling4u.com/>
53. <http://www.rke.cc/>
54. <http://serenityonlinetherapy.com/>
55. <http://www.platiquemosde.com/>
56. <http://www.gomipsicologoonline.com/>

57. <http://123counselling.com/services.html>
58. <http://www.briefcounseling.com/>
59. <http://www.etherapistsonline.com/etherapists/index.htm>
60. <http://www.counselingcafe.com/>
61. <http://www.counseling-connection.com/>
62. <http://home.nww.net/willcars/index.html>
63. <http://www.thecybershrink.com/>
64. <http://www.e-mailtherapy.com/>
65. <https://www.etherapyconnect.com/matriarch/MultiPiecePage.asp?PageID=17&PageName=TherapistsJoinNow>
66. <http://www.feeltalk.com/>
67. <http://e-therapyhelper.com/>
68. <http://www.goslings.net/counselling/fees.htm>
69. <http://www.help2cope.com/>
70. <http://www.hotlinecounseling.com/serv.php>
71. <http://www.icallisrael.com/>
72. <http://www.counsellingskyways.co.uk/>
73. <http://www.keen.com/memberpub/homepage.asp?user=nursehope>
74. <http://www.love-sessions.com/>
75. <http://www.mynettherapist.com/individuals.html>
76. <http://www.thecounselors.com/index.html>
77. <http://www.shrink-me.com/>
78. <http://www.asktheinternettherapist.com/>
79. <http://www.helphorizons.com/>
80. <http://peaceandhappinessinstitute.com/FRAME.html>
81. <http://www.psybernet.co.nz/>
82. <http://www.mytherapynet.com/>
83. <http://www.openfordialogue.com/>
84. <http://www.nefeshnet.co.il>
85. <http://www.personalsolutions.com/>
86. <http://www.onlinecounsellor.co.uk/>
87. <http://www.etherapycenter.com/>
88. <http://www.kasamba.com/Advice/Browse/ViewCategory.aspx?desid=8&Catid=10341&banid=358>
- 6
89. <http://www.cocooncounselling.com/home.htm>
90. <http://www.brian-turner.co.uk/>
91. <http://www.ukcouplescounselling.com/>
92. <http://www.gjcounselling.co.uk/>
93. <http://www.dangilbride.com/>
94. <http://www.moralexpert.org/>
95. <http://www.askachildpsychologist.com>
96. <http://letstalkcounseling.com>
97. <http://www.warrenshepell.com/wsi/iind.asp>
98. <http://therapyave.com/>
99. <http://cybertherapy.com/>
100. <http://www.theroad.com.hk/>
101. <http://www.marriagematters.com>
102. <http://www.psychotherapy-online.com>
103. <http://www.gethelponline.org>
104. <http://www.familytherapynet.com/>
105. <http://www.gaytherapistonline.com/>
106. <http://www.counselingnet.com/>
107. <http://www.helpyourselftherapy.com>
108. <http://www.counseling-online.net/>
109. <http://www.aplacetotalk.com>
110. <http://www.horizonscounselling.com/>
111. <http://www.onlinecounseling.org>
112. <http://www.elevated.fsnet.co.uk/index-page15.html>
113. <http://www.therapyonline.ca>
114. <http://online-counseling-service.com/>
115. <http://www.toltex.com>
116. <http://www.egetgoing.com>
117. <http://www.mommy-muse.com/>

118. <http://www.mifgash.co.il>
119. http://www.kidshelp.com.au/home_KHL.aspx?s=6
120. <http://www.sexology.org>
121. <http://www.netaddiction.com>
122. http://www.infidelity.com/e-therapy/e-therapy_thp.htm
123. <http://www.psychoptions.com/>
124. <http://www.juliemorrell.com/>
125. <http://www.psychtogo.com/>
126. <http://www.crosscreekcounseling.com/>
127. <http://www.counselingpros.com/>
128. <http://www.drfranklin.net>
129. <http://www.licensedcounselor.com/>
130. <http://www.geocities.com/counselpro/ProfessionalOnlineCounseling.html>
131. <http://www.couplecounseling.com>
132. <http://www.abuse-recovery-and-marriage-counseling.com>
133. <http://www.peace-joy-love.org>
134. <http://www.family-counseling.org/>
135. <http://www.drerononline.com/Counseling.htm>
136. <http://www.sunrisecounseling.com>
137. <http://www.lifeworkshelp.com/onlinecounseling.htm>
138. <http://www.counselcareconnection.org/services.asp>
139. <http://www.girlshrink.com/index.html>
140. <http://www.psychology.com>
141. <http://www.gaymenscounseling.com/online.html>
142. <http://www.acctraining.com/counsel.shtml>
143. <http://www.leademcounseling.com>
144. <http://www.abel-counseling.com/online.htm>
145. <http://www.convenient-counseling.com/>
146. <http://www.drfranyoung.com>
147. <http://lifecoachchristiancounseling.com/>
148. <http://www.basicgoodness.org>
149. <http://www.edotcounselor.com>
150. <http://www.onlinecounsel.org/id2.html>
151. <http://www.robinsoncounseling.com>
152. <http://www.counselingcorner.net/services/online.html>
153. <http://business.gorge.net/CBC/page10.html>
154. <http://www.merrymauiweddings.com/counseling.html>
155. http://www.calmspirit.net/online_counseling.htm
156. <http://www.beharcenter.cz/en/frameset.htm>
157. http://www.stepcircle.com/eservices_ecounseling.htm
158. <http://www.emotionet.com>
159. <http://www.e-counselingonline.com/>
160. <http://www.kingdompathway.com>
161. <http://www.mcstalk.com/>
162. <http://www.adhdsite.com/site/1177310/product/E-Counseling%202>
163. http://wholelifegym.com/online_counseling_about.htm
164. <http://career-crossroads.com>
165. <http://www.askdoctor.md/>
166. <http://homeroaster.com/procedur.html>
167. <http://www.professionalcounseloronline.com/>
168. <http://www.therapyworks.ws/ecounseling1.html>
169. <http://empowermentnavigator.com>
170. <http://www.lifeonline.co.za/>
171. <http://www.4counseling.com.au/>
172. <http://www.geocities.com/a2zcounseling/index.html>
173. <http://www.therapywithsusan.com/>
174. <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/therapie.centre/center/>
175. <http://www.drjudith.com/>
176. <http://counselingservices.tripod.com/>
177. <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Styx/9698/counseling.html>
178. <http://webcamcounseling.com/>
179. <http://www.net-therapist.com/>
180. <http://www.heiko.com/>

181. <http://www.sex-therapist.org.uk/>
182. <http://www.onlinecounseling.co.uk/>
183. <http://www.therapyssession.net>
184. <http://www.getadvicethatworks.com/>
185. <http://home.earthlink.net/~jaril/online.htm>
186. <http://www.counselingcentersofamerica.com/>
187. <http://www.enhancedhealing.com/counseling.php>
188. <http://www.breakthru counseling.com>
189. <http://www.onlinecounselingnow.com/>
190. <http://www.onlinelifecoach.org/>
191. <http://shanemjones.com/mainpage.html>
192. <http://healthy-living-solutions.com/online.htm>
193. <http://www.sophiasolutions.net/sevasworld/default.asp>
194. <http://online-treatments.com/>
195. <http://www.journeys.com.au/>
196. <http://www.mentalhealthhelpline.com/>
197. <http://www.dowcounseling.com/>
198. <http://www.churchangel.com/counselor/>
199. <http://www.find-a-therapist.com/>
200. <http://www.timidez.com/english.htm>
201. <http://emotionalrescue.net/>
202. <http://www.womenscounselingonline.com/>
203. <http://www.nyccc.org/nyccc012.htm>
204. <http://www.e-psychonline.com/ecounseling.html>
205. <http://www.letstalkaboutitonline.com>
206. <http://www.beautifulnewzealand.com/help.htm>
207. <http://www.alittlebitoftherapy.com/>
208. <http://accessnorth.net/ic/>
209. <http://drjulieann.com>
210. <http://www.e-therapy.us/>
211. <http://www.innerchildhealing.com>
212. <http://www.net-therapy.com>
213. <http://www.e-therapist.us/>
214. <http://www.cathylees.com/>
215. <http://lifesspecialvalues.com>
216. http://www.aut.ac.nz/student_services/counselling/online_counselling.shtml
217. <http://www.etherapy.com.au>
218. <http://www.christiancounselling.on.ca>
219. <http://www.dnafoundation.com/sub01/empsy/status.htm>
220. <http://www.ny-psychotherapy.com/linkd.html>
221. <http://www.cosmoedu.net/therapy.html>
222. http://www.nvo.com/psych_heop/onlinepsychotherapy
223. <http://www.sexualtherapy.com/index.htm>
224. <http://www.hotkey.net.au/~bobrich/psych/index1.html>
225. <http://www.bridgecounseling.com>
226. <http://gloria-brame.com/therapy>
227. <http://www.theselfesteem institute.com>
228. <http://www.elifeline.co.nz>
229. <http://www.queendom.com/portls/advice.html>
230. <http://www.onlinecounseling.50megs.com/onlinecounseling.html>
231. <http://www.ecounseling.com>
232. <http://lindasonlinetherapy.com>
233. <http://www.millsconsulting.com>
234. <http://linepsy.tripod.com>
235. <http://www.talksolutions.net/home.htm>
236. <http://www.mcstalk.com>

In order to identify and evaluate the level of 'secure frame' proposed by each therapist, I analysed the structure of each web site according to the seven categories of ground rules, (see Appendix 1). I organised the details of each site into a table divided into

three sections by using three categories corresponding to Aristotle's three rules of thumb: space, time and action, including in each the other aspects of the seven categories of ground rules.

Space	
Setting	
Description	
Therapists	
Site	
Design	
Language	
Time	
Session length	
Session time	
Therapy length	
Action	
Therapy	
Online style	
Empathy	
Approach	
Contract	
Fees	
Ethics	

In each line of this table I inserted a short description. It looks like this:

237. <http://robertfsmith-lsw-cac.com/>
Life Issues Counseling

Space	
Setting	Secure chat or Email.
Description	Detailed explanation.
Therapists	1therapist + Professional and personal CV.
Site	Simple and clear.
Design	Focused and neutral.
Language	English (US(
Time	
Session length	30-60-90minutes chat or Email.
Session time	Scheduled appointment for chat. Email Response within 48 hours.
Therapy length	'On request.'
Action	
Therapy	It is 'an experimental activity'. 'Online counseling is NOT a substitute for traditional face-to-face psychotherapy treatment'.
Online style	Chat and Email.
Empathy	No personal appeal to the reader.
Approach	Task centered approach.
Contract	Client / Counselor Agreement.
Fees	25\$for Email, \$45 for 30 minutes Chat session.
Ethics	Confidentiality and privacy.

The sum of this information may reveal some interesting conclusions concerning online psychotherapy.

1. **Space.** The components of site construction on all 236 web sites afford a comprehensive view of the setting of online psychotherapy.

Online setting (therapeutic style)						
Email	Chat	Email+chat	Video	Forum	None	Total
98	18	99	14	3	4	236
41.5%	7.6%	42%	5.9%	1.3%	1.7%	100%

There are five categories of online setting for the therapeutic encounter and each site offers one or more of them: e-mail therapy, chat room therapy, e-mail and chat room, video-conferencing and forum therapy. Some sites make no reference to the sort of setting.

Results:

- 1. Most therapists (83.5%) prefer e-mail psychotherapy, although this kind of online psychotherapy lacks most of the characteristics of face-to-face psychotherapy.
- 2. Less than half the therapists (49.6%) prefer chat room therapy, although it resembles face-to-face psychotherapy more than e-mail therapy.
- 3. Video-conferencing is still barely used (5.9%), although it is available to most Internet users and therapists, and although it is similar to face-to-face psychotherapy.

Conclusion:

It looks as though online therapists do not choose the e-mail option because it resembles their face-to-face practice, or because they find it appropriate for a new kind of therapeutic interaction, but because e-mail is the most popular prevailing means of communication on the Internet.

Description of online psychotherapy		
Comprehensive description	Inadequate description	No description
37	71	128
15.7%	30.1%	54.2%

There are three categories of therapists' description of their work on their sites: a comprehensive description, an inadequate description or no description at all. Since most clients have no knowledge about psychotherapy, the various approaches of psychotherapy or the different styles of therapeutic relationships, it is the therapists' duty to give their clients a simple explanation of the therapeutic process during the preliminary meetings, whether in face-to-face therapy or in online psychotherapy.

Results:

- 1. Most therapists (54.2%) do not explain or describe online psychotherapy to prospective clients, although there is a greater need for such an explanation in such an innovative setting.
- 2. Only 15.7% of online therapists give a comprehensive explanation about online therapy, its advantages and disadvantages, and their specific online approach.

Conclusion:

One must assume that online psychotherapists themselves are not well-informed about online psychotherapy, since they too are new to this kind of therapy, and it is possible that even face-to-face therapists do not inform their clients about their therapeutic approaches.

In most cases the lack of information concerning online psychotherapy lessens the sense of a 'secure frame' on such sites.

Information and CV of therapists	
Detailed information	Inadequate information
127	109
53.8%	46.2%

In order to choose a therapist, clients have to be informed about his personal and professional details. This information includes the therapist's CV, credentials, diplomas and certificates, professional organisation and exact location. In online setting clients also need personal details that will help them identify the therapist and trust that he is a real therapist, as well as non-virtual ways of contacting him (address, phone or fax number, etc.)

Results:

1. About half of all online therapists (53.8%) advertise their personal and professional details on their web sites.
2. Almost half of all online therapists (46.2%) do not give adequate information to prospective clients.

Conclusion:

Many online therapists are not yet aware of the importance of presenting themselves as 'real' persons in order to engage the trust of prospective clients. 'On some, I found things that alarmed me as a consumer advocate: therapists who did not disclose their credentials, a few who did not even reveal their names. How could we, as consumers, judge whether they were competent to help us?' (Ainsworth, 2002: 203).

This means that either these therapists are not taking the new kind of therapy they offer seriously, or that they are not professional psychotherapists.

Web site qualities		
Efficient and practical	Reasonable	Confusing
64	79	93
27.1%	33.5%	39.4%

Therapists' web sites integrate two functions. They force newcomers and potential clients to cope with the technical means of each site, so they can feel familiar in the new and sometimes threatening environment; some people are not yet accustomed to surfing the Internet. The web sites also bring together therapists and clients, affording the latter a first impression of therapists' endeavours to make their sites easy to use, practical, and provided with useful and clear instructions for use.

Efficient and practical web sites make their users feel 'at home' from the first moment by starting with a simple and familiar home page, such as most people have encountered before. The home page should include only a few clearly marked links to the main functions of the site: 1. Home; 2. About the therapist. 3. About eTherapy. 4. About psychotherapy. 5. Services. 6. Terms and conditions. 7. Links. Each link should lead the potential client to a user-friendly new page, which includes an easy-to-use and clear directory and a clear path back to the previous page. These simple guidelines are the first condition for creating a sense of a secure frame on therapists' web pages.

Results:

- 1. Most therapeutic web sites (39.4%) are confusing. They are not simple and clear: they do not give a first impression of the site's purposes, there is a lack of content and explanations and it is difficult to navigate between the links.
- 2. Only a quarter of the therapeutic web sites (27.1%) are practical, simple, friendly and easy to use.
- 3. About a third of the therapeutic web sites (33.5%) are reasonably well constructed and enable newcomers to orient themselves and find their way, but they do not create a friendly welcome or a sense of understanding.

Conclusion:

Most therapists do not adapt their web sites to the needs and abilities of their clients. They ignore the natural reservations regarding the new era of the Internet of many people who need therapy and who lack sufficient knowledge of psychotherapy, two combined factors that are crucial in the first encounter with the therapeutic site.

Prospective clients may identify difficulties in using the main functions of the site or in looking for information and explanations with the personality of the therapist, so that a negative first impression is created, leading to resistance. This is equivalent of therapists that do not give their new clients enough information during a phone call about their address, terms and fees and therapeutic approach.

Web site design	
Focused, personal and aesthetic	No design
92	144
39%	61%

The design of the therapeutic web site may represent the personality of the therapist, and express the level of empathy that potential clients may preceive at first sight.

The design of the site does not have to be aesthetic, but it will always represent the aesthetic views of the therapist. The unique and personal design of a therapeutic web site might even sometimes be rudimentary, while at the same time offering a warm and loving sense of the therapist. For example, the therapist Gil Jones

(<http://www.gjcounselling.co.uk>), achieves this by presenting her smiling photograph on the home page, with a graphic illustration of a signpost to the main parts of her sight.

Results:

- 1. Most therapists (61%) ignore the importance of the design of their web sites, and present dull, formal and unaesthetic sites. This can manifest itself by confusing typography and titles, a page loaded with too much content and no personal graphic representation of the therapist.
- 2. Only a little more than third of the therapists (39%) are aware of the importance of site design. The results of their effort are sometimes also confusing, but at least they represent the taste and personality of the therapist. Sometimes therapists exaggerate in their efforts and flood their sites with images and colours, or even with loud and intruding music.

Conclusion:

Most therapists ignore the importance of their web sites' design. This is equivalent to therapists who neglect the way they dress for therapeutic sessions or ignore the setting of the therapeutic encounter (their clinic, their house, etc.). Such basic inattention to such a major characteristic of the therapeutic encounter may testify to a basic lack of understanding of the characteristics of online psychotherapy on the part of most therapists.

Language							
English						Other languages	
US	UK	Canada	Australia	New Zealand	Others	French, Hebrew Swedish Spanish German	Multi languages
152	32	17	10	5	5	9	6
64.4%	13.6%	7.2%	4.2%	2.1%	2.1%	3.8%	2.6%

The Internet has no borders and is multi-lingual, but English has become the common language for most surfers, as also demonstrated on psychotherapeutic sites.

A detailed list of languages and locations may testify to the popularity of online psychotherapy in various countries and languages. The results of this list have implications for other characteristics of online web sites, as I will discuss later.

Results:

1. Most therapeutic web sites (64.4%) are owned by American therapists who offer their services in English.
2. Another group of therapists (13.6%) works in England, and also offer services in English.
3. There are therapists in other English speaking countries (16.1%) like Canada (7.2%), Australia (4.2%) and New Zealand (2.1%).
4. Only 3.8% of therapeutic web sites present other languages: French (1 site in Canada), German (2 sites, in Germany and Belgium), Spanish (2 sites), Swedish (1 site) and Hebrew (3 sites).
5. Six therapeutic web sites (2.6%) are multi-lingual, and offer their services in more than one language: English-Spanish-Japanese, English-French, English-Czech, English-Czech-German, English-Spanish.

Conclusion:

The language of each therapeutic web site is not an indication of the therapists' location. On most web sites it is difficult to determine where the therapist lives.

Although online psychotherapy is a part of global culture, detailed information about the therapists' location is important. Some clients who live abroad may be interested in a therapist from their own country, or general area, or even city, to ensure that they have a common language and shared culture. Some professionals, on the other hand, may search for a therapist that has no connection to their close milieu. One should also take into account the difference in jargons among English speakers. 'One can imagine the confusion when an English client with an American counselor announces, "I'm dying for a fag [cigarette]" during an online session!' (Skinner & Latchford, 2004: 244).

The therapists' location is interesting from another point of view, and has implications for other results of this survey. Later I will relate to the linkage between therapists' location and their ethical values and evaluation of online psychotherapy.

The low percentage of non-English therapeutic sites (3.8%) does not mean that none exist. It indicates that if there are therapeutic web sites in other languages, they do not advertise their sites via English search engines, or that they use different or

local terms for online therapy (unless they are members of ISMHO). This research is, therefore, primarily involves English language sites.

2. Time. The three dimensions of the time-frame in online psychotherapy play a central role in defining the new characteristics of online psychotherapy. I will explore them here according to their functions in chat room therapy and e-mail therapy.

Session time (E-mail, Chat, Video, Forum, None)		
Fixed time	Flexible time	No time reference
36	117	83
15.3%	49.5%	35.2%

The new online psychotherapy modalities influence therapists' definitions of time, although they can keep to the ground rules of time, if they choose to do so. Classical time frame ground rules in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis relate to 'the time, length and frequency of sessions' (Langs, 1998: 44).

There are different definitions for session time in chat room therapy, e-mail therapy and other modalities. Here I checked therapists' attitude to the length of the therapeutic encounter.

Results:

1. Most therapists (49.5%) refer to the question of time, but they are more flexible in time definition than is the case in face-to-face psychotherapy. This means that they do not offer an option of fixed time for session length. They even leave it open to the client to choose a combination of time division, for example, 15, 20 or 30 minutes for a chat room or video session.
2. Many therapists (35.2%) do not refer at all to the definition of session time, as if it has no importance in creating the therapeutic contract and relationship.
3. 15.3% of online therapists define a fixed time for session length. They may suggest the conventional time of 50 minutes for chat room or video conferencing, or even an exact time for reading and writing of an

e-mail session.

Conclusion:

Most online therapists (84.7%) disregard the ground rule of fixed time, regarding the length of online therapeutic sessions. This may interfere with their efforts to create a secure frame for the therapeutic encounter.

This also indicates that most therapists do not try to adapt their face-to-face ground rules to online therapy or, alternatively, that they do not refer to online therapy as a serious therapeutic modality.

Chat Room Time management								
Session time			Session length				Therapy length	
Fixed	On demand	None	Fixed	fragments	flexible	None	Fixed	None
17	15	85	46	35	6	30	6	111
14.5%	12.8%	72.7%	39.3%	29.9%	5.1%	25.7%	5.1%	94.9%

Chat room therapy may be defined similarly to face-to-face psychotherapy and theoretically, there is no need to change the classical ground rules for time (session time, session length and therapy length) in this modality of online psychotherapy.

However, in actuality, online therapists deviate from the idea of a fixed time definition for chat room psychotherapy. They are more open to 'on demand' time for each session and a flexible time frame for sessions.

Results:

1. Most chat room therapists (85.5%) ignore the importance of fixed time sessions. The majority (72.7%) do not refer to this question at all and only 14.5% offer an exact scheduled time for sessions.
2. Most therapists (60.7%) do not offer a fixed time length for each session. Some (29.9%) give their clients the option of choosing a modular time length, consisting of time segments of 20, 25, 30, 40, 45, 50, 55, and 60 minutes. Others (5.1%) are flexible, letting their clients end the session whenever they choose to, providing they pay by the minute. Only 39.3% insist on a fixed time for chat room session.

3. Most chat room therapists (94.9%) give their clients the option of open-ended therapy, while only 5.1% insist on a fixed time for the whole process, or an accurate definition of a limited time therapy.

Conclusion:

The fact that most chat room psychotherapists relinquish the classical ground rules regarding the time frame is meaningful since it changes the nature of the therapeutic process and relationship.

These modifications of ground rules pertaining to time are not necessary. They are not the result of a natural process of change and are brought about by external causes. They testify to therapists' concept of online therapy as a new kind of therapy or, alternatively, to therapists' apprehension and inexperience in this new field.

It would be interesting to research the small group of therapists (14.5%) that do try to maintain the classical ground rules of time in chat room therapy.

Email Time management									
Writing length		Sending time		Response time				Therapy length	
Fixed	None	Fixed	None	4-12	24-48	48-72	None	Fixed	None
7	190	5	192	15	76	15	89	18	179
3.6%	96.4%	2.5%	97.5%	7.6%	38.6%	7.6%	46.2%	9.1%	90.9%

The time frame in e-mail therapy is essentially different from any other kind of therapeutic interaction, since the interaction is asynchronous and there is no actual shared time frame.

It would be logical to expect e-mail therapists to compensate for the lack in time definitions by reinforcing the definitions of ground rules for the time frame, or even by creating new ground rules to define a fixed time for the different time categories of e-mail therapy.

It is not difficult to define such ground rules for a fixed time in e-mail therapy. When I started engaging in e-mail therapy in 1999, I came to an agreement with my clients concerning a fixed day and hour each week for receiving their e-mails and a fixed hour for my reply 12-24 hours later. To create an even greater sense of a secure time frame, one can reply to a client's e-mail within one hour or fifty minutes, thereby

defining the therapist's writing time (the session time) to be the usual fifty-minute therapeutic hour. However, this is not the situation in current e-mail therapy.

Results:

1. Most e-mail therapists (97.5%) do not ask their clients to send their e-mails at a fixed time.
2. Only 7.6% of e-mail therapists respond to their clients e-mails in a short time (4-12 hours). Most therapists (46.2%) do not refer to the time of their reply, while 38.6% reply within 48-72 hours, which means that clients do not know the exact reply time.
3. Most therapists (96.4%) do not refer to session time. Only 3.6% evaluate session time according to the time it takes them to read clients' messages and write their replies, or according to the number of words or pages.
4. Most therapists (90.9%) do not refer to the length of therapy and do not even define their services as open-ended therapy. They leave the decision to the client.

Conclusion:

E-mail therapists choose not to create a secure time frame for their clients and are overwhelmed by the non-therapeutic spirit of online freedom and lack of boundaries. By so doing, e-mail therapists differ from 'real' therapists, thus ignoring the therapeutic advantages inherent in e-mail therapy and avoiding the option of developing new ground rules for e-mail time frame.

E-mail therapists stick to the classical ground rules pertaining to length of therapy, due to the lack of fixed therapy length in the practice of most face-to-face therapists. However, it is surprising that therapists do not adapt contemporary developments in short-term or time-limited psychotherapy to the field of Email psychotherapy.

3. Action. Therapeutic action in online therapy refers to the therapeutic process and therapists' professional competence. Actually, there is no reasons why therapists should not implement the same professional skills and practice they demonstrate in face-to-face therapy when doing e-mail therapy.

Here I will explore several factors that influence therapists in their e-mail therapy practice, according to the adaptation of traditional ground rules in the e-mail therapy relationship.

Is online psychotherapy therapeutic?	
It is therapeutic	Not as therapeutic as face-to-face
109 web sites	127 web sites
46.2%	53.8%

While no therapist usually asks if face-to-face psychotherapy is therapeutic, a question that undermines the justification of the whole profession, this question is relevant to online therapists.

The attitude of therapists to online psychotherapy throws light on the special position of online psychotherapy at this stage of its development, as I will discuss later.

Results:

- 1. Most online therapists (53.8%) believe that online therapy is not a proper substitute for face-to-face psychotherapy, even recommending that potential clients opt for face-to-face therapy for 'serious' matters.
- 2. Therapists do not openly declare their doubts concerning the therapeutic values of online therapy on their home pages. In most cases, due to legal limitations and apprehensions, they hide this in their detailed 'terms and conditions'.

Conclusion:

It is difficult, even impossible, to create a secure frame for a confidential psychotherapeutic process, if therapists do not believe that their online services are as 'purely' therapeutic as their face-to-face psychotherapy.

The experiential image of many online-therapy sites may deter potential clients, who are already embarrassed about applying for face-to-face psychotherapy due to the stigma. '*Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999) revealed that nearly two-thirds of people who need mental health care never get it, and cited stigma as a primary reason' (Ainsworth, 2002: 208).

This means that although many potential clients could find a new source of mental health care and defeat the stigma by using online services, the doubts of online therapists with regard to their own services may deepen the stigma and prevent the potential development of this new field.

Empathy	
Personal style	Formal style
72 web sites	164 web sites
30.5%	69.5%

While in face-to-face psychotherapy one can express empathy without words through body language, a smile, a look and even by breathing in rhythm with the client, online therapy therapists can only express their empathy through words and visuals.

I explored therapists' empathy according to their writing style: do they present themselves in first or in the third person, the singular or the plural? Do they refer to their personal qualities and life experiences, or maintain a neutral style? Do they present personal photographs so that clients may get an impression of their physical presence, or do they prefer to illustrate their site with anonymous smiling faces? Do they prefer a personal or a businesslike style? Do they refer to the feelings and difficulties of their future clients in their first encounter with the new method?

Results:

- 1. Most therapists (69.5%) do not welcome their potential clients in a warm personal style, preferring to present themselves and their services in a formal style. They write about themselves in the third person or in the plural.
- 2. Only 30.5% of online therapists demonstrate an empathic attitude and style on their web sites. They do so by using the first person, by revealing their personal lives and photographs and by directing their comments to their readers' feelings.

Conclusion:

Empathy is one of the basic skills of therapists in both face-to-face and online psychotherapy. Therapists' difficulties in demonstrating empathy on their home pages and web sites adversely affect the image of their professional skills and may prevent potential clients from asking for their help.

This phenomenon may indicate online therapists' difficulties with technology and the Internet, or their lack of writing skills, but it may also indicate therapists' avoidance of expressing their empathy in public (in contrast to their intimate

interaction with their clients). In online therapy it is difficult to differentiate between therapists' public statements and their personal and private parlance, since their web sites expose them to their prospective clients.

Therapeutic approach	
Detailed explanation	No description
174 web sites	62 web sites
73.7%	26.3%

There are more than 400 therapeutic approaches, and most clients, in face-to-face or online psychotherapy, have no clue regarding the basic meaning of psychotherapy. The development of the Internet makes information concerning psychotherapy available to everyone. While in face-to-face psychotherapy therapists can only give their clients a brief explanation about their personal style and beliefs, online therapists can provide their clients with comprehensive and accurate information about their work, their therapeutic approach, their expertise and about psychotherapy generally.

Online therapists may provide their site readers with links to professional sources about psychotherapy. In addition, they can provide definite information themselves, written in a simple, clear and personal style.

Results:

1. Most online therapists (73.7%) relate to their profession (clinical psychologist, counsellor, social worker, psychiatrist, etc.) therapeutic approach (psychoanalytic, dynamic, person-centred, integrative, behavioural, etc.), special expertise (children, stress, PTSD, hypnosis, ADD, teenage suicide, etc.) and the type of therapeutic services they offer (individual therapy, couples therapy, family therapy, group therapy, etc.).
2. In most cases therapists relate only to some characteristic of their professional style and approach and do not describe it in details. They usually use professional terminology (ADD, Rogerian) unaccompanied by simple explanations.
3. Some therapists direct prospective clients to links about psychotherapy and about their personal approach, while only a few describe their profession and expertise in their own words.

Conclusion:

While most therapists give accurate information about their professional skills and therapeutic approaches, only a few make the effort to render this information clear and simple for potential clients.

From my own experience, I have learned about most clients' need for simple and comprehensive information about psychotherapy and the therapeutic relationship. I decided to publish a full version of my book, *Psychotherapy, User's Guide* (Green, 1993), which is the only guide available in Hebrew, on my site. This kind of information makes clients feel more secure in the new therapeutic setting and provides them with some tools for orientation and formulating expectations.

Therapeutic contract		
Personal contract	Informed consent	No contract
72 web sites	64 web sites	100 web sites
30.5%	27.1%	42.4%

The therapeutic contract is the basis of the professional relationship between clients and therapists. In online psychotherapy the written contract has many advantages, since both therapist and client can read and reread it throughout the therapeutic process, changing and amending it in times of crises and clarifying misunderstandings.

Here I explored proposed contracts that are published on therapists' web sites. I checked the detailed contracts and their components (time definitions, fees, holidays, expectations, confidentiality, etc.) and other kinds of agreements proposed by online therapists (informed consent, initial intake form, terms of service, questionnaires, privacy agreement, etc.).

Results:

1. Most therapists (69.5%) do not relate to the therapeutic contract on their web sites. 42.4% ignore the whole question of therapeutic agreement of any kind, while 2.1% require their clients to sign a document of commitment (informed consent, disclaimer, statement of understanding, etc.). These documents are primarily intended to protect

therapists against legal claims.

- 2. Only 30.5% of online therapists present contracts or 'terms and conditions' which refer to the rights and interests and expectations of both parties on their web sites. Although these contracts refer to both parties, they are prepared contracts and are non-negotiable.
- 3. Only seven web sites (2.9%) offer their future clients 'real' therapeutic contracts, which they discuss and formulate together.

Conclusion:

While most people are aware of the importance of contracts in everyday negotiations, they may be even more essential in the sensitive and fragile interaction between therapists and clients. A lack of a therapeutic contract may not contribute to a sense of security and the imposed terms and conditions may not create a sense of a secure frame.

The small number (7) of therapists who offer their clients a therapeutic contract that might serve as a mutual endeavour towards creating the therapeutic relationship may testify to the level of professional skill among most online therapists. This can be explained by the short history of online psychotherapy and the lack of professional training and supervision that seems to hold true for most online therapists.

The seven instances of online therapeutic contracts may indicate a potential for professional practice in online psychotherapy and a possible effective adaptation of traditional ground rules in the new therapeutic era.

Fees	
Fixed fee	No reference
205 web sites	31 web sites
86.9%	13.1%

One reason for choosing online psychotherapy is the low fee that therapists ask for their services, while both client and therapists are aware of this reason.

Since information concerning the fee is important for both clients and therapists, I explored how therapists present their fees on their web sites, how detailed and clear they are and what payment options they offer (online money transfer, paying by cheques, paying for each session in advance, paying for a series of sessions, refund in cases of cancellations etc.)

Results:

1. Only 13.1 % of online psychotherapists do not present their fee and payment information in detail. In most cases the lack of information concerning the fee appears on sites where other sources of information are also lacking.
2. Almost all therapists (86.9%) give full, detailed information concerning their fees and payment options. This holds true for detailed and well-explained web sites , as well as for dull and almost empty sites.
3. Although the fee for online services is well presented on most therapeutic web sites, most therapists refer to the fee per session, thereby avoiding the implications of other payment options (the responsibility for cancelled sessions, changes of fee according to the inflation rate, etc.).
4. The rates for online therapeutic sessions vary from rates that are much lower than those proposed in face-to-face psychotherapy, to very high rates in accordance with the prominence of the therapist. There are no therapeutic web sites that seriously discuss the correlation between the rate and therapists' professional skills.

Conclusion:

It is natural for therapists to worry more about their fees and the way they are presented on their web sites than about other aspects of their sites. A clear and simple pricelist would help inform clients before they make any commitment, thereby creating a sense of a secure frame.

At the same time, the discrepancy between the lack of information regarding central aspects of online psychotherapy and the precise, clear descriptions regarding payment may create a distorted image of online therapists as being commercial and greedy.

The question of payment is more than just a technical and economic matter. There are many references in psychoanalytic literature to the therapeutic implications regarding payment in relation to psychotherapeutic processes as well as in other approaches to psychotherapy. The new payment procedures and fee scales may stimulate a sense of insecurity in relation to online psychotherapy, and there is a need to discuss this matter with clients.

Code of ethics		
Professional code	Confidentiality	No code
58 web sites	60 web sites	111 web sites
25.3%	26.2%	48.5%

A code of ethics is the stamp of approval for face-to-face psychotherapists and it is even more important for online therapists. A code of ethics gives online therapists legitimacy and asserts their obligation toward a professional organisation, thus enhancing clients' sense of trust and security.

Since online therapists have an interest in informing their clients about their code of ethics and about their professional organisation, I have tried to identify how they do so on their web sites. Do they simply mention the code of ethics and provide a link to their professional organisation, or do they hide this information and limit themselves to providing some ethical guidelines such as confidentiality and privacy?

Results:

1. Most online therapists (48.5%) do not mention a code of ethics on their web sites and do not even substitute this with a commitment to confidentiality or privacy.
2. About a quarter of online therapists (26.2%) promise their potential clients that they will maintain confidentiality, but they do not mention their professional organisation or the procedure for making complaints. In their 'terms and conditions, 'they may formulate a 'privacy statement' or claim that 'security is not perfect'.
3. Only 25.3% of online therapists mention an obligation to the ethical standards of their professional organisations and advise their future clients to read the code of ethics and be aware of their right to complain whenever necessary.

Conclusion:

The disregard for ethical standards by online therapists may serve as a warning signal regarding the professional skill of online psychotherapists, as well as their competence in creating a secure frame for their clients.

While all other adaptations of traditional ground rules in online psychotherapy are optional, all therapists, including online therapists, are committed by their professional organisations and by law to a code of ethics.

A small group of therapists (25.3%) represents a professional demonstration of online therapeutic work that integrates the advantages of online therapy and the new professional skills of online therapists.

Some observations about the results of the survey

The results of the survey of 236 active therapeutic web sites represent the present situation of online psychotherapy. Although this situation is changing every day, with new web sites starting to offer therapeutic services and old sites becoming inactive, the results may indicate certain directions and inclinations in the development of this kind of psychotherapy.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of this survey is a prevalent lack of belief among online therapists (53.8%) in the therapeutic value of their online services. This lack of belief is also reflected in the statements of ISMHO's site and ISMHO's members. The definition of online psychotherapy on ISMHO's site claims that 'E-therapy is not psychotherapy, nor is it psychological counseling' (ISMHO, 2005a). Dr. Leonard Holmes claims that 'I do not believe that Internet interactions are therapy' (Holmes, 2005). Dr. Michael Fenichel claims that 'There are several technical difficulties inherent in our efforts to transform face to face (f2f) healing relationships into online formats, across Internet-facilitated boundaries and modalities' (Fenichel, 2003). Martha Ainsworth claims that 'E-therapy will never replace traditional psychotherapy. Working with a therapist in person is still better' (Ainsworth, 2002: 209).

This result may be symptomatic and explain other results of the survey. It may be interesting to compare some sections in this survey.

1. The results enable one to grade sections attained by a high percentage of therapists concerning the level of the secure frame. For example, I will rank the sections in which more than 50% of online therapists create a secure frame for their future clients.

There are only three sections in this score where more than 50% of online therapists contribute to the creation of a secure frame.

High percentage of creating a secure frame		
1. Fees	2. Therapeutic approach	3. CV
205 web sites	174 web sites	127 web sites
86.9%	73.7%	53.8%

This means that online psychotherapists adapt the ground rules of relationships mainly when it is compatible with their personal interests. There is no evidence of a high percentage of therapists who endeavour to adopt ground rules that are associated mainly with clients' interests.

2. The results also enable one to rank the sections that attain a low percentage of therapists (under 50%) who create a secure frame for their prospective clients.

Low percentage of creating a secure frame					
1. Fixed time	2. Description of service	3. Code of ethics	4. Site's qualities	5. Empathy + contract	6. Site's Design
36 sites	37 sites	58 sites	64 sites	72 sites each	92 sites
15.3%	15.7%	25.3%	27.1%	30.5%	39%

This table indicates that there is no difference between technical aspects of ground rules (description and design) and therapeutic aspects (empathy, code of ethics), on the list of ground rules neglected by online psychotherapy.

3. It seems as though there is a connection between belief and lack of belief in the therapeutic values of online psychotherapy and therapists' geographical location. While 68.8% of British online therapists believe that their services are equivalent to face-to-face psychotherapy, only 42.1% of American therapist hold this belief.

One can explain this difference by referring to the U.S. law that limits psychologists and psychotherapists to working only in the state where they are

registered. In order to give therapeutic services to clients in other states without breaking the law, these therapists define their services as 'non therapeutic', even if they do believe that their services are therapeutic.

British psychotherapists have no such limits and need no registration, which might explain why 50% more British therapists than American therapists believe that online psychotherapy is equivalent to face-to-face psychotherapy.

This is an example of the influence of legislation on the nature and quality of online therapy services. While these legal formulations, which are usually hidden between the lines in the web sites' 'terms and conditions', help therapists to cope with legal limitations, they also interfere with the goal of creating a secure frame for the therapeutic encounter.

4. Online psychotherapy gives rise to special kinds of psychotherapy that are meant for special communities. Online psychotherapy may bridge the distance between the members of these communities and enable them to find a suitable mode of therapy.

Three gay therapy web sites (1.3%) appear in the list of 236 sites. There are also 11 sites (4.7%) for Christian psychotherapy. 'It didn't take long before biblical counseling entrepreneurs caught on to a whole new way to do counseling and make money – and without even leaving their computers. We were surprised (but should have expected it) when someone suggested that we check out a biblical counseling (E-therapy) web site' (PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries, 2001).

5. Online therapy enables therapists to open more than one web site to advertise their services. This sometimes may confuse potential clients. Gil Jones has two web sites: <http://www.gilljones.net/> <http://www.gjcounselling.co.uk>. The two sites are different in design, contents, personal photograph, even fees. Both sites present her high skills as a therapist, and create an empathic atmosphere. In a way this therapist fails her prospective clients by confusing them.

Dr. David Franklin also has two web sites. The title of the first is 'Dr. Franklin Online' (<http://www.drfranklin.net>), while the other is 'Online-Treatments.com' (<http://www.online-treatments.com>). The two have the same design, and the content is similar. The fees quote on one of the sites are twice as high as those on the other one. This may be a mistake, or a way to check clients' readiness to pay higher fees.

Some therapists may think that they are so well known that they can construct a site with no information at all. Such a web site is 'Counseling with Gloria'. Gloria claims that 'Dr. Gloria G. Brame is one of the world's foremost experts on SM/fetish sexuality' (Brame, 2005), but there is almost no content on her site, except for her CV. 'StepCircle' (http://www.stepcircle.com/eservices_ecounseling.com) is another 'empty' therapeutic web site. Except for the fee, there is no information concerning the identity of the famous therapist or about online therapy, the therapeutic approach, a contract or a code of ethics.

Another view of the survey

Each section of the survey presents objective data concerning the adaptation of certain ground rules to online psychotherapy. Although this enables an evaluation of online therapists' standing with regard to these ground rules, it is not enough to shape a comprehensive view regarding therapists' skill in creating a secure frame from their online practice.

In order to explore therapeutic sites through the eyes of potential clients or, in other words, with an intuitive and subjective point of view, I have given scores each section and reduced them to three categories according to the Aristotle's rule of thumb.

First, I designated a letter for each section: A for a high score (3 points), B for a medium score (2 points) and C for a low score (1 point). The score level refers to the level of creating a secure frame in each section. These were my evaluation guidelines for each section:

Space	
Setting	Chat room and Email: C. Secure chat room or Email in the therapist's site: B. Video-conferencing, Forum or message board in the therapist's site: A.
Description	No description: C. Minimal introduction: B. Comprehensive description: A.
Therapists	No information: C. Short presentation without CV: B. Detailed information, CV and credentials: A.
Site	Confusing with no content or too much content: C. Practical with no content or awkward and comprehensive: B. Practical and easy to navigate + relevant content: A.
Design	Loaded , confusing, without personal characteristics: C. Personal with primitive and awkward graphics: B. Simple and practical design, personal line and a photograph, easy to read typography, focused and minimal: A.
Language	I didn't score this section.
Time	
Session length	Email or chat room with no time definition: C. Some options of time fragments: B. Fixed time units: A.
Session time	No time definition: C. Approximate response time for e-mail and some options for chat room: B. Fixed time for chat room encounter, for receiving e-mail and for reply: A.

Therapy length	No time definition or open-ended: C. By request: B. Agreed length or number of sessions: A.
Action	
Therapy	This is not psychotherapy: C. This is alternative psychotherapy: B. Online therapy is equivalent to face-to-face therapy: A.
Online style	Email: C. Secure chat room: B. Video-conference, Forum or message board: A.
Empathy	Technical and formal style, commercial or in third person: C. Written in first person but with no appeal to the clients: B. Personal in first person to second person: A.
Approach	No description: C. Pale description or the usage of professional terminology: B. Accurate description of the therapeutic approach, the expertise and the professional role (psychologist, psychiatrist, counsellor, social worker, etc.): A.
Contract	No contract, terms or conditions: C. Semi-contract, informed consent, questionnaires: C. Therapeutic contract or terms and conditions: A.
Fees	No description: C. Partial or confusing description: B. Accurate description of services and fees: A.
Ethics	No reference to the code of ethics: C. Some elements of the ethical guidelines (confidentiality, privacy): B. Link to certain code of ethics and professional organisation: A.

Average:

This evaluation is naturally subjective, reflecting my expectations of online psychotherapy, my theory about the ground rules of therapeutic relationships and my personal experience in some fields (such as my rich experience as a graphic designer, editor and publisher).

There are many other ways to score these sections, according to other points of view or expectations, which may be useful for other purposes.

Secondly, I summed up the points of each category (space, time and action). Each category is summed up according to 36 points (the minimum score is 12 points). Some sections had a product according to their significance in creating a secure frame. In the category of space the setting had a product of 6, the description and therapist's CV had a product of 2 and the site and design had the product of 1. The language was not rated at all. In the category of time each section had the product of 4. In the category of action the question of therapeutic value had the product of 4, the sections of online style and empathy had the product of 2 and the sections of approach, contract, fees and ethics had the product of 1.

Third, I scored the sum of each category to evaluate the level of creating a secure frame. 12-18 points: No (unsatisfactory). 19-27: Low. 28-36: High.

Fourth, I summed up the three categories and divided them by three, in order to find the average score and evaluate the level of creating a secure frame in each site (high, low or none). It looks like this:

238. <http://robertsmith-lsw-cac.com/>
Life Issues Counseling

Space	(29) High.
Setting	Secure chat or e-mail. (B)
Description	Detailed explanation. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + Professional and personal CV. (A)
Site	Simple and clear. (A)
Design	Focused and neutral. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	30-60-90 minutes chat or e-mail. (B)
Session time	Scheduled appointment for chat. Email Response within 48 hours. (A)
Therapy length	'On request' (C)
Action	(21) Low.
Therapy	It is 'an experimental activity'. 'Online counseling is NOT a substitute for traditional face-to-face psychotherapy treatment'. (C)
Online style	Chat and e-mail. (B)
Empathy	No personal appeal to the reader. (C)
Approach	Task centred approach. (A)
Contract	Client / Counselor Agreement (A)
Fees	\$25 for e-mail, \$45 for 30 minute Chat session. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality and privacy. (B)

Average: 24.6 Low

The score of each category represents the first subjective impression of the site regarding the basic aspects of ground rules: the setting (space), the time and the therapeutic work (action). A high score creates a sense of a secure frame, and enables potential clients to approach the therapist and start a therapeutic process.

It is important to differentiate between the three categories. While the setting (space) is the main difference between face-to-face and online psychotherapy, the ground rules of time may be the same for chat room therapy or adapted for e-mail therapy. Although the category of action (the therapeutic work), which represents the professional skills of the therapist, is as important in online psychotherapy as in face-to-face psychotherapy, there are no significant differences in this category concerning online psychotherapy. This may explain the high scores of most therapists in this category, which forms an integral part in their everyday work.

Rating of the three categories of ground rules in 236 therapeutic sites		
Space (setting)	Time	Action (doing therapy)
4,644 points	4,220 points	5,640 points
Average: 19.7 No secure frame	Average: 17.9 No secure frame	Average: 23.9 points Low level of secure frame

Here I compared the three categories of ground rules, according to Aristotle's rule of thumb, to present the sense of a secure frame as it may be experienced by subjective future clients.

Results:

- 1. The average score for the category of time is the lowest among the three categories and it is not satisfactory for creating a minimum sense of a secure frame.
- 2. The average score for the category of setting touches the lowest level of creating a minimum sense of a secure frame.
- 3. The average score for the category of therapeutic skills is reasonable for creating a sense of a secure frame, although it is not high.

Conclusion:

Since most online therapists are 'real' face-to-face psychotherapists, it is not surprising that it is easy for them to present their therapeutic skills in the clearest and most positive way. However, this may raise some questions concerning the low level of professional skills that therapists consciously choose to represent. This could be explained by therapists' difficulties in expressing themselves in writing, or by their 'online anxiety'.

The low and inadequate score of therapists' adaptation of the ground rules of time to online psychotherapy may testify to negligence and ignorance arising from the excitement of creating a new therapeutic frame.

The almost adequate score of therapists' adaptation of the ground rule of setting may testify to their efforts to create such a setting, although no such setting exists as yet.

Rating of the psychotherapeutic skills in 236 therapeutic sites	
Empathy	Approach
Average of 1.76 of 3	Average of 2.53 of 3

Empathy and professional definitions are necessary characteristic of for any kind of therapist, and here I present the average score relating to 236 therapeutic web sites. While scoring each site from 1 (inadequate) to 3 (perfect presentation of a secure frame) I always rounded off towards the higher score.

Results:

1. The average score for presenting therapeutic approach, professional identity and expertise is high.
2. The average score for expressing empathy on therapists' web sites is in the lower part of the reasonable level.

Conclusion:

Here again one can see that online psychotherapists do their best to present themselves on their web sites, but only when this serves their interests or is important for their personal and professional image.

While the presentation of the therapeutic approach and professional knowledge testifies to therapists' views of their work, the expression of empathy testifies to their actual competence for doing so in practice. The low score for empathy may indicate therapists' difficulties in expressing this in writing or their online anxiety, or it may be due to the commercial atmosphere that still surrounds the image of online therapeutic web sites.

While reviewing the three categories of ground rules in each of the 236 therapeutic web sites, I identified many sites that presented double messages. Although the average rating of the three categories in all sites is very similar, there are significant differences between the three categories for certain sites. In many sites one of the categories may be very high, while the others are low. This means that although the average score of the site is low, potential clients may be impressed by the high score for one category. For example, while the score of the categories of setting and time are very low, as in most therapeutic web sites, a client may be impressed by the category of action. This means that an experienced face-to-face psychotherapist may attract online clients, although he has no qualifications for online psychotherapy. This may explain the fact that there are 236 active online therapeutic web sites, while the average rate of all sites is only 21.9 points (almost the lowest threshold of the low level for creating a secure frame).

This phenomenon does not mean that clients choose therapists who do not create a sense of a secure frame on their sites. It means that clients may choose therapists in times of difficulty or stress by clutching at any sign of a secure frame, even a fragile one. The lack of the sense of a secure frame may affect the relationship during the ongoing therapeutic process.

Critical Review of Online Ground Rules

At the end of 2005, ten years after the first attempt at online psychotherapy, there were 236 therapeutic web sites. Some books and many papers on the subject have been published, and an international society has been founded. Although the sum total of activity in online psychotherapy is still negligible in relation to face-to-face psychotherapy, it may be seen as a meaningful achievement for the short period of its existence.

It may be interesting to explore this achievement in light of the findings of this research regarding the adaptation of traditional ground rules to the new setting of online psychotherapy and the creation of a secure frame for the online therapeutic relationship.

The potential of online psychotherapy

When online psychotherapy started in 1995, there was already a history of telehealth (telephone therapy and psychiatric video-conferencing therapy) which preceded the unique characteristics of online therapy (Rosenfield, 2003: 93, Simpson, 2003: 109). Therapeutic encounters that are not based on face-to-face interaction were previously known, ready to be implemented into the new technology.

But this did not happen. Online therapists have chosen to communicate with their clients through textual written interactions, in a mode that is totally different from face-to-face psychotherapy. While this could be explained by the technological limitations existent in 1995, most online therapists (91.1%) still engage in written therapy in 2006. This is in spite of the fact that the technological developments of the last ten years enable them to utilise video-conferencing or integrate advanced instruments, thus creating an adequate substitute for face-to-face interaction.

The main criticism of online psychotherapy focuses on the lack of physical cues and body language. Although there are research studies on the therapeutic advantages of video therapy (Simpson, 2003: 125), online therapists ignore this option and only 5.9% of the therapeutic web sites (14 sites) offer this option.

There are many reasons for therapists' decision to do online therapy through written interaction. Written communication has advantages that may contribute to the therapeutic process and the therapeutic relationship. One would expect that in ten years of written psychotherapy this experience would have materialised into a new concept or technique that is compatible with the new setting of online therapy. But the

potential of textual methods for online psychotherapy has not yet been realised. There is no evidence in the literature or on therapists' web sites of the actual use of linguistic instruments or writing methods as practical therapeutic tools.

The main characteristic, or disadvantage, of the two main online therapeutic modes (e-mail and chat room) is the lack of a substitute for the traditional setting. There is still no online clinic or 'virtual clinic' for psychotherapy. Without such a clinic, which could serve as a secure frame, it is difficult to create such a secure frame or any substitute for a secure frame.

There are no limitations to the creation of a virtual clinic for online psychotherapy. There are many ways of creating private password-secured spaces, on web sites, and adapting them to individual needs. Practically it is possible to create a defined space in which therapist and client meet once a week for a limited length of time, as in face-to-face interaction. Such a space could be planned and designed according to the traditional ground rules of the therapeutic relationship, thus creating a secure frame.

Nevertheless, there have been very few attempts to create such therapeutic clinics by using secure message boards or forums on therapists' web sites. In the next chapter I will present my experiences with creating such an online clinic.

The adaptation of traditional ground rules

Online therapeutic relationships are similar to face-to-face relationship in some aspects and different in other aspects. This may affect the adaptation of traditional ground rules or the definition of new ground rules for online psychotherapy.

Only two of the seven categories of ground rules relate to new characteristics that require alterations of the traditional ground rules or definition of new ground rules. These are the categories of setting and time.

The equivalent of the therapeutic setting in online psychotherapy is the virtual space, which is metaphorically represented by therapists' web sites. Therapists may create a sense of a secure frame on their web sites by presenting secure modules for communication (i.e., a secure space for correspondence or chat in their sites); by presenting a functional and simple site; by creating a warm and personal design; and by presenting detailed information about their personal and professional qualities. Actually, most therapists ignore the option of creating a sense of a secure setting on their web sites.

There is no reason not to adapt the traditional ground rules of time (fixed time, *fixed length*, etc.) in chat room therapy, but most online therapists prefer to ignore the ground rules of time and prefer to relate to chat room therapy as a new *kind of therapy* altogether.

E-mail therapy, which is based on asynchronous communication, lacks all the flavour of traditional ground rules. This may cause a sense of insecurity, thus requiring therapists to define new ground rules, such as fixed times for sending and receiving emails. Most therapists do not pay attention to this option.

All other aspects of online therapeutic relationships are similar to face-to-face interaction and can be secured by the same ground rules. In practice, online therapists are less keen on preserving the ground rules as a secure frame for the therapeutic relationship. Most of them (53.8%) are sceptical about the therapeutic value of their work. They have difficulty being empathic and are not clear about the therapeutic contract and ethical guidelines.

It seems as if online psychotherapy serves as a catharsis or antithesis to the traditional beliefs concerning ground rules in psychotherapy. In most cases, online therapists ignore the question of ground rules and their importance in creating a secure frame, while in other cases the lack of ground rules is interpreted as an anarchic structure that is in keeping with the innovative Internet culture.

Ground rules exist in any kind of human relationship, especially in the case of a therapeutic relationship. The apparent absence of or disregard of the importance of ground rules in online psychotherapy, especially regarding the natural insecurity of this new mode of online therapy, is not a result of the new setting, but rather a description of the present situation. It may reflect the sense of insecurity, which is the basis for prejudices against the Internet and online relationships.

Traditional ground rules can be adapted by online psychotherapists according to their therapeutic approaches and can serve as a primary means of protecting their new setting and creating a sense of secure frame. The practice of ground rules in traditional psychotherapy is a convention, although not part of most training programmes, but it may be forgotten in the confusing new setting of online psychotherapy. Perhaps a training programme in ground rules and online psychotherapy is needed for therapists who engage in this new kind of therapy.

Professional qualities of online therapists

In order to create a secure frame in online psychotherapy, two basic conditions for efficient management of ground rules must be met.

1. Professional experience in face-to-face psychotherapy. While face-to-face psychotherapy is restricted by legal regulations regarding the practice of psychotherapy that are enforced by the authorities, professional organisations and codes of ethics, there are no such formal limitations for practising online therapy.

Online psychotherapy is a new source of income for therapists who do not have enough clients in their practices. It can be tempting for young, inexperienced therapists or for therapists who have certificates in certain therapeutic methods, but have no comprehensive knowledge and experience of psychotherapy.

There are also highly experienced psychotherapists, who are experts in creating a secure frame and ground rules in their face-to-face practice, however, this does not ensure that they will implement this experience while engaging in online psychotherapy. Sometimes the confrontation with the new flexible boundaries of online therapy may damage therapists' efficiency in defining and preserving the ground rules for their clients.

The results of my survey indicate that online psychotherapists ignore the role of ground rules in creating therapeutic relationship and a secure frame for the therapeutic interaction. This may be explained by a lack of professional experience or by an inability to implement this experience in the practice of online psychotherapy.

2. Training and practice in online psychotherapy. Since online psychotherapy is still in its infancy, there is no organised knowledge and comprehensive training programme for online therapists.

There are some private enterprises offering short-term training programmes for online therapists conducted by therapists who share their limited private experience with their students. However, there are as yet no courses for online psychotherapy that are accredited by any university or school of psychotherapy.

OnlineCounsellors (2005) have offered such courses since 2002. Their training programme consists of a six-module certificate course (six weeks) and is designed for professionals who are trained to reach at least diploma level.

e-Therapy Training (2005) propose a 12 hours basic individual programme 'basic course', and an option for short programmes in 'therapy practicum' (8 hours), 'e-Therapy Internet Tutorial' (4 hours), and 'e-Therapy Site Building'.

Online Training (2005) offers a general certificate in online counselling skills for therapists or counsellors, 'diploma level of equivalent'. This is an 8-week course of 65 hours. They also propose a 12-week advanced certificate in online counselling.

There is a need for a comprehensive programme in online therapy (a one year programme, for example) followed by long-term practice and supervision. Such training is necessary for creating a body of knowledge concerning online psychotherapy and for planning training programmes that will integrate the technical skills needed for online therapy with the practical confrontation with the new kind of therapeutic relationship. It is also important that such programmes be accredited by a university and by professional organisations, so that clients can rely on therapists' credentials.

Since the practice of ground rules is not an easy task even in traditional psychotherapy, and since it is contingent on professional skills and experience, such programmes should be aimed, at least at this stage of online psychotherapy, at experienced and accredited therapists. Short training programmes, which are open to beginners, might label online therapy as one of the 'new age' methods and delay its integration into the main stream of psychotherapy.

In order to create a secure frame for the therapeutic relationship, the adaptation of traditional ground rule or the definition of new ground rules in online psychotherapy are dependent on therapists' professional skills. In the present situation, these skills are not yet generally coming to expression, so it may be unrealistic to anticipate any serious consideration the question of ground rules in the near future.

The influence of Internet anxiety

Online relationships are mediated by technology, thus evoking anxiety. First, this is true since many people, including therapists and clients, are threatened by new technology. Secondly, anxiety is aroused by the anonymity of online encounters and the difficulties in identifying the real identity of online users.

It is self-evident that unfamiliar spaces and changes in habitual practices raise anxiety. This is the situation with online psychotherapy, where therapists have to confront three sources of anxiety.

1. Technological difficulties. The Internet and computer culture is still unfamiliar to many people. Most therapists have little or no knowledge of computer

hardware or software and the rapid ongoing changes in this field raise anxiety or 'persecutory potential' (Civin, 2000: 47).

2. Professional difficulties. Online psychotherapy is a new and unfamiliar setting for therapists. Experienced therapists are required to change their conventional therapeutic style, while novice therapists are confronted with a threatening environment.
3. Relational difficulties. Most therapists are not experienced in written relationships, especially with anonymous addressees. This situation is quite different from any face-to-face relationship and may raise anxiety in therapists.

Changes and innovation, such as various kinds of frame violations, are a major source of anxiety. 'Unstable and insecure frames are damaging and unconsciously arouse another form of death anxiety – *predatory death anxiety*' (Langs, 1998: 7). Managing ground rules and creating secure frames are the main tools for coping with such anxiety. In light of the above, it is interesting to note that it is hard to find any reference to therapists' or clients' anxieties and their therapeutic implications, on therapists' web sites or in the literature.

Resistance and prejudices

Innovations and changes always arouse resistance as a result of anxiety. Sometimes the resistance to an unknown phenomenon is ingrained and remains even when the unknown becomes familiar. Through this process the resistance becomes a prejudice, and serves as an obstacle to further development.

Such a process has also occurred in the short history of online psychotherapy. The new characteristics of online psychotherapy integrated with the natural anxiety of technology and the lack of physical cues has engendered resistance to the whole idea of online psychotherapy.

While 236 web sites are practising online psychotherapy and clients have begun to relate to online psychotherapy as a valid option for psychotherapeutic services, the professional milieus are still prejudiced, demonstrating resistance to this new kind of therapy.

It is natural to expect such an attitude from most face-to-face therapists, who have no experience with online therapy and who are as yet unaware of the advantages and potential of this new field. However, it is interesting to find that such prejudices and resistance also exist within the small number of online therapist, and to discover that

most of them (53.8%) are unaware of the therapeutic qualities of online psychotherapy.

One may assume that these therapists have concluded from their experience that online therapy is limited to non-therapeutic support interventions and is not appropriate to 'real' therapeutic help. DeeAnna Merz, who was President-Elect of ISMHO, claims that 'while I can provide you with helpful ideas, advice, encouragement, and support, I cannot provide you with psychiatric treatment or therapy' (Merz, 2005A). If this is true, one wonders why 46.2% of online therapists believe that online therapy is therapeutic. Are they deceiving their clients with vain promises?

Behind the resistance to online psychotherapy there is an assumption that face-to-face psychotherapy is the only beneficial psychotherapy, while online therapy is considered either a good or a bad substitute. This assumption ignores the possibility that the advantages of online psychotherapy may some day place it in the centre of the psychotherapeutic scene, as the main source of therapeutic services. Although this option is still far off, one should consider it seriously when researching the potential of online psychotherapy.

Resistance to and prejudice against the provision of psychotherapeutic services through the Internet are embedded in therapists' presentations of themselves and their work on many therapeutic web sites. This phenomenon, in addition to Internet anxiety and lack of experience and training programmes, is deterring progress and development in the field resulting in failure for fail many online therapists and clients.

The role of professional bodies

Like the status of any other profession, the status of online psychotherapy derives its authority from professional bodies. For psychotherapists, membership in a professional society is sometimes more important than academic qualifications and diplomas, since many training programmes are controlled by professional bodies such as the UKCP (UK Council for Psychotherapy) in the United Kingdom.

Membership in a professional organisation is a stamp of approval that creates the sense of a secure frame in potential clients. The authority of such organisations is expressed in their code of ethics and procedure for complaints. In the present situation of online psychotherapy only 25.3% of online therapists are committed to a professional code of ethics.

Although some professional bodies of psychotherapists (the American Counseling Association, the American Psychological Association, the National Board for Certified Counselors and Affiliates and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), have formulated special guidelines for online psychotherapy. Although there are voluntary definitions of codes of ethics for online psychotherapy (ISMHO, HONcode, Ethics Code, etc.) there is no professional body for online therapists and therefore no such obligatory code of ethics available to therapists and clients.

Some therapists attach the logo of the International Society for Mental Health Online (ISMHO) to their web sites, and commit themselves to ISMHO's suggested principles for online provision of mental health services. But ISMHO is not a professional body and its logo is not a real stamp of approval; actually, this logo might mislead clients. ISMHO is a group of professionals and non-professionals who are interested in online therapy. Most members are not professionals and some professionals are not psychotherapists. Thus ISMHO cannot represent online psychotherapists as a professional body.

The American and International Association of Online Psychotherapists is actually part of Ron Kraus' web site. My name may be found on this list, and there are no criterion for membership in this association and no membership fees.

Some lists of online therapists pretend to check therapists' credentials, for example, Metanoia (Martha Ainsworth's web site) which presents a list of recommended online therapists. The Therapy Web is an American national list of online counselors. However, these are volunteer sites and have no professional authority to accredit online therapists.

An establishment of an international professional organisation for online therapists is essential for stabilising and strengthening the status of online psychotherapy and for creating standards and regulations for online therapeutic work. This is the precondition for creating trust and a secure frame for online psychotherapy.

The future of online psychotherapy

Before starting my research, I considered online psychotherapy an option for broadening the boundaries of psychotherapy and for improving its facilities and accessibility to extensive sectors of the population.

Exploring the potential of online therapy exposed me to new fields of research and development that could contribute to the future of psychotherapy. I found that traditional experience may be updated for the new era of online psychotherapy and that traditional ground rules may be adapted to online therapy in order to create a secure frame for online therapeutic relationships. The technical developments of the last ten years have persuaded me that there are no limits to the expansion of online psychotherapy and the integration of online services into any existing therapeutic establishment.

But contrary to all expectations, this potential has still not been materialised. Chat room and e-mail therapy, which lack the requirements of a therapeutic setting, are still the main choice for online therapy (91.1%), and they have not changed significantly in the last ten years. Video-conferencing and secure forums that are capable of serving as an appropriate setting for the therapeutic process are still negligible (7.2%). No new theoretical approaches towards online therapy have been developed, and there is still no training programme for online therapists, that is, accredited by universities or by professional organisations of therapists. There is no professional body (organisation, society, etc.) which can impose its regulations and code of ethics on online therapists or offer clients a formal complaint procedure. Online psychotherapy is not yet accepted by health authorities and is not integrated into their services.

The foundation of the development of online psychotherapy and its integration in all setups of mental health services is established and ready, however the present situation of online psychotherapy does not bode well for its future. It will happen when the gap between the potential and the fear of innovation is reduced. Online psychotherapy is accessible to more clients and is less expensive than face-to-face psychotherapy. When insurance companies and health authorities become aware of these characteristics, online therapy may be integrated into all health systems.

A fresh precedent regarding the future of online psychotherapy may be found at the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, where online counselling services for students started in 2005 (AUT, 2005). When more universities, health authorities and institutions provide online therapeutic services, online psychotherapy may finally enter the psychotherapeutic mainstream.

Conclusion

Ground rules are the main source of a secure frame for the psychotherapeutic relationship in online therapy, as well as in face-to-face psychotherapy. By exploring the ground rules of online therapy through the prism of the seven categories of ground rules, I was able to identify the potential qualities of online relationship and the actual adaptation of ground rules to the new setting.

1. There are no limitations to the assimilation of traditional ground rules in online psychotherapy according to therapists' approaches and personal preferences. As in face-to-face practice, therapists may amend or even define new ground rules, according to the unique terms of each therapeutic relationship.

The new characteristics of online therapy concerning setting and time management may influence the therapeutic relationship and the definition of ground rules, as any personal situation may influence the therapeutic relationship in face-to-face interaction.

There is no essential factor in online psychotherapy that affects ground rule practice in any way.

2. Contrary to the conclusion of the last section, and to the agreed convention about the central role of ground rules in creating a secure frame for therapeutic relationship, this aspect of online psychotherapy is neglected, even non-existent.

Paradoxically, this neglect, the result of anxieties, prejudices and resistance to online psychotherapy, strengthens prejudice and resistance.

In practice, there are no satisfying conditions for creating a secure frame for the therapeutic relationship in the present situation of online therapy and there is no equivalent for an online clinic.

3. The gap between the potential of online psychotherapy and the fact that in the ten years of its existence, there has been no meaningful development in the area of therapeutic relationship and the creation of a secure frame, creates tension that may cause a delay in the development of the field for many years. This gap may also cause a sudden breakthrough that will change the status of online psychotherapy in the psychotherapeutic scene.
4. Practically, there is an immediate option to define significant ground rules and to create a secure frame for online therapeutic relationships. This may lead to the creation of an online clinic that will effectively compete with face-to-face psychotherapy.

When such an online clinic exists, the practice of online psychotherapy will become a convention and there will be less reason for resistance and anxieties.

Chapter Four: The Forum as a Secure Frame for Online Psychotherapy

In 1999 I started to practice e-mail psychotherapy. Although I found some advantages in this kind of online therapy, I was aware of its disadvantages and the lack of a setting that would serve as a secure frame. I also experienced chat room therapy but didn't find that it met my requirements for a therapeutic setting. From the start I was looking for a technical device that would serve as a virtual clinic with the characteristics of a secure frame.

In 2000 I started an online support group for PTSD victims in an open forum (discussion group). This support group, which I am still running, is open to all Internet surfers, and a group of more than 100 known participants (and hundreds of unidentified participants) use it regularly. I found that by assimilating the traditional ground rules of psychotherapy I could create a sense of a secure frame, which helped me to cope with many cases of violence and disturbances (Green, 2001). Since 2000, there have been more than 80,000 messages on the forum. I have collected and documented more than 35,000 messages on my computer and classified them according to the names of the regular participants. A review of these data has helped me to understand my role as a group leader and to examine the role of the forum's ground rules in creating a secure frame.

In March 2003, based on my experience with the open forum, I developed a special forum for individual online psychotherapy, which functions as a virtual clinic. The characteristics and design of this forum are different from the usual discussion group. In order to create a sense of a secure frame, I planned and designed the 'New Forum' according to the seven categories of ground rules.

Since no one else has experience with this kind of virtual clinic, and since my experience in forum psychotherapy is limited to my few clients (13 clients in the last three years), my findings are not yet sufficient for a comprehensive research study. However, I will present them here in order to explore the option of such a virtual clinic and the role of ground rules in the setting of online psychotherapy.

Although personally I am enthusiastic about my experience with my clients in forum psychotherapy, I will try to distinguish between my therapeutic approach and its implications and the phenomenological aspects of ground rules in this new setting.

Ground Rules in Support Forums for PTSD

My decision to start a support group for PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) veterans was not coincidental. In 1992 my novel about the 1973 Arab-Israeli war was published (Green, 1992). The novel was based on my personal experience in the war and, after its publication I received many phone calls from army veterans who wanted to talk to me about the war. I was surprised to find that it was the first time they had ever talked about their painful memories. At that time I was sure that, although I had suffered from some symptoms of PTSD (when I was recognised as war-disabled after the war, the term PTSD had not yet been acknowledged by the Israeli defence ministry), I had escaped the tragic results that were the fate of other victims of that war. Only in 2004, after four years of working with PTSD victims, did my symptoms become more serious, and I still cope with their implications.

Although the open forum lacks some basic ground rules such as confidentiality and privacy, I could recognise therapeutic processes. The forum is open to all Internet surfers, but it functions as a homogeneous group of 10-20 participants who identify themselves (although participants can hide their true identity and use a nickname). This is exceptional in such open forums and may be explained by my decision to create appropriate ground rules for such a chaotic forum. From the start, I grasped my role in the forum as a model for the small group of identified participants, with whom I also met face-to-face, demonstrating for them the basic ground rules for creating a sense of a secure frame. Now, almost six years later, my activity in the forum is minimal and the members of the same small group function as facilitators and refer to new participants according to these ground rules. These are as follows:

1. *Emotional interaction.* Most participants in this forum suffer from anxiety, feel neglected by the establishment and express anger, frustration and aggression. While in other forums, anger and aggression are banned, I let participants express such feelings with no reaction and no criticism. I do not ask them to talk about their painful history, but we all share our military background and memories of the war, so new participants may feel “at home”.

2. *The use of therapeutic tools.* Here, more than in any other therapeutic situation, I have found that listening is the best way of coping with difficulties and interruptions. In this context, listening means letting participants tell their personal stories without any interference. Instead of asking questions or expressing opinions, I encouraged the small group to share their own experiences, so that other participants could identify, reflect or support each other in a secure frame.
3. *The language.* Most members of the forum feel that no one understands them. The forum enables them to use old military slang and professional terms, with which they feel secure. This common language enables them to reveal their difficulties and to talk about PTSD for the first time.
4. *The contract.* Although I cannot prevent anyone from participating in the forum, I have formulated 'Terms and conditions' for the forum and published them at the top of the screen. I have consulted with the members of the forum and, from time to time, I also refresh and re-define them, according to the present situation in the forum. I open this "contract" with a declaration:

War memories are ingrained in every war veteran's mind. We, who participated in the war, will never forget the terror and death anxiety, the horror of the burned bodies and the destructive power of the military force.

Hundreds of thousands of us were there, and we still don't talk about it. These 'stuck' stories became a source of tension and violence that affect and harm our life in this country.

This forum is dedicated to those who wish to share their stories with other war veterans, or victims of PTSD.

This forum is open to anyone who identifies with its goals and accepts its contract.

- a. The goal of this forum is to bring the subject of PTSD to public discussion, and to support PTSD victims and their families.
- b. In order to enable group members discuss everyday subjects and create relationships between them, every message title concerning PTSD will be signed by the letters (PT).
- c. The forum is open to war veterans or any one who has faced a traumatic event, their families and friends and anyone who is interested in the subject.

- d. Participants will try to avoid political or religious arguments; they will support each other and be sensitive to other members' pain and difficulties.
- e. Personal insults or the use of vulgar or aggressive language is not allowed. Violent messages will be erased.

This contract raised resistance and aggressive reactions, but it also enabled the permanent participants to cope with times of tension and chaos, with the outrage of one of the members or with new participants who joined the forum. The constant renewal of the agreement was essential for creating the relationship between the group members and between the group and myself.

5. *The setting.* The forum has a permanent address on the Internet and a fixed design and style, and all messages are documented. This means that participants can read all the messages from the first day of the forum. They can also use the forum search engine to find old messages in a convenient way. The forum's participants feel "at home" in this setting, and sometimes behave as if they own it. Since many of them do not feel secure in their own homes, the forum serves as their main setting for communication with other people whom they trust.
6. *Time management.* The forum enables participants to be involved in synchronous and asynchronous communication. Sometimes, when they enter the forum at the same time, they use it as a chat room, while at other times they leave messages for each other and participate in asynchronous communication. Although there is no fixed time for my activity on the forum or for meetings of forum members, there are two signs of a fixed time. First, I read all messages and reply once a day. Second, many participants who have difficulties in sleeping meet each other during the late hours of the night. These time habits contribute to the sense of a secure frame.
7. *The therapeutic message.* It is a very difficult task to work with such a forum. Sometimes participants become aggressive and direct their rage at me, and sometimes they attack each other. I have found that the best way to cope with such difficult times and to keep the sense of secure frame is to ignore all attacks and keep sending reconciliatory messages.

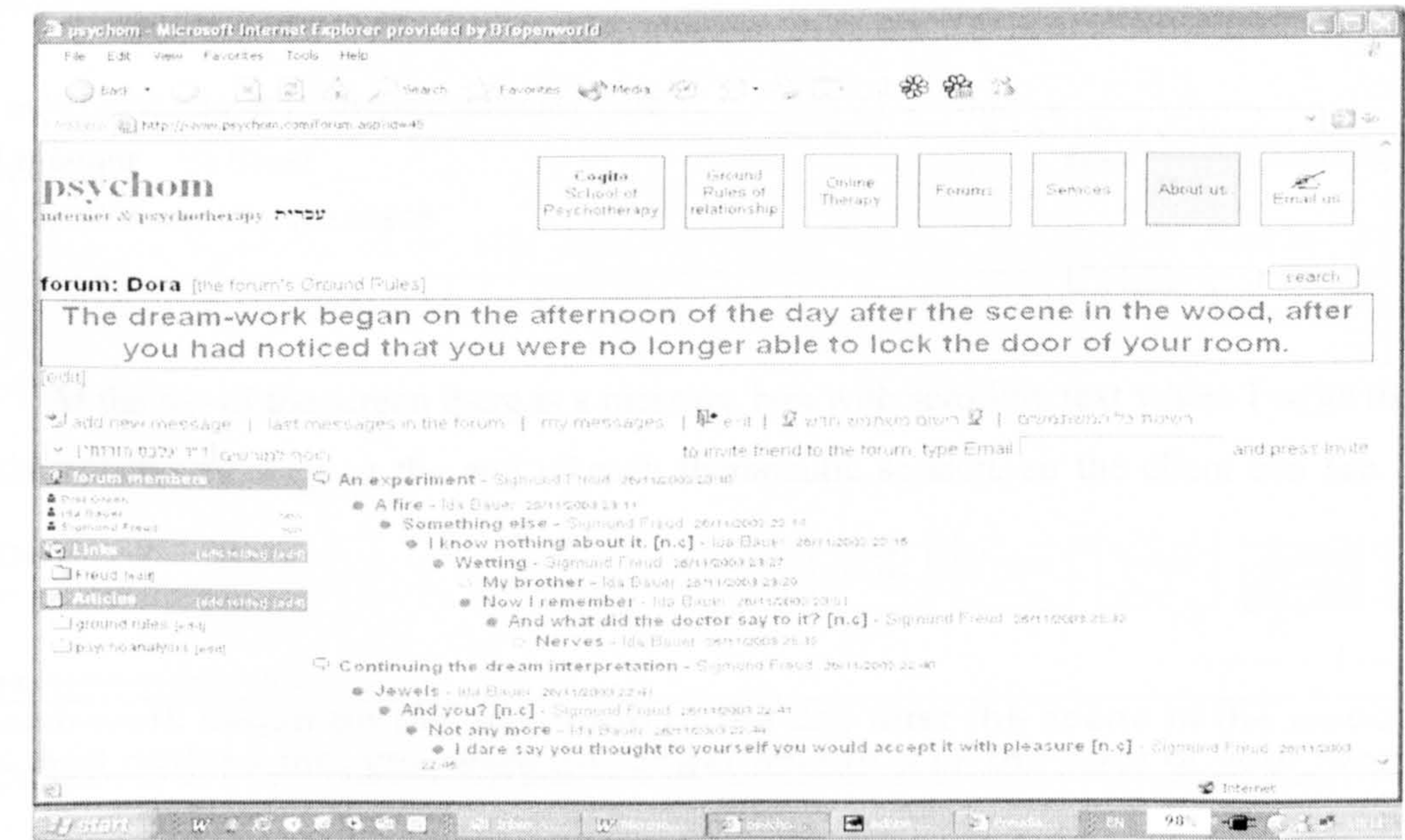
Nothing can be more chaotic than an open forum on the Internet. Such a virtual setting will never be a secure frame for therapeutic work, but defining ground rules and consciously referring to them helps to convey a sense of a secure frame.

In 2003, after developing the 'New Forum', I opened a secure forum for a small group (16 participants) of PTSD victims who participate in the open forum. Although the ground rules of this forum are almost the same as those of the open forum, the confidentiality enables the forum members to express themselves more openly and to reveal their personal stories. They do so by writing these in a special file in the "library of articles" which means that each of them can read these at his leisure and discuss them in due course.

The New Forum as a Virtual Clinic

My experience with groups and online forums was the trigger for creating a new setting for online individual psychotherapy in a private forum. My main object was to create a "secure online frame", that would merge the positive qualities of chat room psychotherapy and Email psychotherapy and overcome their weaknesses. I had to build my own site and to develop and design the New Forum, which needed special software programming. Much effort was needed to create the New Forum that now plays a central role in my work.

The New Forum is based on the structure of the “traditional” online forum. This is an organised and shaped setting which is localized in a remote computer on the web and which is not dependent on the therapist or the client's computers. The main



function of the forum is the opportunity it provides for each participant to write a new message (which means to open a new catalogue tree) or to reply to any message from another participant in any catalogue tree (from the starting point of the therapeutic process). Time and date are indicated for each message. I will describe the New Forum by a sample from the case of Dora (Freud, 1990).

In the New Forum, both participants can see the last catalogue trees on their screen (only the titles of the messages).

They can also see a succession of titles and texts from all messages in one catalogue tree, like this:

replies ↻ reply

● **When had you first dreant it? [n.c]** - Sigmund Freud

date: 26/11/2003 20:52

● **I don't know.** - Ida Bauer

date: 26/11/2003 21:02

I remember having had the dream three nights in succession at L (the place on the lake where Herr K. tried to abuse me), and it had now come back again a few nights earlier, here in Viena.

↻ reply | ✉ Ida Bauer | ✕ delete message | [edit]

○ **Free associations** - Sigmund Freud

date: 26/11/2003 21:05

Please take the dream bit by bit and tell me what occurred to you in connection with it.

↻ reply | ✉ Sigmund Freud | ✕ delete message | [edit]

● **Clarification** - Sigmund Freud

date: 26/11/2003 21:10

Did you have the dream during your first nights at L- or during your last ones? in other words, before or after the scen in the wood by the lake of which we have heard so much?

↻ reply | ✉ Sigmund Freud | ✕ delete message | [edit]

○ **A guess** - Ida Bauer

date: 26/11/2003 21:12

I don't know.

↻ reply | ✉ Ida Bauer | ✕ delete message | [edit]

● **A thought** - Ida Bauer

date: 26/11/2003 21:13

Yes. I think it was after the scene.

At the top of the screen there is a message box with scrolling text where I write the therapeutic message at the end of each therapeutic session, so the client can see it

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Rules of
relationship

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forum: Dora [the forum's Ground Rules]

search

The dream-work began on the afternoon of the day after the scene in the wood, after you had noticed that you were no longer able to lock the door of your room.

[edit]

add new message | last messages in the forum | my messages | ✕ exit | 🔍 חיפוש באתר | 🔍 חיפוש באתר

while entering the forum. All messages are kept on the bulletin board at the bottom of the screen so clients can reread them whenever they wish.

On the left side of the screen are three columns. The upper one indicates names of the forum members. By clicking on each name a personal folder is opened. The participants can add their details and photographs to their personal folders. In the second column, the participants can add links to other Internet sites which are relevant to the therapeutic process. In the third column the participants can add articles or papers by copying them from the 'Word' word processor.



On the right side at the top, near the title of the forum, one can click on '[the forum's ground rules]' and read the contract, which the therapist can change at any time.

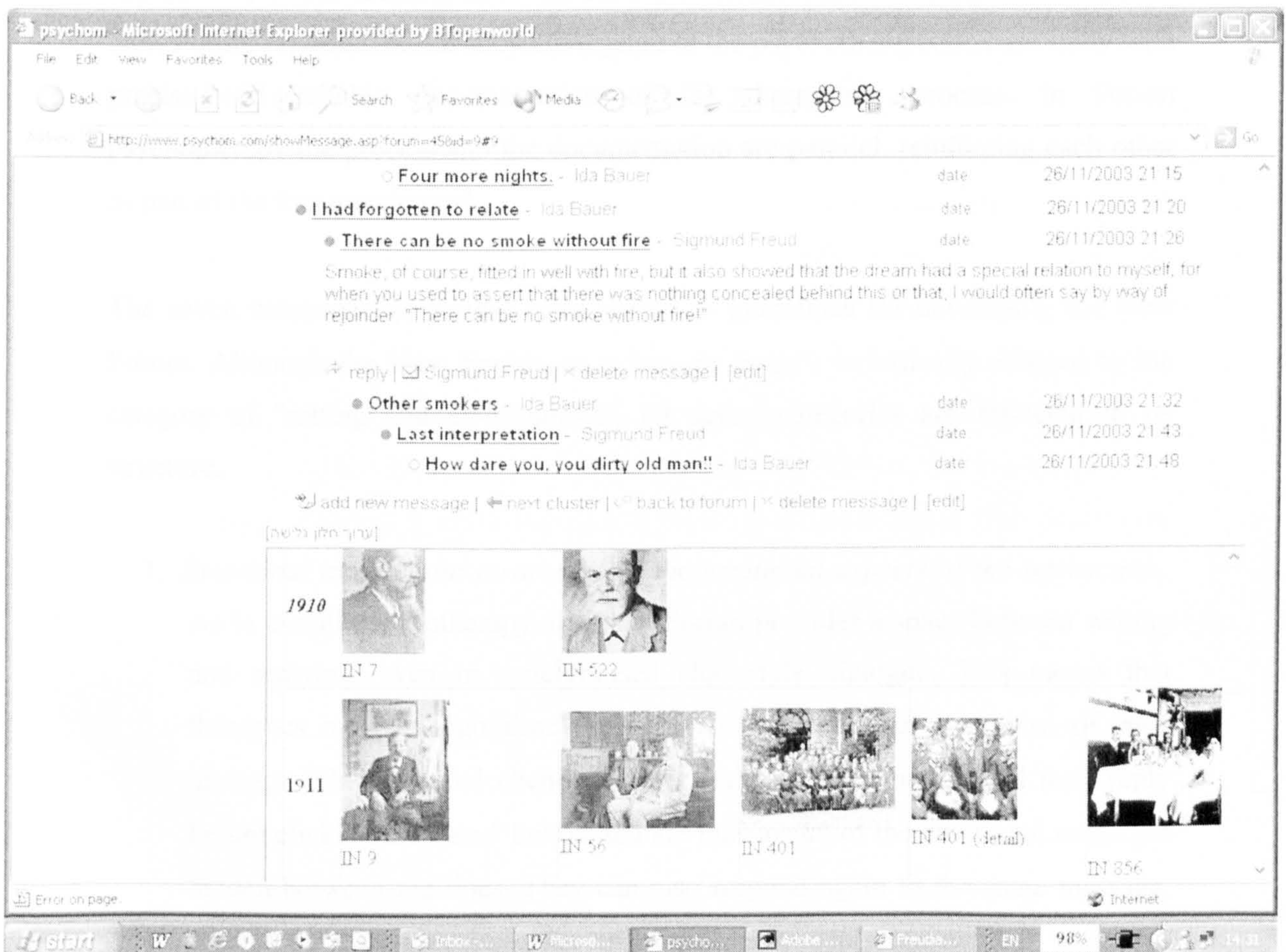
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forum: Dora [the forum's Ground Rules]

The dream-work began on

On the lower part of the screen is another screen on which the psychotherapist can surf other sites or present a paper. This unique feature of the New Forum will enable many further developments of online psychotherapy. In the near future I will be able to do video-conferencing with my clients on this inner screen and to integrate written dialogues with video therapy.



The case of Dora (Freud, 1990) might have been different, had there been a New Forum in Freud's day (Green, 2000). In the original case study, Freud used his

sophisticated new genre to distort Ida Bauer's narratives. He told her story again and again so he could replace her report about sexual abuse with his own interpretation of her sexual feelings towards Mr. Zelenka. If the analysis had taken place in an Internet Forum, such a distortion would have been impossible, as the original text would always have been accessible to both Freud and Dora. In the New Forum, the text is a silent witness to the therapeutic process and can serve as data for objective research.

The New Forum integrates the qualities of chat room psychotherapy and e-mail psychotherapy. This integration creates a new therapeutic environment, which is more than the sum of its components. The New Forum has the characteristics of synchronised dialogue, while also functioning as a container for e-mail correspondence.

The New Forum brings new possibilities to the therapeutic encounter that can lay the foundation for adapting this special environment to many psychotherapeutic approaches, or for creating new approaches to online psychotherapy. In a way, the New Forum replaces the old subjective genre of the psychotherapeutic case study with precise and reliable documentation of the therapeutic process. In Forum psychotherapy the process and the documentation are parallel, reinforcing each other as part of the therapeutic goal.

The seven categories of ground rules served as guidelines for developing the New Forum. Although the New Forum, as a "secure frame", is basically adapted to the category of "setting and environment", all seven categories are reflected in its structure.

1. *Emotional interaction: awareness of the emotional aspects of the interaction.*

As in e-mail psychotherapy, the New Forum provides a space between writing and replying, even in synchronised chat style dialogue. This means that therapists have enough time to listen to the emotional overtones of each message. Therapist and client can review the message and reread their reply before clicking the 'Send' button and are thus aware of the emotional messages hidden between the lines. They can also respond again to the same message, adding new insights in order to clarify emotional aspects that were not understood earlier.

2. *The use of therapeutic methods and tools.* In traditional psychotherapeutic settings, therapists use their professional skills to listen to their clients and help

them face their inner emotional processes. In online psychotherapy (chat room therapy or e-mail therapy), therapists can use the same skills (empathy, interpretation, holding, mirroring, containing, supporting, listening, etc.). The New Forum adds a "third party" to the therapeutic encounter: the text. This means that the therapist is less able to manipulate the therapeutic process and a learning process replaces the healing method. Clients are able to acquire some emotional instruments by imitating the therapist and practising by "listening" to their own texts. The inner screen, at the bottom of the New Forum, provides a new emotional instrument. Therapists can follow their clients in "real life" and help them practice simulations of various kinds of relationship by participating in role-plays in other Internet forums and chat rooms. While clients participate in a role-play (for example, a client meeting a girl on a singles' forum), therapist and client can see this interaction on the lower screen while discussing it in the New Forum.

3. *The language.* While online psychotherapy provides a higher degree of communication (reading between the lines, re-reading vague texts, correcting mistakes and slips of the keyboard), the New Forum can enrich the vocabulary of the common language with its indoor library of articles and links. The search engine in the forum enables therapist to analyse clients' texts, to find all appearances of a word or a term, etc.
4. *The contract.* In the New Forum there is a special room for the contract ('[the forum's ground rules]' at the top of the forum), where therapist and client can read it any time and change it whenever necessary. This means that the contract plays a central role in the therapeutic process, and such issues as expectations, payments, confidentiality, vacations and termination are part of the ongoing therapeutic process.
5. *The setting.* A secure setting means privacy, exclusivity, confidentiality, stability, constancy, no intrusion of third parties, convenience, easy operation and orientation etc. From this point of view, the New Forum has all the qualities of face-to-face psychotherapy. The New Forum is a private room that serves therapist and client exclusively. (In face-to-face therapy the therapist meets other clients in the same room). The New Forum can be fitted to the needs of each client and furnished (designed) as a neutral space or according to the therapeutic approach. Since all the dialogues are documented in the New Forum, there is no transportation of mail that can be tracked or read by third

parties. The confidentiality is higher than e-mail psychotherapy or face-to-face therapy, where therapists keep written records about their clients which can be lost or seen by other people.

6. *Time Management.* The New Forum is a very flexible environment, which enables therapists to match the time frame to their clients' needs. It can function as a chat room in which therapist and client have a synchronised dialogue. It can also be used for e-mail remote communication when psychotherapist and client exchange messages at an agreed time. The therapeutic dialogue can also be a free-time relationship in which therapist and client are involved in a daily dialogue that is based on many sorts of messages. It can also integrate all possibilities, with client and therapist meeting on a weekly basis at a fixed time, while using non-synchronised messages and replies between these fixed meetings.

7. *The Psychotherapeutic Message.* The psychotherapeutic message is a ritual with which any psychotherapeutic session is ended. It includes a comprehensive review of the session and its place in a succession of therapeutic sessions, a critical study of the contract, re-definition of expectations and future anticipations and scheduling. In the New Forum, the message is not remote from other parts of the session (as in face-to-face or chat room psychotherapy, where the text is not recorded and made available to both sides); it is rather a natural result of the whole process. In the New Forum, after a discussion in a catalogue tree, the message can be clearly phrased by the therapist and copied to the upper message board as a motif indicating the direction of the next session.

Built on the foundation stones of the seven categories of ground rules, the New Forum can function as a secure frame for an online therapeutic relationship. This means that psychotherapists are always committed to formulate and re-phrase ground rules for each client and for every session, as a central part of the psychotherapeutic process.

The Practice of Ground Rules in the New Forum

In the following vignettes, I will present aspects of ground rules as I experienced them in my practice of forum psychotherapy, through the prism of the seven categories of ground rules.

1. Emotional interaction: the first stage of forum psychotherapy

In face-to-face psychotherapy, clients approach therapists by telephone while, in online therapy, clients approach therapists by e-mail.

Dr. G. told me in his e-mail that he was the head of the psychiatric department in one of the hospitals in the centre of Israel and that his position and status prevented him from seeing a psychotherapist in his area. He had read one of my papers about online therapy and asked for information about the procedure. At the end of his e-mail, he firmly insisted on his right to confidentiality and demanded that I delete his e-mail as soon as I had finished reading it.

We corresponded for a few days. He insisted on addressing me as 'Dr. Green', although I declared that I was not a doctor, and my attempts at empathy and explanations aroused in him resistance, anger and a feeling that I didn't understand him and that I was arrogant and patronising. In his reactions to our communication, it was not difficult to identify the difficulties he was coping with or the signs of transference.

Transference and countertransference are important aspects of psychotherapeutic work. The very fact that these groups are held online can change the interactions. For example, because the group members and I do not see each other, members may idealize me or project their fantasies and wishes onto me. Because I am unseen and 'mysterious,' anger and frustration can be taken out on me more readily.

(Fink, 1999: 76)

In order to establish the first stage of a relationship and create a sense of trust, I invited Dr. G. to talk to me through Internet telephone software. In this conversation I opened a private forum for him and presented the setting in which we could meet for the therapeutic process.

Our shared observation of the specific setting and assurances of exclusivity and confidentiality, relieved his suspicious and anxiety, signifying the boundaries of therapy by distinguishing the emotional aspects of our relationship and all other aspects that were not part of the therapeutic relationship.

2. The use of therapeutic tools: processing the therapeutic narrative

Dalia was the cultural attache for one of the Israeli consulates in Europe, and from her first e-mail I was impressed by her writing skills. She was a forty-year-old single woman and her work filled her life. She was the author of four books of poetry and her language was rich and unique. She approached me when she learned that she was going to terminate her work within a few months and asked me to help her cope with this unexpected change in her life.

In our weekly sessions, she flooded me with words. In our contract we had agreed on three months of weekly sessions that would focus on the process of termination and departure and the preparation for her re-encounter with relatives who might see this as a failure and blame her again for not getting married when she was younger. I could not escape the thought that she was investing all her power in hiding something else. I read her messages again and again, until I recognised her overuse of the word "silence" ("they are trying to silence me", "I will not keep silent", "the silence of the sheep", "silent agreement", "my right to remain silent", "silence is golden", "the silent major", "breaking the silence", etc.).

In my next message, I told her that I had used the search engine of the forum and found that in the first five sessions she used the word "silence" 164 times. Dalia responded with astonishment and asked to consider it before we discussed this in our next session.

In the next sessions, her writing style changed. Her messages were shorter and, over the subsequent months, her awareness of the word "silence" led us to a painful childhood memory about a relative who had asked her to keep silent when he forced himself upon her.

The option to examine the therapeutic process in the forum through objective linguistic research adds new therapeutic tools that serve the therapist and are intelligible for clients.

3. The language: multicultural interaction

My first interaction with Hanan also took place through Internet telephone software, in a discussion of the forum that would serve us as the virtual clinic.

Hanan was an Israeli who had lived in Thailand for fifteen years; he had continued talking and writing in Hebrew, but his writing skills were diminishing. We agreed that

he would write for the forum in English, while I responded in Hebrew, while integrating the Internet telephone to practice our common language.

But Hanan's necessity for a common language did not refer only to the Hebrew language that had led him to choose online therapy with an Israeli therapist. He was a stranger in a strange culture and becoming a stranger to his original language (his family had remained in Israel).

The forum enabled us to examine together the multicultural systems in which he was involved and to consider if they served him as a way of communicating with his environment or as a wall between him and this environment. We also examined the meaning of a common language in our relationship. We did this by using the libraries in the forum, where we could keep text files or links to online web sites, and by using the inner screen, where together we could study texts of other web sites.

The creation of our relationship, which was based on identifying the sources of our common language (as Israelis who were interested in literature, music and Western culture), served us as a simulation of Hanan's communication with other people. The date of termination, on which we agreed in our contract, was the catalyst for identifying the meaning of relationships and their connection with death anxiety; this led us to Hanan's childhood and the syndrome of "Foreign Ministry children" that had haunted him all his life.

4. The contract

In traditional psychotherapy it is conventional to formulate the therapeutic contract in the course of the first sessions. Kallner (2000) presents Etchegoyen's view (1991), that the contract has to be formulated after the assessment session and before starting psychoanalysis, Greenson's suggestion (1967) is to devote a few sessions to formulating the contract with the client, while Langs (1973, 1982) proposes dedicating the last third of the first session to the contract.

I believe that the contract, as part of the therapeutic ground rules, has a central role in the therapeutic process, and that it has to be reconsidered regularly every few sessions and made accessible in every session. In my practice I divide the therapeutic process into units of 11 sessions, at the end of which my client and I can renew the contract or terminate it.

In the forum itself, the contract has a special location and it can always be read by clicking the title at the top of the screen ("[The ground rules of the forum]") and

always be discussed. I formulated the therapeutic contract according to the seven categories of ground rules. For example:

- a. Our interaction, in this forum, is a dialogue of emotions. The forum will serve you as a safe, in which you can deposit your emotions and observe them with no interruption, judgement or criticism. In the forum you can write whatever comes to your mind, and we will both try to understand the meaning of your words.
- b. My 'listening' to your words is based on the assumption that each of us is a story, and that the way we tell our life story is the software that leads us in our lives. I will try to help you understand your story and identify the patterns of its structure, especially the 'stuck' patterns that disrupt it. I will try to 'read between the lines' and listen to unconscious messages in our communication. I will not judge you or try to influence you, but will try to see the world from your point of view and reflect your story back to you so that you can see it from another point of view.
- c. Our mutual work will be based on the effort to create a common language and not on therapeutic theories or professional terms. I will try to understand your language and reveal your ability to use it as part of your personal inner work.
- d. Our contract is limited to 11 weeks, during which we meet here at the agreed time. You can use this forum between the sessions and relate to our work here. You can also add texts to the library of articles and links to the links' library. All your texts will be saved in the forum and no one else, except for both of us, will be able to see them or be aware of the existence of this forum. The texts may be erased whenever you choose to do so. You will pay \$ 660 for a series of 11 sessions and, at the end of each series we can start a new series. If you have to cancel a session, you can inform me 24 hours before the agreed time, and we will agree on a different time for that session. Our relationship is subject to the professional code of ethics at the time of therapy and after termination. I am a member of the UKCP and committed to the code of ethics. I am also a member of ISMHO and accept its code of ethics.
- e. You can use the New Forum, in which our interaction takes place, in the sessions and between the sessions. The forum is protected by a password and no one, except us, can enter it or know about its existence. You are invited to read about the structure of the forum in the library of articles, and to use all its facilities. While in face-to-face psychotherapy the clinic serves all the clients, the new forum is exclusively yours. No one has used it in the past, and no one will use it in the future. This means that you can use it between sessions, whenever you choose to do so.
- f. We will meet here once a week for fifty minutes, during the next 11 weeks, on the same day and at the same hour. Changes in time are possible, if notification is made 24

hours before the session. You can use the forum between sessions, and you will be free to read our dialogues after the end of the therapeutic process.

- g. This forum is meant to serve you as a 'secure frame' for self-observation and it is meant to give you the means of doing so in the best ways possible. On special occasions you can call me at the phone number which you can find on my personal card in the forum or send me an e-mail.

I wishing both of us a productive and successful journey,

Dror

The availability of the contract in the forum has served me on several occasions in times of resistance, immobilisation or dead end.

Orna, a teacher who lived in an isolated village in the south of Israel, complained about her longing for her daughter, who lived in Tel Aviv. When she wrote about her weekend meetings with her daughter, it reminded her of our weekly sessions. I suggested that we both review our contract, and consider the option of conducting two sessions a week. Because of her financial situation we agreed on two sessions and a reduced fee. Following this change Orna dared to talk with her daughter about their meetings and to suggest that they also meet between weekends at a train station in Beer-Sheba (a city between Tel Aviv and Orna's small village in the south).

5. The setting: the client's clinic

During ten months of therapy, I practised simulations with Dan, reconstructing his relationship with his partner, a relationship that he wished to end, but did not due to his fear of remaining alone.

The series of 11 therapeutic sessions helped him to cope with the process of separation from me, which was not easy. After termination he continued to write in the forum, and actually practised our work together in the ten months of therapy. A few months later he sent me an e-mail:

I feel that our conversations helped me to separate, and cope with the fear of being alone. Now the forum enables me, in difficult times, to review our work together and to recover in times of weakness. I know that you don't read my messages in the forum (although I'll be glad if you do so), and I want to thank you for this space, and I feel as if you built it specially for me (and maybe all your clients feel like that).

In order to create a secure frame, the forum was designed to create a sense of privacy, exclusivity, permanence, absence of interruption of third parties, convenience, etc. Except for the messages that are kept in chronological order, the forum is designed to contain "libraries" of articles, links and a message board, and it is adapted to the needs of each client. The forum may be designed as a neutral space or according to the special characteristics of each therapeutic approach. The confidentiality in the forum is more absolute than that of e-mail therapy, since the whole correspondence is kept in the forum which is protected by a password that can be changed frequently. Two characteristics of the forum add advantages that are not present in a face-to-face clinic:

- a. The forum is the client's, not the therapist's, exclusive setting. This enhances the sense of confidentiality and a secure frame.
- b. The inner screen of the forum enables client and therapist to view texts or web sites together. For example, the therapist can "follow" his client in his encounters with other surfers on the Internet, and observe his relationships with others (on singles' sites, for example). This option, allowing the therapist to follow his client outside the clinic, is impossible in traditional face-to-face therapy.

6. Time management: a flexible time

Daphne was a stewardess for an Israeli airline and her work did not allow her to determine a fixed time for therapeutic sessions. She asked me to meet her for face-to-face therapy whenever she was available. My limited time did not allow me the appropriate flexibility for Daphne's needs, so I offered her forum therapy, which could be flexible and adapted to her needs and possibilities.

The "New Forum" can serve as a sophisticated chat programme, in synchronised sessions, or as enhanced e-mail therapy. I proposed another option: Daphne would send a short message whenever she decided to do so and she would receive my responses within 24 hours (excluding weekends), with a fixed fee for each message.

We decided to integrate all options and, in accordance with her time limitations, Daphne sent me short messages, long e-mails, and we, periodically had a 50-minute session in which we could conduct a synchronised dialogue.

The flexible time management was appropriate for Daphne's lifestyle and reflected the accurate way in which she related to the meaningful figures in her life. My readiness to adapt myself to her time conditions enabled her to examine, in a protected laboratory frame, the influence of her flexible time management on her relationships with other people and to re-estimate her expectations of marriage and motherhood.

7. The therapeutic message: between sessions

When Joe, the managing director of a start-up company, started therapy he was exhausted, and he felt as if he was losing control of his personal and professional life. He worked for about twenty hours a day and, for the previous two years he had only spent time with his wife and children on Saturdays. He asked me to follow him via the Internet six days a week, so that he could correspond with me on the "New Forum" during the few free minutes he could find each day.

I refused. If I had agreed to his request I would have become part of the chaotic texture of his life and served as another cause for pressure. I thought that my insisting on a weekly session at a fixed time would serve him as a model for change.

During the first two weeks Joe "bombed" me with e-mails between sessions. At the end of the third session, after discussing this subject, I concluded with this message:

In our session today I understood your necessity to send me daily e-mails and to share every minute of your life with me. By doing this you enabled me to understand your way of life, conducted from one minute to another, with no boundaries. Our meeting here is a different little space and I believe that it may help you to practice another option. Here, in the forum, you can go on and share your daily experiences with me, but I will not read your message until our next session. Please remember that although I do not respond immediately to your messages, I always keep you in my heart.

I left this message in a large box at the top of the screen, where he can see it whenever he enters the forum, under the title "Gut feeling (third session) ".

In this way, my therapeutic messages stay with the client between sessions for the whole week. Clients can see all past messages on the message board of the forum. My message to Joe, which concluded the session, linked him to the progression of our meetings and to the therapeutic contract. On the one hand, it clarified for him the

boundaries of our relationship and on the other hand, it assured him that I would always support him and remain empathetic.

A Case Study of Forum Psychotherapy

In the following pages I will present the case of Rona, which could be entitled "a case of self-criticism". This case demonstrates some of the main aspects of online psychotherapy, its advantages and disadvantages.

This case study, like all other examples of my work, is based on my personal experience with my clients. However, according to ethical considerations, it does not reveal any personal details, since it is fictional and composite by nature.

Theoretical model

My therapeutic work is based on my own narrative approach (Storytailoring), which is different from the Narrative Therapy of White and Epston (1990). The main assumption of my approach is that the personal narrative is a metaphor for the human mind, and that emotional processes are continuous processes of re-telling. Emotional difficulties are caused by "stuck" stories or narrative patterns, and the therapeutic process focuses on identifying personal narrative patterns and "stuck" stories. In fact, the therapeutic process is a learning process in which clients are trained in the process of identifying narrative patterns and in re-telling their stories.

In my approach, I have integrated ideas and techniques from existential psychotherapy and communicative psychotherapy, in which I was trained and supervised. I have adapted the idea of clients' responsibility for the therapeutic change from existential therapy, and communicative interpretation from communicative psychotherapy. I have also integrated my own development of practical training in the "ground rules of relationship".

I have published books and papers and I have lectured about my therapeutic approach; many of my clients have read my book, which is the only guide to psychotherapy in Hebrew (Green, 2003). My papers and books are also published on my web site in Hebrew (<http://www.psychom.com>).

Preliminary communication

I received Rona's first e-mail in February 2004. We went through the regular ritual: she asked for information; I sent her a link to my site, where she could read about my therapeutic approach, about online psychotherapy and about my practice of forum therapy; she could not open the link, so I copied the information for her and gave her detailed directions to my site; she did not understand the difference between e-mail therapy and forum therapy; I sent her a copy of my paper about forum therapy.

From her first e-mail, I could not escape from the domineering characteristics of her style, which made me feel uncomfortable. She was demanding and apologetic at the same time. She asked for detailed information and apologised for wasting my time without paying. I assured her that informing her about my therapeutic method and about my personal style of online therapy was my duty, and that I would not bill her for that. However, when she started to share her emotional difficulties with me I defined the boundaries of psychotherapy and told her that we would discuss it if she decided to start therapy.

In four e-mails she tried to convince me to let her test me for two or three sessions (I insisted on a commitment to 11 sessions), followed by profound apologies for wasting my time. At last, I opened a forum for her, in which she could experience the forum as a secure frame, while discussing the terms of the therapeutic process (our contract). I "furnished" the forum especially for her, so that she could feel the essence of forum therapy. I copied my papers concerning psychotherapy and online therapy into the library of articles, and added relevant links to the links library. I added a message to the message screen at the head of the forum, and presented a web site on its inner screen. I also invited her to read the proposed contract in "[the ground rules of the forum]" and to relate to its sections, so that we could formulate a mutual contract together.

I answered her questions and clarified technical aspects, but refused to discuss her personal issues before starting therapy. A week later she decided to commit herself to a series of 11 sessions.

The client

Rona presented herself as a grandmother. She was sixty-nine years old and lived in Los Angeles with her husband, two daughters and five grandchildren. In February 1967, four months before the Six-Days War, when her husband, who was a dentist,

spent months in Sinai in the reserve forces, as a result losing many of his clients to other dentists, she coerced him into leaving the country with her and their daughters.

Although her husband had a successful career and her daughters were happy with their new life, finished university and became devoted mothers to their children, she never stopped blaming herself for interfering with her family's fate, as she defined it, and was always occupied with the questions of "what if?". She felt guilty, and this became the central subject of her thoughts and dominated her daily life. From her first e-mail and throughout the eight months of therapy she always apologised and blamed herself for any inconvenience.

Rona's main complaint was her relationship with her daughters and especially the behaviour of her grown-up grandchildren. She felt ignored, but took the blame for this upon herself. She believed that psychotherapy would help her to cope with her frustrations concerning her expectations from her family.

Rona is a gifted writer, and this made her an appropriate candidate for narrative psychotherapy and online psychotherapy. She had published three children's books before leaving Israel, and her familiarity with my books was one of the reasons she approached me for psychotherapy. In the course of therapy, I found that part of her frustration was caused by her failed attempts to write in English and her mistrust of her "rusty Hebrew", as she called it.

Setting and contract

The change in Rona's writing style was apparent when we stopped corresponding through e-mail and started communicating within the secure forum. Her last e-mail was characterised by resistance and doubts that were masked by her self-accusation and self-criticism.

You don't know how much I appreciate your patience and generosity, although I feel as if I'm taking advantage of your precious time. I really want to start therapy with you, but this is all so new and I still don't really understand how it works. Why don't we try it for one or two meetings, so I can see if it works for me? Why can't I pay you for two meetings, and then decide if I can commit myself to 11 meetings? It is not that I don't trust you. It always takes me time to become used to new ideas, and I'm sorry that you have to face my weaknesses even before we start working together, and with no payment. This is not fair.

You don't have to waste your time on my indecision. I insist on paying you for this time, although this is not yet therapy.

This kind of confusion is typical of such preliminary communication with new clients, and I have learned to cope with it by inviting them to experience the forum before starting therapy. I do the same in face-to-face therapy. I don't charge new clients for a preliminary meeting unless they decide to start psychotherapy. This strategy is even more necessary in online therapy, where clients need more information and support before starting psychotherapy. I have learned that opening a forum for each new client saves the time necessary for e-mail correspondence and prevents misunderstanding and frustration.

Before I send new clients their personal password (which they can change), I prepare the forum for their special needs, so that they will feel secure and welcome. When Rona entered the forum there was a greeting in the messages square at the top of the screen: 'Welcome to the New Forum, Rona'. All the features of the forum were prepared for her needs, so that she could find answers to her questions and feel comfortable. In the library of articles, I opened files containing my personal information (CV, professional and personal history, certificates and professional association); I opened a file for psychotherapy (containing papers and books about my therapeutic approach); I opened a file for online therapy (a detailed guide to the New Forum and some papers about online therapy); and a file entitled "Rona" for her personal needs (where she could add her published books or unpublished stories or any other written material). In the links library I opened files for therapeutic sites, online therapy, online bookstores that sell her children's books and a file for her personal use (where she could add sites that were relevant to our communication). On the inner screen at the bottom of the screen I presented a site that was dedicated to children's books, on which we could see detailed information about one of her successful books, which has been a best seller for many years (which is very rare).

I also posted the first message on this forum, in which I helped Rona to navigate the forum and outlined the boundaries of our relationship at this stage of preliminary communication.

Dear Rona,

You are most welcome to the forum, which will be exclusively yours when you decide to start therapy. While in 'traditional' therapy you come to my clinic, the

forum is yours, and you can use it whenever you choose to do so. I'll meet you here once a week, for fifty minutes, at the agreed time and date. The forum is protected by a password (which you can change whenever you choose by clicking on your name in the 'forum members'). No one except us can enter this forum, or even know that it exists.

Please read 'How to operate this forum' in the library of articles, at the left side of the screen, where you'll find a detailed guide to this forum. You can also read '[The Forum's Ground Rules]' at the top of the screen, which is an outline for the contract between us. after you write your expectations and needs we will phrase it together.

Please take your time, try the forum and its functions and use it until it feels familiar. You can feel 'at home' here, and I will join you when you are ready. If you need help or explanations, please ask and I will try to do my best to reply within 24 hours.

I will not charge you for experiencing the forum, but if you decide to start therapy, this period of time will be considered as the first session. If you decide not to start therapy, you will not be charged, and this forum will be closed.

I wish you a pleasant experience in this new world of psychotherapy.

Dror

My message, and the effort of adapting the forum to Rona's needs, was intended to create a secure frame for starting a therapeutic relationship. I consciously avoided any reference to her emotional difficulties at this stage. The separation between the therapeutic setting and the therapeutic content enabled Rona to reduce her worries concerning the therapeutic process and explore the option of the new therapeutic environment. Her reply reflected the influence of the sense of secure setting at the first stage of the therapeutic relationship.

Thank you, Dror, for letting me try this new kind of therapy. I can tell you that it looks quite different from what I read in your essays. I don't mean that your essays are not good enough, but that it is not easy to imagine such a way of doing therapy. I have some experience in forums, but this one makes me feel better, since there is no one else here, except for us, and since it is more personal. Where did you find this web site with my book? I was so moved by your effort. It will take me some time to read your papers in the text libraries, and the contract, but I am more relaxed now, and I hope that it will work for me here.

Rona

A few days later we discussed the contract and the money transfer, and decided to start the first series of eleven sessions. When Rona insisted on paying for the preliminary communications separately, in addition to the eleven sessions, I interpreted it (utterly personal) as a sign of trust and accepted her offer.

Main themes and narrative patterns

The therapeutic process lasted for about eight months, or three series of eleven sessions, at the end of which we examined our contract. This practice proved to be efficient in the case of Rona, and the end of each series enabled, or forced, her to review her progress and move to the next stage.

In the first series she focused on her present situation, the feelings of disconnection and their impact on her relationship with her family and her surroundings.

In the second series, Rona tried to ascribe her present situation to her childhood by referring to her superficial knowledge of psychoanalytic ideas.

In the third series, we focused on Rona's cognitive and behavioural patterns, and I trained her in the process of re-telling her narrative, according to the seven categories of ground rules, concerning her relationship with her husband and children.

First phase: current relationships

In the first six sessions Rona 'talked' about her older daughter, Ruth, and their complicated relationship. She almost ignored her husband, Daniel, who was her "best friend and partner", and did not mention her other daughter, Dafna.

Ruth was nine years old when her parents left Israel, a happy girl with many friends, who filled the house from the moment she came back from school and stayed for dinner. "She was a natural leader", Rona wrote, "and I disconnected her from her friends and culture. She was always so active and full of initiative, and when we came here she became a different person. She never invited her friends to our home and didn't share her school experiences or her feelings with us, as she used to do. I'm so sorry for her. I really ruined her life."

Rona did not give up. She spent most of her time with Ruth, helping her with her homework, talking with her and meeting her teachers and bringing her together with children of other Israeli families in Los Angeles. She never let her stay alone for more than a few minutes, and this provoked many quarrels between them. Ruth became

more and more introverted and silent, choosing to hide in a corner with a book (in Hebrew), while Rona kept blaming herself for her lack of social life and trying to force her to read in English and improve her English vocabulary. When Ruth was sixteen, Rona accidentally read her diary. 'She could be a great writer,' Rona told me, 'but her Hebrew is not good enough for publishing and her English is worse. If we had only stayed in Israel she could have been a famous writer. It's all my fault'.

When Ruth was eighteen, Rona succeeded in convincing her to study literature at a college, and Ruth left home for the first time in her life. Rona was relieved when a year later Ruth moved back home, pregnant, with her boyfriend. Nothing could be more humiliating for Rona, and it was the stamp of her failure as a mother, although Ruth was happy. For the first time in her life she had an American boyfriend. She loved him and they were married within a few weeks. She never wanted to study at a college, and was very enthusiastic about being a mother. Her parents bought her and her husband an apartment within walking distance of their own, and Rona helped her raise her children.

In the seventh session, I began interpreting Rona's narratives, and turned her attention to her repeated category of guilt and self-criticism. I asked her to re-read the last six sessions that were devoted to her daughter, and to "translate" each category to the first person. For example, instead of 'she could be a great writer' to write: 'I could be a great writer'.

Rona ignored my intervention and for the first time described her relationship with her other daughter, Dafna, with her relatives in Israel and with some Jewish women in Los Angeles. From her reaction, I could guess that she did review the documented text in the forum, and that it would take her some time to digest its implications.

Dafna was five years old when the family moved to the US, and she flourished in her new kindergarten, forgot her mother tongue and became a fluent English speaker. 'This is my fault, ' wrote Rona, 'Dafna always knew what she wanted and I was occupied with Ruth and didn't notice that she had forgotten our language. This is my fault and now we don't really have a common language, since my English is not good enough for an intimate conversation between mother and daughter. I lost her. She played the piano all day long and I didn't really follow her progress. She is a very good pianist and has won some prizes in competitions, but then she married Dave and gave up her career. I know that she is a very good piano teacher and she loves teaching piano, but I cannot stop saying to myself that if I had been there when she needed me, she could have been a famous pianist.'

I could identify the category of self-accusation when she wrote about her relationships with her friends and relatives, but she still hadn't written anything about her husband. In the tenth session, when I asked her about him, she wrote:

I've read it over again and again, and I understand why you asked me to re-write it all in first person. Don't be angry. I know that I'm not a very good client, but I cannot do it here. I tried to write it on a piece of paper, but I couldn't. Whenever I tried I saw my mother's angry face, asking me to re-write my homework again and again on a piece of paper since I had awful handwriting. I hated her for that, so help me God, but she was right. People always tell me that I have beautiful handwriting, and it always made me feel guilty, since she died before I acquired such perfect calligraphy. My father always tried to protect me, he was such a good man, like my husband, but he wasn't strong enough to stand by me. Don't you therapists talk about childhood memories? I feel ready for that, if you want me to.

I didn't ask her to talk about her childhood memories, but it was clear that she had unfinished business with her mother, so we agreed on another series of eleven sessions.

In the last session, Rona "talked" about her husband and between the lines I could also read about her father. She still blamed herself for forcing her husband to leave his clients and academic career and move to the USA. However, I couldn't escape the feeling that he was the cause of all the changes, since she wanted to save him from risking his life at the Suez canal before the 1967 war. Paradoxically, her husband was glad to leave his academic career and was very pleased with his achievements in establishing a chain of dental clinics all over the USA. These were her last words, at the conclusion of the first series of eleven sessions:

I know that when I write that it was my fault that Daniel gave up his position in the University and started a business career, you think that I am talking about myself, saying that I gave up my career as a successful writer and became a frustrated mother. Do you think that I blame Daniel for this? Let me think about it, and we'll talk about it after I tell you about my mother (now I'm crying again).

As in every session, I concluded this session with a therapeutic message, which I also copied and pasted into the scrolling text at the top of the screen, which she could read and re-read until we met again for the next session.

Gut feeling (11th session): today we reviewed together the first part of our mutual journey. In a way, we both lead each other in this journey. You lead me into the labyrinth of your life and I, as a blind sage, try to see your world through your eyes and help you see your world through my closed eyes. We both know that we cannot start this journey without trusting each other, but there are always fears and doubts. I feel more secure now, and more aware of your life and relationships, although there are some points that are still hidden. You presented yourself, in your first e-mail, as a grandmother, but in the last eleven sessions you have said nothing about your grandchildren. I feel as if you are still testing me, doubting my view of your life, which is quite natural, since I am a complete stranger. On the other hand, I appreciate your trust and courage, while inviting me to follow you to another journey, deep into your childhood memories. I wish both of us a successful journey.

Although our time was over, Rona replied to this message:

Thank you, Dror. You are right. It wasn't easy for me to trust you, and how can one trust someone he has never met, concerning the most intimate secrets of my life? I have to confess that every week I thought of terminating our contract, but your message at the end of each session, made me feel better and understand my feelings. It stayed with me during the week until our next session, and made me feel that there is someone who listens to me. I even replied to your messages and wrote to you between the sessions, although I didn't dare to do that in the forum (I know that this is 'my' forum, and that you suggested that I use it between sessions, but I felt that this would not be fair to you and I didn't want to take advantage of you like that). These messages convinced me that there is something in this sort of therapy, something that I didn't have with my face-to-face therapists in the past.

Second phase: childhood reminiscences

In the first session of the second series of eleven sessions, we renewed our contract and agreed on a plan for this series. We discussed Rona's wish to review her

childhood memories and talked about her narrative patterns that serve as "self-failing" and "self-deception" (terms that are part of my narrative approach).

The main category was Rona's self-criticism and self-accusation, which we had not discussed yet. I suggested that before we discuss this category and its meaning she could use the unique facilities of the forum that could help her identify this category and control it according to her needs. I opened another forum, entitled "Rona's negative forum", which we could both see on the inner screen at the bottom of the forum. Rona agreed that whenever she blamed or criticised herself, she would write about it in the other forum. In the course of that same session, I had to remind her of this option two or three times, but then she practised it by herself.

In the first three sessions, Rona told me about her love-hate relationship with her mother. She had some vague ideas about psychoanalytic processes, and tried to connect her relationship with her mother to her relationship with her daughter, and in a way to see her mother as the deterministic source of the category of self-accusation. At the same time, she kept separating the description of her childhood memories from her criticism, which she wrote in the other forum on the inner screen of our forum.

This parallel process was the opposite of the psychoanalytic ground rule of free association. It forced Rona to review her childhood reminiscences consciously and differentiate between pure description and her judgement and self-analysis. This double action was therapeutic in itself and saved me from having to interpret her narratives myself. In the third session she talked about the death of her mother:

When I came back from school, I was fourteen then, I found her lying on the kitchen floor. She was dead. I touched her hand, carefully, and it was cold. I screamed and sat there on a chair, staring at her, screaming. No one could hear me, because we lived in the last house of the village and our neighbours never came back from work before five o'clock. After an hour I took out of my school bag an essay with my teacher's remarks, commenting on my clear handwriting and well written work. I was very proud of this work, and wanted to prove to her that she was wrong. I threw the papers over her dead body and went on screaming. I'll go on in the other forum.

And she continued in the "negative forum":

I tried so hard and I failed again. I disappointed her again and again, I tore her heart. I killed her. I killed her. I could never satisfy her. I was never the girl she

wanted me to be. She loved me so much. Every day when I came home from school, she would sit with me and help me with my homework, feed me with all the food I loved and sacrifice her career as a writer for me. She was a journalist before I was born, and decided to stay at home and be a dedicated mother. And I always betrayed her. I preferred to stay with my girlfriends while she was waiting for me, read books instead of doing my homework and listen to my father's stories about his work as a train conductor than to help her at home. It was too late, and I'll never be able to show her that I'm so sorry.

This message was the focus of our meetings until the end of this series of sessions. She read it again and again, trying to understand her feelings, project them onto her relationship with her older daughter in psychoanalytic terms, understand herself and even forgive herself. 'Why don't you tell her about it,' I asked her, 'about your feeling and about who you are now?'

'Don't bullshit me with psychological insights,' she raged. 'It is hard enough as it is.' But a few sessions later, she decided to try it and wrote a letter to her mother. She opened a new file, "Letters to my mother", in the library of articles, and added 5-10 letters every week. She never asked me to read these letters, never mentioned them again and never asked me to refer to them.

In the tenth session we talked about the whole process, the contract and the option of starting another series of eleven sessions. Rona wrote:

I'm flooded. Seeing my words 'on the wall' and reading them again and again is like standing against the mirror, naked, seeing all my defects and weaknesses for weeks. You know how difficult it was for me, although I know how productive we were in this period of time, and I thank you for that. Will you forgive me for the hard time I gave you? (oops, I had to write it in the other forum, didn't I?). I feel as if I see my life from a different point of view now, but somehow I am not satisfied with that, and I feel that I need something else. I'm not sure, yet, what it is. Can we take a break for a week or two and then try another series of eleven sessions? Don't answer now. We can talk about it next week, in the last session. OK?

At the next session, before I concluded the whole therapeutic process, Rona surprised me, telling me that she wanted to do the "gut feelings" for the end of this stage in her therapy.

I appreciate your self-restraint for the last eleven weeks. I wasn't such a good patient, and I slipped away when I had to expose my real feelings. I know that I have to write this in the other forum, but I'm sorry, I want to be assertive now and write it here in a different way, as you asked me some time ago.

I was so preoccupied with my negative message concerning my mother's death, that I didn't have the courage to face it. I want to try your Storytailoring technique now and rewrite the same messages, painful as it can be. Here it is: (she typed the next paragraph in blue letters).

I tried so hard to satisfy my mother, but she disappointed me again and again. She tore my heart. I didn't kill her. She killed me day after day, by asking me to satisfy her, to be the girl she wanted me to be. She never loved me. Every day, when I came back from school, she forced herself upon me by interrogating me about school, about my friends, about my private feelings, feeding me with her disgusting food, blaming me for losing her failing career. She always betrayed me, ruining my childhood with her unrelenting demands, disconnecting me from my girlfriends and interests. She underrated my father and always intrigued between us, and I hate her, I hate her, I hate her.

This message was converse to her letters to her mother, in which she missed her, loved her, shared her life history with her, told her about her family, her books and even her present therapy. This message was followed by another one:

I had to write it, you know, but it is not the whole truth. It is part of me, and I'm so glad that I succeeded in saying this at last. I do hate her, but I also love her and miss her. I know that you'll say that it may represent my relationship with my daughter. I have to think about that. What bothers me is that although I made quite a journey with you, and feel that I have settled the account with my mother, actually I still have the same difficulties in my everyday life. Can we do something about that in our next eleven meetings? I really want to be a better mother (and wife), and I know that blaming myself is, in a way, blaming them for my problems.

I thought that her request was a natural progression of our relationship, and suggested that in the next eleven sessions we focus on issues concerning relationship and integrate her new insights with practical training (concerning the seven categories of ground rules).

Third phase: relationships and simulations

In the first session of the third series of eleven sessions, after a two-week break, Rona started with an episode that happened a few days before between her and her younger granddaughter, as if we were continuing where we had left off three weeks before.

'In our last meeting,' I wrote, 'you told me something that was missed in our discussion for a few weeks. I feel the same now. I appreciate the way you share your intimate interaction with your granddaughter with me, but I can't ignore the gap in our relationship, as if nothing happened in the last three weeks, and the fact that we start a new experience today.'

'You're right,' she replied. 'This is my way of disregarding my difficulties. I just ignore them and go on. Another category? Well, why don't you tell me how to cope with such situations?'

This was the time to review our previous work and to outline the goal of the present interaction. I presented an option concerning her question.

It looks as if we are closing a circle now and going back to the starting point, maybe a little wiser. When we first met, about six months ago, you asked the same question: how to cope with your present situation, with your 'here-and-now'. But we are not at the same place now and I feel that we made progress on four levels. First, we are aware of your narrative and of your category of self-accusation, which failed you in the past. Second, you were trained in a practical method of being aware of this failing category and separating it from your everyday life. Third, we explored the source of this category, which shaped your life story, and found it in your relationship with your mother. Fourth, you practised the process of retelling by reframing the narrative of your relationship with your mother.

We went back to square one, but I believe that you are stronger now, and that you are equipped with new resources that will help you explore your relationships and retell your narrative in a different way. Would you like to try?

Rona's reply embarrassed me.

Are you OK? You phrased it brilliantly, as if you are impressed by your own therapeutic and literary skills (I wonder which of them is the dominant here), and it made you blind. What do you think I was trying to do right now? Why did I tell you about my granddaughter? Perhaps I'm not such a good writer as you, but I'm older, and I can also add one to one and come to the same conclusion. I'm not

apologising now (haven't I learned something?) and I'm even proud of preceding you in such a therapeutic insight. Well, you are right and this is exactly why I decided to commit to another eleven meetings with you. I'm grateful for what you've taught me until now, so don't lose it, please, and let's start working.

It was my turn to apologise. I reread her story about her relationship with her granddaughter and found that she was right. It was a practical demonstration of the work we had been doing for the last six months, and I was proud of her, too.

The next ten weeks were very productive. Rona worked hard, integrating her experience in the forum and exploring every aspect of her relationships through the prism of these four kinds of experience. She knew how to use all the benefits of the forum, how to search the documented messages, the text files and the inner screen and in her own way taught me a lot about some possibilities that I was not aware of. She took the idea of narrative retelling seriously and used her literary skills as a means of therapy.

Rona did this in a very organised way. She opened a new filing cabinet in the library of articles for each relationship she wanted to explore and wrote the story of this relationship. Then she retold the story in a different way, referring to her "stuck" patterns and "failing" patterns, sometimes in more than one version. From time to time she picked one of these narratives and presented it on a new "tree", while I presented the retold version on the inner screen, so that we could compare the two.

At the same time, Rona continued to write her letters to her mother. She knew that I had read her letters, but she never referred to them or asked me to discuss them. The changes in these letters reflected the progress in the therapeutic process, and when Rona "sent" the last letter to her mother I knew that she was ready for termination. I waited for her to declare it, and she did so in the tenth session.

Did I tell you that Dafna and Dave are moving to Israel next month for six months? He was invited to give a seminar at the Weizmann Institute, and I was surprised to discover that I can survive without meeting them, and my granddaughter, every day for such a long time. Well, obviously I didn't tell you. I still have this category, but on the other hand you have your part in the way I'm coping with such a traumatic development. Thank you. Do you think they'll cope without me? Oh, yes, I mean, do you think I'll cope without them? I did learn something, didn't I?

I thought she did:

Yes, Rona, you still have this category, and I wonder if this is the only thing that you didn't tell me about. This is our tenth session, and next week will be the end of this series of eleven sessions. While reading about the expected separation from your daughter I couldn't ignore our expected separation. You wrote about your worries concerning the separation, and about the new strength that you have found in yourself for coping with such a 'traumatic development'. You even thanked me for the change. Yes, I think that you can cope without them and that you can also cope without me. I think that you have learned a lot, and now it is time to practice it by yourself.

Rona validated my interpretation:

Again, you read my thoughts. I don't think that I have changed, but I feel that I have learned to appreciate myself and the way I live better than I could before. There is still a long way to go and this time I'll have to do it myself with my husband and daughters, but I feel that I'm ready for that now. When we started you said that I would be able to use this forum between sessions and also when we finish our contract. It will make the separation from you easier for me. There is another thing that I didn't tell you yet. You know that I have stopped writing for many years, and writing in this forum made me feel it again in my fingertips. I want to start it here, in the forum, if you don't mind, since it makes me feel secure.

Ten months later Rona sent me her new book and I was surprised to find that it was written in English. The title was: *Letters to My Mother*.

The therapeutic process

In this case study, I have presented some aspects of the therapeutic process that demonstrate the unique characteristics of forum psychotherapy. Since the exact therapeutic processes of all my clients are documented on my site (in Hebrew), one can present relevant segments, in order to strengthen or support an argument, without distorting the original data of the case.

There were meaningful therapeutic processes in the case of Rona that have not presented here, since they were not relevant to the question of online therapy. I

focused on certain processes that demonstrated the role and influence of the forum on such processes.

1. Written communication.

Some people, like Rona, express themselves fluently in writing and are more productive in such self-awareness processes. This phenomenon is not limited to professional writers. Many people write diaries or letters and prefer to cope with crises in their lives by analysing them in writing. For such people, forum therapy is an efficient way to explore inner emotional processes.

Rona, who had published some books, was not a professional writer, but writing was for her a secure frame for self-observation. I could recognise her enthusiasm when she discovered the writing options in the forum. She used all of them, and knew how to integrate them into her therapeutic journey.

a. Message communication. Our weekly communication, a fifty-minute session on the forum, was a correspondence of synchronous messages. Rona learned the functions of message communication quickly, mastering it from the first week. She used all the editing tools by using bold letters, colouring certain words, integrating images and copied pictures, linking some words to other web sites and integrating some texts which she had prepared in advance. She could open two or three catalogue trees simultaneously, commenting and replying in a multi-level textual structure.

b. Self-therapy messages. A fifty-minute session is never enough for a thorough discussion. It is not exceptional for clients, at my face-to-face clinic to say at the end of the session: "I just reached the main point, and I can't stop now", and like many other therapists, I have to stand up and say "Well, let's talk about it next week". This is frustrating, and it never happens in forum therapy. Rona was pleased to hear that the forum was not my clinic, but her private secure frame and that she could use it between our weekly interactions. She continued our communication almost every day, by writing messages and commenting by herself as continuous training in our work or a process of self-therapy. On the subject line

she always typed (t) for training, which meant that she didn't expect me to read or relate to these messages. Sometimes, within the therapeutic session, we both read and referred to one of these messages, if she wished us to do so.

- c. **Therapeutic diary.** From the beginning, Rona wrote a diary that she kept in the library of articles, in which she documented her everyday life. While in the forum itself, between therapeutic sessions, she referred to our communication and practised therapeutic work in her diary, where she referred to the minute details of her life. In her diary she didn't focus on relationships, but tried to understand her life through the new insights she had acquired during therapy. Sometimes she copied part of her diary that could clarify her view according to specific topics in our meeting.
- d. **Therapeutic letters.** Rona's letters to her mother, which she also kept in the library of articles, served as an efficient way for her to cope with the unfinished business with her mother. In her own original way, she "invented" this technique for dealing with the mourning process. I felt that this process, which was parallel to the main therapeutic process, was the main achievement of the therapy, even though it was actually a process of self-therapy.
- e. **Therapeutic training.** The main method of my narrative approach is the process of retelling and Rona actually practised this method by opening a cabinet file for each relationship and by telling and retelling these narratives until this method became a habit. This kind of training is impossible in face-to-face psychotherapy, and Rona demonstrated its effectiveness.

The option of separating the therapeutic process into two forums is another unique feature of forum therapy. Rona used this option as a cognitive behavioural technique that helped her to identify her self-defeating category of self-criticism. By training in this method of separation, in which the two forums represented two parts of her inner processes, she learned how to control this counter-productive category.

I use this option as a practical method for helping therapists to improve their empathic competence. By separating their observations from their prejudices and pre-assumptions, they practise, in accordance with Husserl's phenomenological method, the art of "bracketing" (Spinelli, 1989: 17), which is essential for any kind of psychotherapy.

2. Documentation.

Documentation characterises all kinds of online psychotherapy and influences the therapeutic process. The distinctive feature of forum therapy is its structural arrangement of documentation, which enables client and therapist a comprehensive view of this construction.

The textual documentation illuminates the main characteristic of online therapy, which is the absence of any other kind of interaction except for textual communication. This characteristic has advantages and disadvantages that might influence the therapeutic process, as one can also observe in the case of Rona.

- a. Equality.** The accessibility of all the documented texts both to therapist and client, thus making the whole history of the therapeutic process constantly available, diminishes the power differences between both parties and make the therapeutic relationship more "democratic".

Equality prevents therapists of manipulating their clients by distorting their texts, as demonstrated in Freud's case studies (Green, 1998). On some occasions of nonagreement Rona insisted on proving her point by quoting from previous messages. In the first stage of therapy this equality made her feel self-confident and secure, and diminishes her resistance to therapy.

On the other hand, equality also diminishes the authority of the therapist, strengthens resistance and weakens processes of transference. I experience such moments with Rona in times of crises, when the documentation helped her resist the therapeutic process. On one occasion she felt insecure in her relationship with her daughter and tried to find a reference to similar insecurity in the therapeutic relationship. In such cases, I had to cope with insecure feelings by strengthening and emphasising the ground rules. I did

this by listening to her expressions of emotion, containing them with empathy, using our common language, referring to our contract, keeping the boundaries of time and formulating a positive message.

- b. **Flooding.** The documentation of all our dialogues in the forum is permanently growing, and might create a sense of flooding, as Rona formulated in one of our interactions. She described this feeling as "flooding", by using the metaphor of standing naked against the mirror. This feeling is threatening and may be referred to as "over-consciousness".

I'm flooded. Seeing my words 'on the wall' and reading them again and again is like standing against the mirror, naked, seeing all my defects and weaknesses for weeks.

This "flooding" of documentation and information is threatening and strengthening at the same time and, at such times I do my best to contain and support the client, so that he or she can overcome and cope with the temporary weakness.

- c. **Control.** The documentation of the whole therapeutic process gives both therapist and client a sense of control. It makes the forum, as a virtual clinic, a familiar setting in which they feel secure.

This sense of control might enhance the therapeutic process. In psychoanalytic terms, one might say that the forum makes visible the process of turning the unconscious into the conscious. The sense of visual control in the forum serves as a learning process. I believe that Rona's awareness of the visible documentation of her personal content concerning the changes caused by the therapeutic techniques (the use of two forums, the process of retelling) enhanced her adaptation to these techniques and her experiences of self-therapy.

3. Secure virtual clinic.

As in face-to-face psychotherapy, the setting plays a central role in the therapeutic process. While the sense of a secure frame might enhance the therapeutic process, any frame deviation might subvert it.

Since my virtual clinic, the forum, is the first of its kind, it is an unfamiliar setting for all clients and they all start with the feeling of insecurity. Rona was no different from other clients.

To cope with this first sense of insecurity, I let Rona experience the forum free of charge before starting therapy. I designed it especially for her, so that she could feel "at home". It was as if she were starting therapy, but at the same time I kept to the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship and avoided any therapeutic interaction. She could use the forum only for experiencing its functions; I did not refer to her personal content and limited myself to technical information concerning the procedure of therapy. Although in face-to-face therapy such an offer may be regarded as seductive, in the case of Rona it was productive. Usually clients take two or three weeks before they decide to start therapy, but a week later Rona made this decision.

During the therapeutic process, we had to cope with some difficulties concerning the nature of the virtual setting.

- a. **Technical problems.** Although I wrote a detailed guide for clients, there is no way of preventing misunderstandings. In the second session Rona was frustrated. During the four days before the session, she tried to paste her daughters' photographs into the forum. She tried the messages and the library of articles and failed in this again and again. Eventually she asked her husband, who knew about her being in therapy but had never seen the forum itself, to help her. He did not succeed either and she regretted sharing her intimate space with him. She felt as if her privacy had been violated.

In the next session I told her that she could not paste any graphics into the forum, since "heavy" photographs might slow site traffic. She accepted my explanation, but for the next three sessions her husband's presence as a "third party" interrupted our communication.

- b. **Communication difficulties.** In the fifth session, due to communication difficulties on my provider's site, we could not communicate through the forum. I anticipated such a possibility, and we communicated through Skype, a free Internet telephone programme.

It was the first time we had heard each other's voices, and this frame deviation, actually led to a very productive session, adding another dimension of trust to our relationship.

4. Therapeutic message.

While the documentation of the whole therapeutic interaction equalises therapists and clients and diminishes the authority of the therapist, therapeutic messages might rehabilitate this authority.

Traditionally, the therapist's authority is based on the client's trust and transference and manifests itself in the therapist's interventions during the therapeutic process. Since documentation diminishes authority in forum therapy, I designed a special space for therapeutic messages, to which only the therapist had an access. This means that the therapeutic messages are not part of the documented dialogue, causing them to serve as a kind of counterbalance to the sense of an equal relationship.

I found this function of the therapeutic forum to be very efficient, almost playing the main role in the therapeutic process. Rona was aware of this unique function of the forum, as she expressed at the end of the first series of eleven sessions. When she felt insecure and thought of terminating our relationship, the therapeutic message was the anchor that helped her cope with these feelings. 'Every week I thought of terminating our contract, but your message, at the end of each session, made me feel better and understand my feelings.' The messages served as my representative when I was absent between the therapeutic sessions. 'It stayed with me along the week until our next session, and made me feel that there is someone who listens to me.' Although the forum, as a setting, is different from face-to-face therapy, Rona identified the therapeutic message as the main difference between traditional and forum therapy. 'These messages convinced me that there is something in this sort of therapy, something that I didn't have with my face-to-face therapists in the past.'

While Rona's appraisal of the therapeutic message was manifestly positive and represented the importance of the message in her therapeutic process, it also expressed her expectations and added some pressure on my part. In one of the sessions, we had a very intensive dialogue until the last minute, and I was too tired and exhausted to phrase the therapeutic message on the spot, so I decided to rest for an hour and then add my message. But an hour later I was busy with my children, and when I got

back to my study it was almost midnight and I felt that it was too late and that Rona could experience it as a frame deviation.

I was not smart enough to understand that she would experience it as a frame deviation no matter what I did. She did not mention it, but the next day she sent me an e-mail asking to change the time for our next session. In another e-mail she asked me to help her cope with the HTML editor in the forum, since she could not change the background colour. It continued like this until four days later, I referred to the missing therapeutic message and interpreted her unconscious messages according to the communicative approach (Smith, 1991: 193).

A few months after termination, Rona sent me an e-mail with her greetings for the holiday (Passover).

I feel as if we haven't met for years, although it was less than six months ago. I don't miss you, but I didn't forget you. For a month or two I continued to write in the forum, and then I was busy with one of my grandchildren who broke his leg and other family businesses and lost this habit. But I printed all your 33 "Gut feelings" [the therapeutic messages], and I'm still reading them. It reminds me of the long journey we had together, and I read it once or twice a week. It feels as if a part of you is still accompanying me, or, as you phrased it, it became my "inner therapist". Thank you.

5. Narrative qualities.

All kinds of psychotherapy use narrative, although each therapeutic approach refers to the narrative in a different way (interpretation, manipulation, reinforcement or techniques of retelling).

The narrative nature of online psychotherapy, especially the nature of forum therapy, plays a central role in the therapeutic process. The narrative qualities of the forum could be useful and practical for all therapists, and I experienced some of these qualities in the therapeutic process with Rona.

I cannot deny that the influence of the narrative qualities of the forum was intensified in this case due to my narrative approach and the fact that both Rona and I are writers. Rona was aware of the narrative elements and adopted them easily to our work and her self-therapeutic enterprises.

- a. **The outline of the therapeutic narrative.** The narrative in face-to-face psychotherapy is vocal and temporal and disappears in the process of narrating. In e-mail and chat room therapy the narrative is documented and approachable. In forum therapy the narrative is visible to both therapist and client.

The narrative in forum therapy is linear and graphic, as in a musical score. The special structure of the text in the forum presents the structure of the therapeutic narrative. Just as the high registers outline the melodic structure of a musical composition, the main titles of the catalogue trees outline the narrative structure of the therapeutic plot, and the branching of each catalogue tree represents the subplots in the therapeutic process.

At one of the crisis times during the therapeutic process, Rona felt that she was not progressing and considered terminating therapy. I didn't try to convince her to continue, and in my therapeutic message I tried to understand her feelings, suggesting in the next session that we review the whole therapeutic process; if she still felt like terminating, it would be the last session.

When we started the next session Rona's message, prepared in advance, was waiting for me.

I'm so stupid. Will you forgive me? I was sure that we were going to separate today, and I'm so glad you didn't try to stop me or convince me to rethink it. When I reread your message, after our last meeting, the words '**review the whole therapeutic process**' hit me like a rock. It was just a contemporary weakness that stopped me from seeing the whole picture and I forgot that I can really see what we've done here in the last four months. I went back to the previous pages and read **everything**, and it was like re-experiencing the whole journey we've made here. How could I say that there was no progress? Well, there is a lot more to do, but now I can see (I think) where we're going.

- b. **Identifying linguistic patterns.** As well as identifying the outline of the therapeutic narrative, the forum also enables one to identify narrative and linguistic patterns in the text, which is much more difficult in face-to-face psychotherapy.

Although Rona's emotional category manifested itself in self-criticism and self-accusation, I felt that this category was a cover or a camouflage for a hidden category, that of the victim. I had no evidence for this category, so I analysed her self-accusatory statements. I didn't find associative terms that made any sense, so I analysed the linguistic structure of each statement of self-accusation.

I found that whenever she blamed herself for other people's fate, she formulated it in deterministic terms. Here are some examples.

1. I don't know what made me such an awful mother. It was all my fault, and I'm so sorry for her.
2. A little devil was pushing me, and I forced him to move to the States. He had to give up his academic career, and there is no one to blame but me.
3. This is my curse. I am responsible for the woman she is now. I just couldn't let her go.

This insight was the turning point in the therapeutic process and opened new fields of exploration.

- c. **The process of retelling.** The main therapeutic process in my narrative approach is retelling, where clients are trained in various technique of exploring their life stories (variants, variations, transformations etc.). Forum therapy provides clients with practical devices to practice this training. Rona demonstrated these options by writing the narratives of her significant relationships and rewriting them in various ways. The option of viewing the original narrative and the rewritten narrative simultaneously using the forum's inner screen enabled us to discuss this process and review it. This dialogue constituted another process of rewriting, which promoted the therapeutic process.

The therapeutic relationship

By reviewing the therapeutic process in the case of Rona I can see the development of our therapeutic relationship and the parallel characteristics of the two.

1. Demanding and apologising.

In her early e-mails, Rona's messages had double meanings. On the one hand she was cautious and apologising, as if interrupting me without permission and blaming herself for any misunderstanding. On the other hand, she was demanding and put me under pressure by her continuous requests. Both types of conduct made me uncomfortable, and I felt as if there was no way to satisfy her.

Later, when she described her relationships with her daughters, I could interpret my feelings as a reflection of her daughters' feelings or as countertransference, since she reminded me of my own mother and my charged relationship with her.

I coped with this situation by being strict concerning the ground rules of time and setting (I refused to reply to her e-mails between session or to use the Internet telephone regularly unless there were difficulties with online communication). I believe that this helped me to create trust and reduce her demands.

2. Manipulating victim.

In the second phase of therapy, I still felt uncomfortable, although she became aware of the category of self-criticism and apologising, and her demands almost ceased. This could be the motive for my attempt to explore the category of self-criticism, which led me to identify her self-perception as a victim.

On the surface, our relationship became more intimate and close, but although she co-operated and made an effort to practice her new insights, I could see how difficult it was for her to take responsibility for her feelings and relationships. Unconsciously she saw herself as a victim trapped in the therapeutic situation, and she evaded her own responsibility by demanding of me to change or "cure" her.

I love our work here. After so many years of suppressing my writing, you gave me a new motive to express myself, and I appreciate it. I like the idea of doing therapy through writing, although I don't really yet understand how it works. But I trust you, and deposit my fate in your hands.

I decided not to interpret the above until another trigger to her realisation of being a victim appeared. This happened a few weeks later, when she came to understand the implications of this feeling in relation to her relationships with her daughters. After this there was no more pressure on our relationship, and she started taking responsibility for the therapeutic process by initiating some self-therapeutic training, such as writing letters to her mother.

3. Independence and separation.

In the third phase of therapy, Rona became independent. Actually, she took responsibility for the therapeutic process and continued it without my help. She practised our work by acting as her own therapist, but she needed me to be there as an observer or a witness, and as the guardian of the forum as a secure frame for her work.

While Rona retold her relationship with her family members, she also retold her relationship with me. While in the beginning she saw me as a threat to be resisted, later she saw me as a source of cure and healing, whereas in this part of therapy she saw me as a supervisor and trainer. Later, as she mentioned in a letter sent six months after termination, she used my printed therapeutic messages to serve as her inner therapist. She did not need me any more.

Critical review

This case study is segmental and limited due to the aim of its presentation and the unique characteristics of forum case study. Online case studies, especially forum case studies, are essentially different from traditional case studies. In this actual case study, I intended to demonstrate these differences and to focus on the unique characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of forum case studies.

- 1. Documented case study.** The case of Rona is based on the actual documentation of the therapeutic dialogue. Since nothing except written communication is present in forum psychotherapy, the therapeutic dialogue constitutes the comprehensive data of the therapeutic process, which is appropriate for a scientific research. These data are the "real" case study.

While in traditional case studies, such as those of Freud, there are no objective data concerning the therapeutic process, the case of Rona can be examined and criticised according to agreed standards.

2. **Review.** A forum case study is actually a supplement to the "real" case study consisting of the documented dialogues in the forum. Like any traditional case study, the case study of Rona is a subjective review of the documented data. It is biased and slanted by my goals, therapeutic approach and personal preferences.

While in traditional case studies it is impossible to distinguish between the objective data and the subjective review, the reader (a supervisor who is committed to confidentiality) can compare the case study of Rona with the objective data and form an independent opinion concerning the therapeutic process.

The separation between data and review might open a new field of exploration. There can be many kinds of case studies, according to the purpose and assumptions of the researchers. There can be case studies, such as the case of Rona, that demonstrate some characteristics of the therapeutic process or others that focus on exploring therapeutic approaches and theoretical hypotheses.

This kind of case study, as in Rona's case, is by definition limited, fractional and subjective, and has to be evaluated as such.

3. **Research.** The case study of Rona is part of my research on online therapy and forum therapy. Using this case I have examined some details of the data that are relevant to the goals of my research. I have focused on the influence of the new setting on the therapeutic process and on the creation of the therapeutic relationship.

The goals of my research do not encompass other aspects of the therapeutic process. I didn't refer to the role of my narrative approach in the case of Rona or to my personal kind of psychotherapy. I cannot claim that these aspects are not significant and have no influence on my research, and a lack of research concerning these aspects has to be considered.

4. **Confidentiality.** Due to my ethical principles, I never reveal any information concerning my clients. In my books I always present fictional case studies that are based on my experience in face-to-face psychotherapy without exposing any details of real case studies.

Forum case studies demonstrate another option. The separation between the documented data and the subjective review allow the researcher to describe the therapeutic process without exposing the details of the documented data. In the case of Rona I avoided any personal exposure of a specific client, basing the therapeutic processes on documented dialogues of various cases.

- 5. Presentation and supervision.** The target audience of a case study influences the style in which it is written. While in a didactic case study, which is read only by a supervisor, one can present the client without any disguise, in a presentation to all other kinds of readers one must change clients' details or even describe a fictional client.

In the case of Rona, I had to present a fictional client, in order to prevent any possibility of recognising the client. Whereas in a case of face-to-face therapy I would also have to fictionalise the whole therapeutic process according to my subjective personal experience, in the case of Rona the therapeutic process is based on genuine objective data of several cases.

- 6. Limitations.** The case of Rona is not a suitable case for scientific research. It is not based on the genuine documented data of one client, it is not comprehensive and it ignores significant aspects of the therapeutic process.

The case was designed for a specific demonstration of some characteristics of forum psychotherapy. As such, it is accurate and based on objective data. However, it is important not to ascribe other implications to the conclusions and findings of this case study.

Conclusion

Since 1999 I have experienced and researched online psychotherapy. Although I was enthusiastic about the potential of this new kind of therapy, I also recognised the lack of a virtual clinic and the disadvantages of e-mail and chat room psychotherapy.

My experience in open support forums has led me to develop a special forum for individual therapy that serves as a virtual clinic. I designed this new forum according to the seven categories of ground rules, so that it could support the creation of a secure frame for the therapeutic relationship.

This chapter is a demonstration of my experience in this virtual clinic during the last four years. My limited experience, and the fact that no other therapist has tried this yet, makes it impossible to conduct scientific research or draw significant

conclusions. This chapter may serve as a phenomenological description of a new option for online psychotherapy and open up a field for further exploration.

My experience in the new forum has been limited to certain options:

1. **Individual psychotherapy.** Since 2003 I have practised forum therapy with more than ten clients. I have never advertised myself as an online therapist; all my clients approached me after reading one of my papers or books concerning online psychotherapy.
2. **Supervision.** I have found the inner screen of the forum an efficient device for supervision. While discussing therapeutic issues in the supervision forum the individual under supervision and myself can watch, on the inner screen, the private forum of the client and we can discuss it without intervention. This means that supervision can be based on an authentic review of the therapeutic data from each session. I used this option to supervise therapists who lead support forums.
3. **Teaching.** I have used the forum as an additional option for my students in psychotherapy courses. The forum served the student as a dynamic group interaction between face-to-face meetings and as an additional learning instrument. For example, we could use it for a "reading group" in order to discuss texts that were presented on the inner screen.
4. **Training.** I have used the forum as a virtual class for distance learning in order to teach therapists who were interested in my therapeutic approaches (Storytailing, my narrative approach and my seminars of ground rules) and for therapists who wanted to be trained in online psychotherapy.

I have also used the forum as a virtual auditorium for conferences and seminars. In 2004 I organised the first conference for online psychotherapy. 120 psychologists and therapists participated in this conference, which lasted two days, from early in the morning till late at night. The conference included lectures by professionals and workshops by psychologists who led online support groups.

In 2005 I established online biweekly seminars for professionals. In each four-hour seminar a well-known therapist or psychologist or an author of a new book presented a therapeutic subject in a written lecture on the inner screen of the forum. About 150 psychologists and therapists participated in these seminars.

My experiences of the forum as a virtual clinic are based on the advantages and disadvantages of written communication. There is much more to experience and explore in this new psychotherapeutic setting, and there are many options for developing therapeutic tools and methods required by this kind of interaction.

In order to research and explore the potential of forum psychotherapy I developed the inner screen in the forum, so that clients can also choose secure video-conferencing or voice dialogue within the forum, integrated with written communication.

Conclusion

I started my research with a simple definition of my goal. I planned to examine the adaptation of the traditional ground rules of the therapeutic relationship to online psychotherapy.

This goal was based on two assumptions:

1. that online psychotherapy exists.
2. that there are ground rules in psychotherapy.

These two assumptions were not abstract hypotheses. I have practised online psychotherapy since 1999 with some positive results and I am optimistic regarding this field. I also have a personal interest in Freud's technical papers (Freud, 1912, 1913, 1915) and in Langs's definition of psychoanalytic ground rules (Langs, 1998) and have integrated this subject into my writing and teaching.

My research undermined both assumptions. Online therapy has existed for more than ten years, but I found it difficult to identify an online therapeutic setting that resembles traditional professional psychotherapeutic interaction. I was also surprised to find that the various approaches to psychotherapy have no common definition for ground rules except for the ground rules of psychoanalysis and that there is no other criterion for examining therapeutic relationships.

At this stage, I could have changed the goals of my research, focused on other aspects of online psychotherapy or found another subject for my research. My experience with thinking methods (Green, 1993) has taught me that such difficulties may serve as a productive resource for change and new insights. Therefore, I decided to cope with the collapse of my two assumptions.

Ground rules and the research method

I planned to explore the therapeutic relationship via the Internet by using the ground rules of psychotherapy as a research method or as a prism for observation. When I found that the ground rules of psychoanalysis are neither universal nor applicable to all therapeutic approaches, I decided to determine the common denominator of ground rules in all therapeutic approaches. I reviewed the professional literature and found that, apart from psychoanalytic literature, no such literature exists. In fact, I found no literature concerning the ground rules of psychoanalysis except for Freud's technical

papers and Langs's books. Instead, I found many references and fragments regarding some aspects of ground rules and therapeutic relationships, such as the analytic frame, in the professional literature.

In the second chapter of my thesis, I tried to define the common denominator for ground rules in all therapeutic approaches, but I found that there are no ground rules that are common to all kinds of psychotherapy. Instead, I identified some common categories that play the same role in all therapeutic approaches. As a result of my efforts, I defined seven categories of ground rules that might serve as a common denominator for all therapeutic approaches.

These categories served me as a prism through which to examine the main modalities of online psychotherapy. Since the difference between online and face-to-face psychotherapy manifests itself in setting and time dimensions, I reduced the seven categories to three, which I titled 'Aristotle's rules of thumb'. These three rules (time, space and action) enable one to readily identify the main categories of ground rules on therapists' web sites, as demonstrated in the third chapter.

This chapter, originally intended as a short introduction to the role of ground rules in therapeutic interaction, shifted my research in another direction that played a central role in my thesis. Although my work focused on the development of online psychotherapy and its therapeutic values, I now felt that my research in the field of ground rules was even more significant.

The results of this research also influenced my therapeutic work. I developed a training seminar in ground rules of relationship for family doctors; the positive results over the last five years have enabled me to apply the seminar to other kinds of relationships (teachers and pupils, couples, parent and children, etc.).

Expectations and results in online psychotherapy

Although I believed in the future of online psychotherapy from the start, I notice that the professional aspects of online psychotherapy were still in their infancy.

In the first chapter I described the short history of online psychotherapy. I explored the background and context of online therapy and the influence of previous distance services. The main outcome of this chapter was contrasting the therapeutic potential of online psychotherapy and the fact that most therapists ignore this potential and choose to employ conventional e-mail communication. This finding was the first clue to the therapist's role in the development (or non-development) of this field.

Since the potential of online psychotherapy has not been realised, I decided to base my research on evidence and avoid interviews with therapists that might be biased by their subjective and limited experience in this field. Instead, I decided to make a survey of all therapeutic web sites and explore the kind of secure frame they provided, according to the seven categories of ground rules.

In the third chapter, I analysed the therapeutic aspects of e-mail and chat room therapy and the results of a survey of 236 therapeutic web sites. The results were worse than I expected. I found that most web sites did not create a secure frame for prospective clients, that many online therapists have no professional skills for this kind of therapy and that most online therapists do not exploit the full potential of online therapy. It would appear that there has been no progress in online psychotherapy from 1995 until today and that no virtual clinic has as yet been created.

The future of online psychotherapy

Although the results of my research are negative, I am still optimistic. I believe that the present state of online psychotherapy is a natural response to the fear of technology and the lack of professional training in this new field.

Although there are only a few professional online therapists and sites that create a secure frame and only hints of the prospect of virtual clinics, the potential for online psychotherapy is still promising.

In the fourth chapter I presented the virtual clinic that I developed and a case study that demonstrates my limited experience in online psychotherapy. I believe that such therapeutic settings, with parallel professional training, supervised and inspected by professional organisations and academic institutions, may in time turn online psychotherapy into a chief source of therapeutic services.

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Appendix / Survey

1. <http://www.merzconsulting.homestead.com/>

Merz consulting

Space	(25) Low.
Setting	Protected online chat (and secure email between chat sessions). (B)
Description	An abbreviated description of online therapy. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist, CV included. (A)
Site	Online therapy is one of the sections of the site. Too loaded. (C)
Design	Simple but too loaded, long texts. (B)
Language	English, US.
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30 minutes or 60 minutes chat sessions. (B)
Session time	Schedule one session a week or "on demand". (B)
Therapy length	Open ended. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	This is not psychotherapy 'in the traditional sense of these words'. (C)
Online style	Chat-room therapy. (B)
Empathy	There is no personal attitude toward the reader. (C)
Approach	Rehabilitation Counselor, Life Strategist Therapist , Dr. Phil's approach. (B)
Contract	No contract or terms and conditions. Intake questionnaire. (C)
Fees	In advance. \$40 for 30 minute chat session, \$80 for 60 minute chat session. (B)
Ethics	No reference to code of ethics. A commitment to privacy and confidentiality.(C)

Average: 20.3 LOW

2. <http://www.kalimunro.com/>

KaliMunro.com

Space	(30) High.
Setting	Protected online chat (copies of the sessions are not available) and secure email. (B)
Description	A detailed description of online therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist, CV included, personal and professional. (A)
Site	The site is structured and informative. (A)
Design	Pleasant and useful site. (A)
Language	English, Canada.
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30 minutes or 60 minutes chat sessions. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(31) High.
Therapy	It is a psychotherapeutic process. (A)
Online style	Chat-room therapy and Email therapy. (B)
Empathy	The therapist present herself to her readers in second person and empathic tone. (A)
Approach	Integrative and supportive (Rogerian, gestalt, psychodynamic, psychosynthesis). (A)
Contract	No contract or terms and conditions. (C)
Fees	In advance. \$40 for 30 minute chat session, \$75 for 60 minute. \$35 per Email. (A)
Ethics	No reference to code of ethics. A commitment to privacy and confidentiality. (B)

Average: 25.6 LOW

3. <http://www.stofle.com/>

Gary S. Stofle

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Not specified chat-room. (C)
Description	A practical book chapter about online therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist, CV included. (A)
Site	The site is dedicated to online therapy and useful. (A)

Appendix

Design	Simple, focused, boring typography and not personal. (B)
Language	English, US.
Time	(28) High.
Session length	45 minutes chat sessions. (A)
Session time	Weekly scheduled sessions. (A)
Therapy length	No reference to therapy length. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	This is not psychotherapy by definition. (C)
Online style	Chat-room therapy. (B)
Empathy	The therapist presents himself in third person and a neutral tone. (C)
Approach	A social worker with no approach. Addiction, couples counseling. (B)
Contract	There is a disclaimer and agreement and a questionnaire for clients. (A)
Fees	In advance. \$45 for 60 minute chat session. (A)
Ethics	There is a commitment to confidentiality. (B)

Average: 23.6 Low

4. <http://www.netcounselors.com> <http://aboutfeelings.com>
Net Counselors (+ About Feelings)

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Using the clients' chat software and Email. (C)
Description	No description of online therapy. (C)
Therapists	4 therapists, detailed professional CVs included. (A)
Site	The site is simple and practical. (A)
Design	Clear, focused and welcoming site. (A)
Language	English, US.
Time	(28) Low.
Session length	60 minutes chat sessions. (A)
Session time	"On demand". (C)
Therapy length	Three sessions package and open ended. (A)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	It is still experimental. (B)
Online style	Chat-room therapy and Email therapy. (B)
Empathy	The site is formulated in a formal, non-personal, style. (C)
Approach	Counseling psychology, social work, hypnosis, clinical counseling. (A)
Contract	There are terms of service for customers. (B)
Fees	In advance. \$35 for 30 minute email reading, \$70 for 60 minute chat therapy. (A)
Ethics	No reference to code of ethics. (C)

Average: 23.6 Low

5. <http://lifempowerment.com/>
Lifempowerment

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No detailed enough description of online therapy. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist, detailed professional and personal CV's included. (A)
Site	The site is simple and practical but not comprehensive. (A)
Design	Focused and simple, not personal. (B)
Language	English, US.
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	"on demand". (C)
Therapy length	No reference to therapy length. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	It is not psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Email therapy and telephone counseling. (C)

Appendix

Empathy	The site is formulated in a formal, non-personal, style. (C)
Approach	Philosophic coaching. (B)
Contract	There is a questionnaire for clients. (B)
Fees	In advance. \$100 for 4 emails, \$100 for 60 minute chat therapy. (A)
Ethics	No reference to code of ethics. (C)

Average: 15.7 NO

6. <http://psyche-online.at/>

Psyche Online

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Chat-room. (C)
Description	Detailed explanation of online therapy. (A)
Therapists	2 therapists, detailed professional and personal CVs included. (A)
Site	Simple and practical. (A)
Design	Simple and friendly. (A)
Language	German.
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	60 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	"On demand". (C)
Therapy length	No reference to therapy length. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	It is psychotherapy. (A)
Online style	Chat therapy. (B)
Empathy	The site is formulated in a formal, non-personal, style. (C)
Approach	Certain traditional approaches. (A)
Contract	A questionnaire for clients. (B)
Fees	In advance. 30 Euro for 60 minute chat therapy. (A)
Ethics	ISMHO code of ethics. (A)

Average: 24.3 Low

7. <http://www.choose2change.com/>

Choose2change

Space	(32) High.
Setting	The site itself is the setting for therapy. (A)
Description	Brief description of online therapy. (B)
Therapists	4 therapists, detailed professional and personal CVs included. (A)
Site	The site is simple and practical but not comprehensive. (B)
Design	Simple and clear but not personal. (B)
Language	English, US.
Time	(36) High.
Session length	60 minutes. (A)
Session time	Scheduled programmes. (A)
Therapy length	7 or 8 sessions. (A)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	This is not psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Writing in the site. (B)
Empathy	The site is formulated in a supportive style. (A)
Approach	Various approaches. (B)
Contract	There is a questionnaire for clients and a registration form. (B)
Fees	\$515 for 8 sessions, \$480 for 7 sessions. (A)
Ethics	Only confidentiality. (B)

Average: 30.3 HIGH

8. <http://www.headworks.com/>

Headworks

Space	(24) Low.
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Appendix

Setting	Email therapy. (C)
Description	Friendly questions and answers concerning online therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist, detailed professional and personal CV + licence details. (A)
Site	Simple and friendly. (A)
Design	Humoristic with nice illustrations. (A)
Language	English, US.
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No limit. (C)
Session time	'On demand'. (C)
Therapy length	No reference to therapy length. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	'E-therapy is not a universal substitute for face-to-face psychotherapy'. (C)
Online style	Email therapy. (C)
Empathy	Written in first person with empathic humour. (A)
Approach	Clinical psychology. (A)
Contract	Email service agreement. (A)
Fees	\$60 for 60 minutes Email reading and writing. (A)
Ethics	Light explanations of legal and ethical guidelines. APA code of ethics. (A)

Average: 20 LOW

9. <http://www.addconsults.com/>
ADD Consults

Space	(14) No.
Setting	Email consultation. (C)
Description	No descriptions of online therapy. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + some experts. (B)
Site	Site loaded with too many subjects. (C)
Design	Complicated and confusing. (C)
Language	English US.
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Answers in 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	'ADD Consults/Terry Matlen, MSW does not offer psychotherapy via e-mail'. (C)
Online style	Email consultation. (C)
Empathy	Technical style. (C)
Approach	ADD. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$100 for initial Email, \$25 for follow-up consultation Email. \$100 for chat consultation. (A)
Ethics	Not mentioned. (C)

Average: 15.3 NO

10. <http://redpsy.com/>
Auto Développement

Space	(26) Low.
Setting	Secure Email consultation. (B)
Description	Comprehensive explanation of online therapy. (A)
Therapists	2 therapists + professional CV. (A)
Site	Detailed but not friendly, long pages. (C)
Design	Too simple and not attractive. (C)
Language	French (Canada).

Appendix

Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Answers in 48-72 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No. (C)
Action	(17) No.
Therapy	'Il ne s'agit pas de services psychologique.' (C)
Online style	Email therapy. (C)
Empathy	Formal style. (C)
Approach	Humanistic psychotherapy. (A).
Contract	Condition de travail. (B)
Fees	Deposit of \$90 (\$1.5 per minute for Email reading and responding). (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 19.6 NO

11. <http://www.visyon.org.uk/>

Visyon

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Clients' Chat programme. (C)
Description	Not enough information concerning online therapy. (C)
Therapists	No details. (C)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Friendly and colourful. (A)
Language	English (UK).
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	50 minutes. (A)
Session time	'On demand' (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	'One-to-one counselling sessions can be offered via Internet'. (A)
Online style	Chat sessions. (B)
Empathy	Friendly style. (A)
Approach	Teenage suicide. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions + Registration form. (B)
Fees	Free service. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 22.6 NO

12. <http://www.counselor.quillweb.com/>

Mental Health and Wellness Counseling

Space	(20) No.
Setting	Email consultation. (C)
Description	No explanations concerning online therapy. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + personal and professional CV. (A)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Beautiful and warm. (A)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	'This form of E-mail counseling is not the equivalent of psychotherapy'. (C)
Online style	Email consultation. (C)

Appendix

Empathy	Empathic style. (A)
Approach	Counselor and psychologist with no approach (personal growth). (C)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$1.5 per minute for the total time, but no reference to Email therapy. (B)
Ethics	Confidentiality. 'Notice of privacy practices'. (B)

Average: 16.6 NO

13. <http://www.thenetcounselor.com/>
The Net Counsellor

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Chat and Email therapy, clients' software. (C)
Description	FAQ about online therapy. (B)
Therapists	1 therapists + professional CV. (A)
Site	Little content, dull. (C)
Design	Primitive. (C)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(20) No.
Session length	40 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	'On demand'. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	'Not a substitute for fact to face counselling'. (C)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Addiction Counsellor, couples and individual. (B)
Contract	Initial Intake Form (C)
Fees	\$29 for 40 minute individual chat, \$38 for couples, \$13 per email. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 18 NO

14. <http://robertfsmith-lsw-cac.com/>
Life Issues Counseling

Space	(29) High.
Setting	Secure chat or Email. (B)
Description	Detailed explanation. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + Professional and personal CV. (A)
Site	Simple and clear. (A)
Design	Focused and neutral. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	30-60-90 minutes chat or Email. (B)
Session time	Scheduled appointment for chat. Email Response within 48 hours. (A)
Therapy length	'On request' (C)
Action	(21) No.
Therapy	It is 'an experimental activity'. 'Online counseling is NOT a substitute for traditional face-to-face psychotherapy treatment'. (C)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	No personal appeal to the reader. (C)
Approach	Task centered approach. (A)
Contract	Client / Counselor Agreement (A)
Fees	\$25 for Email, \$45 for 30 minute Chat session. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality and privacy. (B)

Average: 24.6 Low

15. <http://www.lzcybershrink.com/>
Elizabeth Zelvin

Appendix

Space	(29) High.
Setting	Chat room on the site and Email. (B)
Description	Detailed description of online therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed personal and professional CV. (A)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Personal and illustrated, dense typography. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(32) High.
Session length	30 or 60 minutes. (B)
Session time	Scheduled sessions. Emails responses in 48 hours. (A)
Therapy length	Commitment for a period of time. (A)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic relationship. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Supporting men and women. (A)
Approach	Crisis counselor, clinical social worker. (A)
Contract	Informed consent. (A)
Fees	\$50 per 30 minutes chat, \$90 per hour. \$1.5 per minute for Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 28.6 YES

16. <http://counsellingresource.com/index.shtml>
Counselling Resource

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Email counselling. (C)
Description	Clear and detailed explanations. (A)
Therapists	1 counsellor + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Practical and useful. (A)
Design	Simple and loaded. (B)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	By request. One or twice a week. Reply within 2 business days. (B)
Therapy length	No limit. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	'No warranty as to the effectiveness of the counselling'. (C)
Online style	Email exchange. (C)
Empathy	A sense of caring for clients. (A)
Approach	Person centred. (A)
Contract	Terms of service and a secure questionnaire. (A)
Fees	Subscription plan: £90 each 2 weeks, or £27 per 1000 words. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality and privacy, (BACP). (A)

Average: 21 NO

17. <http://www.ronkraus.com/pages/1/index.htm> <http://www.onlineclinics.com>
Dr. Ron Kraus, Online Clinics

Space	(15) No.
Setting	Email consultation. (C)
Description	Many resources but not a simple description of online therapy. (C)
Therapists	1 Therapist + detailed CV+ search engine for finding a therapist. (B)
Site	Mixture of private site and online clinic. Confusing. (C)
Design	Simple and nice but not useful. (B)
Language	English (US)

Appendix

Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	'OnlineClinics itself does not provide therapy'. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Clinical psychology. (A)
Contract	Informed consent to service. (A)
Fees	1 Email: \$25. 2 Emails: \$50. 3 Emails: \$90. (A)
Ethics	Legal Disclaimer + EthicsCode. (A)

Average: 15.6 NO

18. <http://www.helpinghandcounselling.com/>
Helping Hand Counselling

Space	(14) No.
Setting	Chat Room. (C)
Description	No explanations concerning online therapy. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no CV. (B)
Site	Very primitive, not friendly. (C)
Design	No design, difficult to read. (C)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	60 minutes, no extra fees for longer time. (B)
Session time	Not mentioned. (C)
Therapy length	Not mentioned. (C)
Action	(31) No.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Chat Room. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Personal and Family Counsellor. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$40 per session. (B)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20.3 LOW

19. <http://www.comfreycounselling.co.uk/>
Comfrey Counselling

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist, no CV (B)
Site	Simple and easy to use. (A)
Design	Simple and friendly. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Reply on the same day or reply once a week. (A)
Therapy length	Open ended. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)

Appendix

Online style	Email counselling. (C)
Empathy	Kind and personal style. (A)
Approach	Not mentioned. (C)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	£15 per Email exchange or £30 for as much as the client write, reply once a week. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 21.6 LOW

20. <http://www.rebt.cc/>

ABC Coaching, Counselling and Therapy Services

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	Primitive and difficult to use. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No details. (C)
Session time	No details. (C)
Therapy length	No details. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Directive psychotherapy and counselling. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	REBT. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	£25 per chat session. £14.99 for two Emails exchange. (A)
Ethics	AREBT Code of Practice. (A)

Average: 18.6 NO

21. <http://www.audreyjung.com/>

Audrey B. Jung

Space	(25) Low.
Setting	Encrypted Email. (B)
Description	No description of online therapy. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Simple with not much content. (B)
Design	Nice and personal. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(17) No.
Therapy	Not mentioned. (C)
Online style	Email contact. (C)
Empathy	Written in third person. (C)
Approach	Personal, family, Parenting. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$25 per Email. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 18 NO

22. <http://www.tridentfoundation.net/>

Trident Foundation

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Not mentioned. (C)
Description	Random references from other sources. (C)
Therapists	No details (C)
Site	Counselling is one of the services. (C)
Design	Too simple with no graphics. (C)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Not mentioned. (C)
Session time	Not mentioned. (C)
Therapy length	Not mentioned. (C)
Action	(23) No.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)
Online style	Not mentioned. (C)
Empathy	No personal approach. (C)
Approach	Multidisciplinary. (C)
Contract	Not mentioned. (C)
Fees	Sliding scale. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 15.6 NO23. <http://www.gracetreecounseling.com/>

Grace Tree Counseling Services

Space	(27) Low.
Setting	Secured Email and chat counseling. (B)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Simple and useful, not comprehensive. (B)
Design	Nice and quiet. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	60 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	Reply within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	By request. (C)
Action	(33) High.
Therapy	'A professional relationship'. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	A friendly style. (A)
Approach	Social worker, crisis, counseling, trauma, brief, cognitive, etc. (B)
Contract	Privacy agreement. (A)
Fees	\$35 per Email exchange. \$50 per 60 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	Maryland Social Work Regulations. (A)

Average: 28 HIGH24. <http://www.theinternetcounselor.com/>

The Internet Counselor

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Private chat room and Email Coaching. (B)
Description	A simple introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist with no CV. (C)
Site	Lack of information. (B)
Design	Simple and nice. (A)

Appendix

Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30 or 60 minutes. (B)
Session time	Email reply within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	By request. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	'My services are not psychotherapy' (C)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Second person, personal. (A)
Approach	Clinical social worker. Solution focused. (A)
Contract	Client statement of understanding. (A)
Fees	\$20 per Email response, \$45 per 30 minutes chat, \$60 per 60 minutes. (A)
Ethics	Not mentioned. (C)

Average: 22.3 LOW

25. <http://donnapeddy.com/>
Donna Peddy

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Secure Email and chat. (B)
Description	No satisfying information. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	With no comprehensive information. (B)
Design	Pleasant, simple design. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Not mentioned. (C)
Session time	Reply within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	Not mentioned. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	Supplement to therapy. (B)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	No personal appeal. (C)
Approach	Anxiety, Depression, Marriage. (A)
Contract	No. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20 LOW

26. <http://peace-joy.net/>
Counseling for life's Journey

Space	(26) Low.
Setting	Secure web-based email exchanges. (B)
Description	No satisfying information. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Well presented, easy to navigate. (A)
Design	Nice, relaxing. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	One-hour email session. (A)
Session time	Email reply within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	Not mentioned. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Experimental medium for counseling. (B)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal and empathic style. (A)

Appendix

Approach	Life changes. (A)
Contract	Informed Consent. (A)
Fees	\$10 per Email. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality, honesty and trust. Ethical guidelines of the ACA. (A)

Average: 26 LOW

27. <http://www.christinasteinorth.homestead.com/>
Christina Steinorth

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	No information concerning online therapy. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Brief and not satisfying. (C)
Design	1 simple page. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30-60 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	Not mentioned. (C)
Therapy length	Not mentioned. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	'Internet and phone therapy may not be as affective'. (C)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	No personal comments. (C)
Approach	Marriage, family and individual psychotherapist. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$75 per 30 minutes chat. \$50 for email response. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16.6 NO

28. <http://www.theplacetotalk.com/>
Psychology Online

Space	(28) High.
Setting	Secure chat and Email in the site. (A)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	5 therapists + detailed CVs. (A)
Site	Slow and difficult to navigate. (C)
Design	Loaded and not friendly. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	50 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	When therapists are on-line. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	Not mentioned. (C)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$50-100 per chat session. \$15 for Email consultation. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 22.3 NO

29. <http://www.personal-counselor.com/>
Dr. Laura Diallo

Space	(24) Low.
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Appendix

Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Satisfying explanations. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + comprehensive professional biography. (A)
Site	Simple and convenient structure. (A)
Design	Clear and friendly. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	'Engaging in online therapy with me is an experimental procedure'. (B)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	A friendly welcome. (A)
Approach	Cognitive behavioral therapy. (A)
Contract	Client questionnaire and Client-counselor agreement. (A)
Fees	\$90 per hour for reading and replying Emails. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 21 NO

30. <http://www.e-sextherapy.com/>

Online Sex Therapy

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Chat-room and Email. (C)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple and sometimes confusing. (B)
Design	Nice and simple. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Therapy. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Sex therapy. Cognitive-behavioral therapy. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$50 for Email session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 19 NO

31. <http://www.active-counseling.com/>

Active counseling centre

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Chat and Email, Clients programmes. (C)
Description	Very limited information. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Sometimes confusing. (B)
Design	Nice and simple. (A)
Language	English (British Columbia)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Minimum of 25 minutes. (B)
Session time	Mutually convenient time. (C)
Therapy	No reference. (C)

Appendix

length	
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	Efficient counseling. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Confusing. (C)
Approach	Unique. Logotherapy. (A)
Contract	Brief Intake Form. Terms of service. Consent form. (A)
Fees	\$25 for one single email question or 25 minutes chat counseling. (A)
Ethics	Privacy Statement. Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 21.3 LOW

32. <http://www.psycholoog-online.be/>
Psychology On Line

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Chat-Room therapy. (C)
Description	No comprehensive explanation. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Useful. (A)
Design	Nice and easy. (A)
Language	German (Belgium)
Time	(20) No.
Session length	60 Minutes. (A)
Session time	Not mentioned. (C)
Therapy length	Not mentioned. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Clinical psychology. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	Euro 24 per 60 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	Privacy. European Federation of Psychologists' Associations Code. (A)

Average: 23 NO

33. <http://www.joames.co.uk/>
Jo Ames

Space	(25) Low.
Setting	Email in a personal room. (B)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple, easy but not detailed. (B)
Design	Personal, with music and illustrations. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal. (B)
Approach	Victims of crime and young people. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)

Ethics	Ethical framework of BACP. (A)
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Average: 21 Low

34. <http://www.results-counselling.com/>
Results counselling online

Space	(28) High.
Setting	Secure Chat and Email. (B)
Description	FAQ's about online therapy. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Nice and easy. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(32) High.
Session length	30-90 minuets chat. (B)
Session time	Email response within 12 hours or scheduled chat. (A)
Therapy length	Weekly or 20 sessions recommended. (A)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Warm welcome. (A)
Approach	Person-centred. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	£30 for Email exchange. £14 per 30 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	The standards of COSCA. (A)

Average: 30.6 YES

35. <http://www.cognitivetherapist.net/>
Paul Goodacre

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email therapy. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Not detailed. (B).
Design	Scientific and simple. (B)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) No.
Therapy	Coaching. (B)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Cognitive Therapy. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$15 for Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.3 NO

36. <http://www.reachtoday.com/>
Reach Today

Space	(22) Low.
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Appendix

Setting	Email counseling. (C)
Description	Satisfying description of Email therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Simple with long texts. (B)
Design	Too simple. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	Not a replacement for face to face psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Friendly text. (A)
Approach	Marriage and Family therapy. (A)
Contract	Informed consent. Disclaimer and terms. (A)
Fees	\$30 for brief consultation, \$55 for two or three responses. (A)
Ethics	Privacy. Ethic Codes of Online Counseling, AAMFT, NAADAC. (A)

Average: 23.3 Low

37. <http://russellcounselling.com/>

Russel Counselling & Consulting Services

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and chat therapy. (C)
Description	Too short introduction to Email counselling. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Convenient but not comprehensive. (B)
Design	Nice and convenient. (A)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	60 minutes. (A)
Session time	By request. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(21) Low.
Therapy	Experimental. (C)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Christian Counsellor. (A)
Contract	Client questionnaire and distance counsellor agreement. (A)
Fees	\$56 per hour session. (A)
Ethics	Security is not perfect. Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 20 LOW

38. <http://www.hopeallianz.com/>

HopeAllianz Inc Counseling and Healing Center

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Email therapy. (C)
Description	Detailed explanation. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	A little confusing. (B)
Design	Could be better. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy	No reference. (C)

Appendix

length	
Action	(21) Low.
Therapy	Alternative. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Almost. (B)
Approach	Social worker, holistic services. (B)
Contract	Disclosure Statement for OnLine Services (A)
Fees	\$48 for Email correspondence. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. Professional and ethical standards. (A)

Average: 19.6 NO

39. <http://www.iwebcounselor.com/>
iweb counselor

Space	(32) High.
Setting	Video Conferencing. (A)
Description	Elementary description. (B)
Therapists	11 therapists + CVs. (A)
Site	Useful but not comprehensive. (C)
Design	Well designed. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	Probably an hour. (B)
Session time	Scheduled appointment. (A)
Therapy length	Not mentioned. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Therapy. (A)
Online style	Video. (A)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	Not mentioned. (C)
Ethics	Privacy. (B)

Average: 27.6 High

40. <http://www.counseling4change.com/>
Counseling for change

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email and Chat counseling. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + credentials. (A)
Site	Useful. (A)
Design	Quite nice. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	50 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Chat or Email. (B)
Empathy	Technical. (C)
Approach	Personal growth. (B)
Contract	Privacy disclaimer. (A)
Fees	\$45 for 50 minutes chat. \$25 per Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22.3 LOW

41. <http://etherapy247.com/>
Etherapy 24/7

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email communication. (C)
Description	Basic explanation. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + short CV. (A)
Site	1 page. (C)
Design	Primitive. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Response within 24 hours. (A)
Therapy length	Monthly basis. (B)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Etherapy is not therapy in the traditional sense, but it is therapeutic. (B)
Online style	Email correspondence. (C)
Empathy	Second person. (B)
Approach	Marriage family therapy. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$25 per Email (25 minute reading) or unlimited for \$250 per month. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (C)

Average: 20.6 LOW

42. <http://www.itstherapy.co.uk/>
Independent therapy solutions

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email correspondence. (C)
Description	A short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV + team (?). (B)
Site	Practical and simple. (A)
Design	Simple and bright. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	By request. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	'It certainly cannot replace "old fashioned" psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Technical. (C)
Approach	Psychodynamic. (A)
Contract	General disclaimer and terms & Conditions. (A)
Fees	£30 per single Email consultation. £275 for 1 month unlimited Email consultation. £30 per private chat room consultation. (A)
Ethics	Privacy and Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 17 NO

43. <http://www.lifequestcounseling.com/>
Life Quest

Space	(25) Low.
Setting	Secure web mail. (B)
Description	Elementary. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)

Appendix

Site	Simple. (B)
Design	No design. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Technical. (C)
Approach	Sexology, hypnotherapy. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions (informed consent). (A)
Fees	\$4 per e-session (Email). (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21 LOW

44. <http://sgpositivetherapy.com/>
SG Positive Therapy

Space	(14) No.
Setting	Therapy chat. Yahoo messenger. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + personal introduction. (B)
Site	Many items with thin text. (C)
Design	Amateurish and not friendly. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	60 minute chat session. (A)
Session time	Scheduled time. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Anxiety, depression, relationship. (B)
Contract	Terms and conditions and a questionnaire. (B)
Fees	\$80 for 30 minute session. \$120 for 60 minute session. (A)
Ethics	No security. Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 21.6 LOW

45. <http://www.dearshrink.com/>
Dear Shrink

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Chat and Email therapy. (C)
Description	Detailed information. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Professional and businesslike. (B)
Design	Simple design but too long pages. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(32) High.
Session length	50 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	Scheduled time for chat. (A)
Therapy length	Ongoing therapy. (B)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Not psychotherapy. (C)

Appendix

Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	No. (C)
Approach	General and geriatric psychiatry + family therapy. (A)
Contract	Terms of service, fully informed consent. (A)
Fees	\$45 for 25-30 minutes for long Email consultation. \$50 for 25 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	HONcode principles. (A)

Average: 25.3 LOW

46. <http://www.counsellingjane.co.uk/>

Jane Roberts Counselling

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Secure Email or chat in other site. (B)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + short CV. (B)
Site	Simple, convenient but not detailed. (B)
Design	Personal and warm design. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	Fifty minutes chat. (A)
Session time	Weekly. Email reply within 24 hours.(B)
Therapy length	Not mentioned. (C)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Couple counselling, same sex couples. (A)
Contract	No contract and terms. (C)
Fees	£35 per week, Email therapy, £30 for fifty minute chat session. (A)
Ethics	CCC code of practice. (A)

Average: 26.3 LOW

47. <http://www.marciastarkman.com/>

Marcia Starkman

Space	(25) Low.
Setting	Email and Secure Chat. (B)
Description	Short introduction. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Online therapy is part of the clinic. (B)
Design	Nice and illustrated. (A)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Scheduled appointments. Replies within 4 hours in office hours. (A)
Therapy length	No reference (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Alternative to psychotherapy. (B)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Warm welcome (A)
Approach	Child/Adolescent psychiatric nursing. Couples and family therapy. (A)
Contract	Client/therapist kind of contract. (A)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	Code of ethics and standards of practice of nursing. (A)

Average: 24.3 LOW

48. <http://www.mental-health-therapy.com/>

Francine J. Hannigan

Appendix

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Email and chat therapy. (C)
Description	Detailed explanation. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple and convenient. (A)
Design	Warm and personal. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	15-30-60 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	Response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	Not mentioned. (C)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	Less effective than face-to-face therapy. (C)
Online style	Email and chat counselling. (B)
Empathy	Sharing personal experience. (A)
Approach	Clinical social worker. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$20 per Email response. \$200 per month. \$60 an hour chat. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 22.3 LOW

49. <http://www.radgivningonline.se/>
Radgivning Online

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	A brief description. (B)
Therapists	2 therapists with short CV. (B)
Site	Organised and informative. (A)
Design	Simple and nice. (A)
Language	Swedish (Sweden)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply in 3-4 days (not weekends). (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(17) No.
Therapy	No depth therapy is given. (C)
Online style	Email therapy. (C)
Empathy	Technical. (C)
Approach	Family therapy, depression. (A)
Contract	Conditions and terms. (B)
Fees	390 Sek for 1-2 hours reading or 2 typed A4 pages. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.6 NO

50. <http://www.psychcafe.net/index.php>
PsychCafe

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Secure Email and encrypted chatroom therapy. (B)
Description	Only short introduction. (C)
Therapists	1 Therapist with short presentation. (B)
Site	Efficient, for clients and therapists. (B)
Design	Nice and commercial. (B)
Language	English (US)

Appendix

Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Email response within 2 business days. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	It is. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Non-personal style. (C)
Approach	Clinical psychology. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$30 for Email response. \$35 per 25-minute chat session. (A)
Ethics	HONcode. Privacy laws of HIPAA (A)

Average: 22 LOW

51. <http://www.gilljones.net/> <http://www.gjcounselling.co.uk>
Gill Jones

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 counsellor + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Simple and convenient, lack of contents. (B)
Design	Simple and intimate. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30-60 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(34) High.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)
Online style	Email therapy and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Psychodynamic, person-centred, cognitive. (A)
Contract	Written agreement. (A)
Fees	£25 for email response. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. BACP code of ethics. (A)

Average: 23 LOW

52. <http://onlinecounselling4u.com/>
Online Counselling4u

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist, anonymous with qualifications. (C)
Site	Lack of information One page + links. (C)
Design	Minimal. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)

Appendix

Online style	Email therapy. (C)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Cognitive therapy, anxiety, depression. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	£20 for two Email exchanges. (A)
Ethics	BABCP and Nursing and Midwifery Council codes of ethics. (A)

Average: 16.6 NO

53. <http://www.rke.cc/>

Rev. Dr. Russell K. Elleven

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email and chat counselling. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	Commercial and not convenient. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Response within 24 to 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	Educational. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Focused on the therapist. (B)
Approach	Solution oriented brief therapy. (A)
Contract	Informed consent form. (A)
Fees	\$15 for Email exchange. \$65 for chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 18 NO

54. <http://serenityonlinetherapy.com/>

serenity online therapy

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Secure chat therapy and Email counseling. (B)
Description	Brief but satisfying description. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Loaded. (B)
Design	Primitive. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	50 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	Reply within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	'Online therapy is not the same as face-to-face therapy'. Experimental. (B)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	First person. (B)
Approach	Group, family, couples. (A)
Contract	Questionnaire and counseling submission form. (A)
Fees	\$30 for Email exchange. \$45 for 50 minute chat therapy session. (A)
Ethics	ISMHO suggested principles and National Board of certified counselors. (A)

Average: 24.6 LOW

55. <http://www.platiquemosde.com/>

Platiquemos

Space	(26) Low.
Setting	Secure Chat-room. (B)
Description	Satisfying explanation. (A)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Nice and funny. (A)
Language	Spanish
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30-50 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic but experimental. (B)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Second person. (B)
Approach	Various. (B)
Contract	Questionnaire. Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 21.6 NO

56. <http://www.gomipsicologoonline.com/>

El Psicologo Directo A Tu Computadora

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email and chat therapy. (C)
Description	Simple explanation. (B)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Simple and detailed. (B)
Design	Warm and inviting. (A)
Language	Spanish
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	30 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	Alternative therapy. (B)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal and commercial. (C)
Approach	Anxiety, depression. (B)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$22 for Email exchange, \$20 for 30 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. ISMHO code of ethics. (A)

Average: 22 NO

57. <http://123counselling.com/services.html>

123 Counselling

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Organised. (B)

Appendix

Design	Flat with no focus. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	50 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	By request. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Yes.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Not specified. (C)
Contract	Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	£30 for 60 minutes chat session or Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	BACP code of ethics. (A)

Average: 21.3 Low

58. <http://www.briefcounseling.com/>
BriefCounseling

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Email Counseling in the site. (B)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	2 therapists + CV. (A)
Site	The site is focused on telephone counseling. (C)
Design	Commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Stress, marriage, alcohol, anxiety, depression, etc. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$39.95 per Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16.6 NO

59. <http://www.etherapistsonline.com/etherapists/index.htm>
4eTherapy

Space	(27) Low.
Setting	Secure Email and chat therapy. (B)
Description	Brief explanations. (B)
Therapists	13 therapists + CV. (A)
Site	Simple and clear. Not comprehensive. (B)
Design	Well designed. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30-60 minutes chat session. (B)
Session time	Email reply within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Psychotherapy (A)

Appendix

Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Pre session form. Terms of service. (A)
Fees	\$35 for Email exchange, \$85 for 60 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 25 LOW

60. <http://www.counselingcafe.com/>
Counseling Cafe

Space	(15) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV with no details. (B)
Site	Too simple, no details. (C)
Design	Primitive, but simple and designed. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Response within 12-24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	Not psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Email counseling. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Information form and conditions. (B)
Fees	\$1 per minute for reading and responding. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 17 NO

61. <http://www.counseling-connection.com/>
The counseling connection

Space	(21) Low.
Setting	Email and chat counseling. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	2 therapists+ CVs (A)
Site	Efficient. (A)
Design	Formal and personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	50 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	Reply within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	Experimental. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Technical. (C)
Approach	Christian counseling. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$1 per minute for reading and responding. \$60 per chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21 LOW

62. <http://home.nwww.net/willcars/index.html>
The WebCounseling Site

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email therapy. (C)
Description	Introduction to E-therapy, mostly Email therapy. (A)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Complicated. (C)
Design	Difficult typography. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	Yes. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	No. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 15.3 NO

63. <http://www.thecybershrink.com/>
the Cyber Shrink

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Chat room. (C)
Description	Short specific introduction. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Useful, lack of details. (B)
Design	Nice and simple. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	45-60 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	Not a replace to face-to-face therapy. (C)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal (C)
Approach	Social worker, various approaches. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	\$35 for 45 minutes chat session, \$45 for 60 minutes. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 19.6 NO

64. <http://www.e-mailtherapy.com/>
Patricia Roles

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Email counseling. (C)
Description	Detailed explanation. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Detailed and comprehensive. (A)
Design	The pages are too long and confusing. (B)
Language	English (British Columbia)

Appendix

Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(31) High.
Therapy	'Online counselling with email is a therapeutic process'. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	A friendly style. (A)
Approach	Social worker. Various approaches. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. (A)
Fees	\$40 for Email session (minimum two page response. (A)
Ethics	Privacy and confidentiality. (B)

Average: 22 LOW

65. <https://www.etherapyconnect.com/matriarch/MultiPiccePage.asp?PageID=17&PageName=TherapistsJoinNow>

Therapy connect

Space	(36) High.
Setting	Secure video and chat. (A)
Description	Short but comprehensive. (A)
Therapists	3 therapists + detailed CVs. (A)
Site	Professional and comprehensive. (A)
Design	Nice and friendly. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Scheduled time. (A)
Therapy length	Established between client and therapist. (A)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Video and chat. (A)
Empathy	Friendly but not personal. (B)
Approach	Depression, grief, ADHD, borderline, eating disorders. (A)
Contract	Terms of use and privacy statement. (B)
Fees	Each therapist has different fees. (B)
Ethics	Various standards for Online Therapy. (A)

Average: 32 HIGH

66. <http://www.feeltalk.com/>

Feel Talk

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Secure private chat or Email in the site. (B)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	3 therapists with too short CVs. (B)
Site	Convenient but with no contents. (C)
Design	Minimal, nice and warm. (A)
Language	English (India)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Warm atmosphere. (A)
Approach	Trauma, addiction, stress, etc. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$20 per chat session, \$10 per Email response. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20 LOW

67. <http://e-therapyhelper.com/>
E-THERAPYHELPER

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (C)
Therapists	5 therapists with no CVs. (C)
Site	Slow and difficult to use. (C)
Design	Too many details. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30 minutes segments of chat. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Questionnaire. Internet counseling agreement. (A)
Fees	\$35 for 30 minutes Email session. \$70 for 60 minutes chat therapy. (A)
Ethics	Total security. (B)

Average: 19 NO

68. <http://www.goslings.net/counselling/fees.htm>
Goslings counselling services.

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short explanations. (B)
Therapists	2 therapists + CVs. (A)
Site	Difficult to use. (C)
Design	Simple and nice. (A)
Language	English (Singapore)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Reply within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email therapy. (C)
Empathy	No. (C)
Approach	Cognitive behavioural. Stress, anxiety, relationships, separation, divorce, etc. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	S\$240 for email consultation. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.3 NO

Appendix

69. <http://www.help2cope.com/>
Help2Cope

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email and chat counseling. (C)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Lack of information. (C)
Design	Not friendly. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Online counselling. (A)
Online style	Email or Chat. (B)
Empathy	Neutral. (C)
Approach	Psychological counselling. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. New client registration. (A)
Fees	£8 per 60 minutes chat session or Email reply. (A)
Ethics	BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice. (A)

Average: 20.6 Low

70. <http://www.hotlinecounseling.com/serv.php>
Hotline Counseling

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Nothing. (C)
Therapists	3 therapists + CV. (A)
Site	No satisfying content. (C)
Design	Nice and calm. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	'Should not be relied upon, as a substitute for consultation. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	No. (C)
Approach	Multi-cultural. (A)
Contract	Disclaimer. (B)
Fees	\$75 per 30 minutes of \$100 per 60 minutes service. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 15.3 NO

71. <http://www.icallisrael.com/>
Internet consultation and therapy in Hebrew.

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	3 therapists + CVs. (A)
Site	Practical. (A)
Design	Commercial. (C)

Appendix

Language	Hebrew (Israel)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Reply within 3 days. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	Not a substitute for face-to-face therapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Psychiatry and psychotherapy. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	\$75 for 3 Email exchanges or \$230 per month for unlimited exchanges. (A)
Ethics	Therapeutic code of ethics. (A)

Average: 16.6 NO

72. <http://www.counsellingskyways.co.uk/>
Counselling Skyways

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	FAQs about online therapy. (B)
Therapists	8 therapists + CVs. (A)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Personal and warm. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Reply in 48-72 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(34) Yes.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. Agreement. (A)
Fees	£15 per Email exchange, £15 for 30 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	BACP code of ethics. (A)

Average: 24 LOW

73. <http://www.keen.com/memberpub/homepage.asp?user=nurschope>
There is hope and help!

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist, no CV. (C)
Site	1 page, no contents. (C)
Design	Dull. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(14) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)

Appendix

Empathy	Not personal. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$5 for answer to specific, brief questions. \$10 for advice that requires research. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 12.6 NO

74. <http://www.love-sessions.com/>

Love-sessions

Space	(14) No.
Setting	Email and Chat. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	4 advisors with no professional details. (C)
Site	Loaded. (C)
Design	Commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	10-20-30-60 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours or while online chat is available. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Client form. (B)
Fees	\$25 per Email session. \$50 for 60 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	Commitment to privacy. (B)

Average: 17.3 NO

75. <http://www.mynettherapist.com/individuals.html>

My net therapist

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Link to ESMHO white papers. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + general CV (no professional details). (B)
Site	Useful but not detailed. (B)
Design	Simple and official. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	1, 3 or 6 sessions (two Emails each). (A)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Psychotherapy. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Nothing personal. (C)
Approach	A generalist (abuse, co-dependency, family systems, grief, etc.). (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. Client questionnaire. (B)
Fees	\$40 for 1 session (2 Email exchanges), \$100 for 3 sessions. (A)
Ethics	Privacy and security. (B)

Average: 22.6 NO

76. <http://www.thecounselors.com/index.html>

theCounselors Online Counseling & Therapy Services

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	48 therapists + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Complicated but with lack of information. (C)
Design	Loaded and threatening. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	20-60 minutes. (B)
Session time	Scheduling chat within 24 hours. Email reply in 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Counseling and therapy. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$30 for 20 minutes Chat session or Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20 NO

77. <http://www.shrink-me.com/>
Shrink-Me

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	FAQ's about Email therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Practical and friendly. (A)
Design	Nice and relaxing. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	Open ended. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Not a substitute to face-to-face therapy. (C)
Online style	Email consultation. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Psychodynamic. (A)
Contract	Questionnaire. Disclaimer. (A)
Fees	\$75 per 30 minutes reading and writing. \$150 per hour. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 19.3 NO

78. <http://www.asktheinternettherapist.com/>
Ask the Internet Therapist

Space	(16) No
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	20 therapists + CV. (A)
Site	Loaded with lack of information. (C)
Design	Confusing. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low
Session length	Units of 15 minutes chat sessions. (B)

Appendix

Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Questionnaire. (B)
Fees	\$25-50 per Email exchange, \$15-30 per 15 minutes chat session (2 kinds of therapists). (B)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20 LOW

79. <http://www.helphorizons.com/>
Help Horizons

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Secure chat and Email. (B)
Description	Introduction for therapists concerning online therapy. (C)
Therapists	69 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	For therapists and clients. Not enough information for clients. (C)
Design	No focus. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Different options. (B)
Session time	Different options. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26). Low.
Therapy	Psychotherapy. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	Various. (A)
Ethics	Privacy statement. (B)

Average: 23 LOW

80. <http://peaceandhappinessinstitute.com/FRAME.html>
Peace & Happiness Institute

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Secure Email. (B)
Description	Not satisfying introduction to Email therapy. (C)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Lack of information. (C)
Design	Not attractive. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(14) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Academic style. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No contract. (C)

Appendix

Fees	\$50 for Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16 NO

81. <http://www.psybernet.co.nz/>

Walter Logeman

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	An interview about online therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple and efficient. (A)
Design	Focused and welcoming. (A)
Language	English (New Zealand)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 2 days. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Not a substitute for face-to-face psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Psychodrama. (A)
Contract	Terms. (B)
Fees	\$72 per hour of reading and writing. (A)
Ethics	NZAP code of ethics and ISMHO. (A)

Average: 20.6 Low

82. <http://www.mytherapynet.com/>

My therapy

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Secured chat. (B)
Description	Limited introduction. (B)
Therapists	751 therapists + not detailed CV's. (B)
Site	Some options do not work. (C)
Design	Commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	15, 25 or 50 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	In 15 minutes or scheduled meeting. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Not a substitute for face-to-face therapy but very effective. (B)
Online style	Chat therapy. (B)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions agreement. (A)
Fees	\$0.16 per minute chat. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. HONcode and KSMHO. (A)

Average: 24 LOW

83. <http://www.openfordialogue.com/>

Open for dialogue

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email. (C)

Appendix

Description	No presentation. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple, lack of contents. (C)
Design	Intruding music. Nice and relaxing. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	By request. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Therapy. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Written in third person. (C)
Approach	Clinical social worker. Depression, anxiety, PTSD, eating disorders. (A)
Contract	Client contract. (A)
Fees	\$30 for Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 19.6 NO

84. <http://www.nefeshnet.co.il>

Nefeshnet

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	4 + partial CV's. (B)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Not attractive but friendly. (B)
Language	Hebrew (Israel)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Lacanian. (A)
Contract	Questionnaire. Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	\$60 for 4 Email exchanges. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 19.33 NO

85. <http://www.personalsolutions.com>

Personal Solutions

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	29 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Too loaded and confusing. (C)
Design	Hi-tech. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	'Adjunct to traditional mental health counseling'. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Disclaimer. Therapist polices for service. (A)
Fees	\$30 for Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	'Ethical standards and guidelines'. (A)

Average: 18.6 NO

86. <http://www.onlinecounsellor.co.uk>
Julie Perry Counselling

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short and not satisfying + links. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist with short CV. (B)
Site	Simple and useful, but not comprehensive. (B)
Design	Casual. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Maximum of two Emails a week. (B)
Session time	Response within 3 days. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Psychotherapy. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	'My contract'. (A)
Fees	£20 for Email exchange or £55 for 3 Emails. (A)
Ethics	BACP code of ethics. (A)

Average: 22.3 Low

87. <http://www.etherapycenter.com>
The Etherapy Center

Space	(21) Low.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	2 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Easy to use, lack of contents. (B)
Design	Simple and personal. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30-90 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(31) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Warm welcome. (A)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	No contract. (C)
Fees	\$30 for 30 minutes session, \$40 for 1000 words Email. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 24 LOW

Appendix

88. <http://www.kasamba.com/Advice/Browse/ViewCategory.aspx?desid=8&Catid=10341&banid=3586>

Kasamba

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	18 therapists + suspected personal information. (C)
Site	Commercial site with many other services. (C)
Design	Loaded and confusing. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Satisfaction guarantee (no payment without satisfaction). (B)
Fees	Indication of price range. (B)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 13.3 NO

89. <http://www.cocooncounselling.com/home.htm> <http://www.counselling-online-uk.com>
cocoon counselling connection online

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	4 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Organised and friendly. Lack of contents. (B)
Design	Nice and warm. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Different chat time for each therapist. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Friendly style. (A)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Counselling contract. (A)
Fees	Different detailed fee for each therapist. (A)
Ethics	BACP code of ethics. (A)

Average: 20.3 LOW

90. <http://www.brian-turner.co.uk>
Brian Turner, counsellor

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Brief and not satisfying. (C)

Appendix

Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Clear and friendly with lack of contents. (B)
Design	Simple and personal. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(36) High.
Session length	Agreed personally in the contract. (A)
Session time	Agreed personally in the contract. (A)
Therapy length	Agreed personally in the contract. (A)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Additional to face-to-face. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Couple counselling. (A)
Contract	Written contract. (A)
Fees	£35 per hour chat or Email reading and writing or £18 per Email. (A)
Ethics	BACP codes of ethics. (A)

Average: 27 LOW

91. <http://www.ukcouplescounselling.com>
couples counselling network

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	3 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Easy to use, lack of contents. (B)
Design	Simple and neutral. (B)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(36) High.
Session length	Agreed with the therapist. (A)
Session time	Agreed with the therapist. (A)
Therapy length	Agreed with the therapist. (A)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Neutral. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. Contract or agreement. (A)
Fees	Each therapist has his own fees. (A)
Ethics	BACP code of ethics and practice. (A)

Average: 28 HIGH

92. <http://www.gjcounselling.co.uk> <http://www.gilljones.net/>
GJ Counselling

Space	(19)
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Too short. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple, friendly, lack of contents. (B)
Design	Nice and welcoming. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30-60 minutes chat session. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy	No reference. (C)

Appendix

length	
Action	(34) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Psychodynamic and cognitive/solution focussed approach. (A)
Contract	Contract for Internet counselling. (A)
Fees	£20 for Email exchange or for 30 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	BACP code of ethics. (A)

Average: 23 LOW

93. <http://www.dangilbride.com>

Dan Gilbride

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with CV. (A)
Site	One page, too long. (B)
Design	No boundaries. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	30 minute chat session. (A)
Session time	Scheduled contact. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal style. (C)
Approach	Specialty in autism. (A)
Contract	Informed consent. (A)
Fees	\$22.5 for Email exchange, \$39 for 30 minute chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 24.3 LOW

94. <http://www.moralexpert.org>

moralexpert

Space	(28) High.
Setting	Secure Email in the site, arranged in a message board. (A)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no detailed CV. (B)
Site	Useful with no contents. (B)
Design	Beautiful but not personal. (B)
Language	English + Spanish + Japanese
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(31) High.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Message board. (A)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Philosophical , moral counseling. (A)
Contract	Terms of use. Nondisclosure & confidentiality agreement. Pre-counseling questionnaire. (A)
Fees	\$20 per Email exchange, \$60 weekly flat fee. (A)

Appendix

Ethics	Privacy and confidentiality. (B)
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Average: 23.6 LOW

95. <http://www.askachildpsychologist.com>

AskaChildPsychlogost

Space	(26) Low.
Setting	Secure Email in the site. (B)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Efficient. (A)
Design	Looks professional and welcoming. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 24 or 72 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	Not a substitute to face-to-face consultation. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Friendly style, not personal. (B)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Online service agreement. (A)
Fees	\$29 for 72 hours reply, \$39 for 24 hours reply. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20 LOW

96. <http://letstalkcounseling.com>

Lets Talk Counseling

Space	(30) High.
Setting	Chat room, iconferencing, email journal at a secure site. (A)
Description	No description, but a wonderful interactive demonstration. (B)
Therapists	38 therapists + detailed CV's. (A)
Site	Too loaded, confusing. (C)
Design	Technical, not attractive, not focused. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	various. (A)
Session time	Scheduled appointment. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	Professional counseling. (A)
Online style	Chat, email and video-conferencing. (A)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Evaluation form, Intake form. (B)
Fees	Various. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 29 HIGH

97. <http://www.warrenshepell.com/wei/iind.asp>

Warren Shepell

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	FAQ's about E-Counseling. (B)

Appendix

Therapists	1 recognised therapist + CV. (B)
Site	A combination of some sites. (C)
Design	Simple and clear but not personal. (C)
Language	English and French (Canada)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Within two business days. (B)
Therapy length	Short term counseling. (A)
Action	(21) Low.
Therapy	Professional counseling but not intended 'to displace direct in-person counseling'. (B)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Technical. (C)
Approach	Brief strategies. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. Registration form. (B)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	WS code of ethics. (A)

Average: 20.3 LOW

98. <http://therapyave.com> <http://apivatetalk.com>
Therapy Ave (+ a private talk)

Space	(21) No.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + detailed CV. (A)
Site	Practical. (A)
Design	Personal and commercial. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	60 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	Email reply within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Friendly style. (A)
Approach	Marriage, parenting, grief, employment stress etc. (A)
Contract	Internet counseling agreement. Pre-therapy questionnaire. (A)
Fees	\$35 for 30 minutes reading and writing emails. \$70 for 60 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 25.6 LOW

99. <http://cybertherapy.com>
Conscious Choices

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction and links. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist without CV. (B)
Site	Simple, easy to use, but no contents. (B)
Design	Nice and neutral. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy	A series of 5 Email sessions. (A)

Appendix

length	
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	It is therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Welcoming atmosphere. (A)
Approach	Cognitive/behavioral. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$25 per Email reply, \$200 fir monthly unlimited Email, \$1.5 per minute of chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22.6 LOW

100. <http://www.theroad.com.hk/>
The Road

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Dedicated to multi-disciplinary activities. (C)
Design	Intruding and commercial. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Self-praising. (C)
Approach	Solution oriented. NLP. (A)
Contract	A registration form. (B)
Fees	\$35 per Email. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 19 NO

101. <http://www.marriagematters.com>
Marriage Matters

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Brief and satisfying introduction. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Concise and useful. (A)
Design	Romantic and warm. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Welcoming but not personal. (B)
Approach	Marriage counseling, personal or couples. (A)
Contract	Online questionnaire. (B)

Appendix

Fees	\$30 for reading and writing session. Monthly unlimited Email for \$250. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22.3 NO

102. <http://www.psychotherapy-online.com>

Psychotherapy Online

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Comprehensive description of Email therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Primitive, 1 page. (C)
Design	Old and out of date. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Therapy. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Trauma and MDR. (A)
Contract	Agreement. Intake form. (A)
Fees	\$150 for a month of daily Emails. \$70 for 60 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21.3 LOW

103. <http://www.gethelponline.org>

Get Help Online

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Not very convenient. (C)
Design	Warm and simple. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	Therapy. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Almost. (B)
Approach	Individuals, couples and families. (A)
Contract	Application form. (B)
Fees	\$50 for Email exchange. \$250 for one month unlimited Email exchanges. (A)
Ethics	Aamft and nbcc codes of ethics. (A)

Average: 21 LOW

104. <http://www.familytherapynet.com>

Family Therapy Net

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)

Appendix

Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Convenient with lack of contents. (B)
Design	Nice and technological. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	A series of 5 sessions. (A)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic but do not constitute traditional psychotherapy. (B)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Marriage and family counseling. (A)
Contract	E-Counseling Request and disclaimer. (A)
Fees	A series of 5 therapeutic Email sessions for \$100. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20 LOW

105. <http://www.gaytherapistonline.com>
Gay Therapist Online

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Old, some parts do not work. (C)
Design	Not attractive. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	60 minutes scheduled Email exchange. (A)
Session time	Scheduled. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Not as psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Almost. (B)
Approach	Clinical social worker. (A)
Contract	Agreement & limitations of service. (A)
Fees	\$10 per unscheduled Email exchange, \$30-75 for a scheduled hour of unlimited email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22 LOW

106. <http://www.counselingnet.com>
Counseling Net

Space	(30) High.
Setting	Private and secure chat-forum. (A)
Description	Confusing. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Impossible (900 pages with strange structure). (C)
Design	Awful. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Difficult to find. (C)

Appendix

Session time	Difficult to find. (C)
Therapy length	Open ended. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Not a substitute for in-person services or treatment. (C)
Online style	Secure chat-forum. (A)
Empathy	Difficult to find. (C)
Approach	Marriage and relationship problems. (A)
Contract	A disclaimer (informed consent agreement). (A)
Fees	\$70 for monthly individual weekly sessions, \$130 for couples. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21.3 LOW

107. <http://www.helpyourselftherapy.com>
Self-Therapy

Space	(15) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist, no details. (B)
Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	Simple but boring. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(15) No.
Therapy	'Consultation is not therapy'. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Not really. (C)
Approach	Social worker. (B)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$1 per minute reading and writing, \$10 minimum per letter. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 14 NO

108. <http://www.counseling-online.net>
Counseling-Online

Space	(21) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction to her service. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical with not much content. (B)
Design	Nice and warm. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) LOW.
Therapy	Professional counseling but not a substitute for face-to-face therapy. (B)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Adjustment disorders. (A)
Contract	Initial questionnaire. Terms of usage. (B)
Fees	\$35 for individual Email session, \$125 for four Email sessions. (A)

Ethics	No reference. (C)
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Average: 21 LOW

109. <http://www.aplacctotalk.com>

A place to talk

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with short CV. (B)
Site	Simple and convenient, not much contents. (B)
Design	Nice and focused. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	'This is not "traditional therapy".' (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Divorce recovery. (B)
Contract	Policies & guidelines. (B)
Fees	\$25 per Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 15 NO

110. <http://www.horizonscounselling.com>

Horizons

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Not dedicated to online therapy. (C)
Design	Not attractive. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 3 working days. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal style. (C)
Approach	Transactional analysis. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. Refund money without quibble. (B)
Fees	£25 per Email reply. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21.6 LOW

111. <http://www.onlinecounseling.org>

Latest Online Counseling

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Secure Email in the site. (B)
Description	FAQ's about e-counseling. (B)
Therapists	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	Simple and commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	Not a replacement for face-to-face therapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Disclaimer. Money-back guaranty for the first session. (A)
Fees	\$25 for 15 minutes counseling response, \$40 for 30 minutes, \$50 for 45 minutes, \$55 for 60 minutes. \$10 for secured personal files. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.3 NO

112. <http://www.elevated.fsnet.co.uk/index-page15.html>
Elevated Therapy's Affiliate Program

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	FAQ's about his service. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist with too detailed CV. (B)
Site	One long page with links. (C)
Design	Awful. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	Alternative to face-to-face therapy. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Transpersonal. (A)
Contract	Confidential application form. (B)
Fees	£60 for 3 Email sessions. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21.3 NO

113. <http://www.therapyonline.ca>
Therapy Online

Space	(30) High.
Setting	Secure Email. (B)
Description	A comparison of f-2-f and TherapEmail. (A)
Therapists	2 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Practical. (A)
Design	Personal and warm. (A)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Very personal welcome. (A)
Approach	Marriage and family. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$85 (Canadian) per hour of counsellor time (reading and writing). (A)
Ethics	ACA, APA, NBCC, CCACC ethical standards. (A)

Average: 24 LOW

114. <http://www.online-counseling-service.com>

Online Counselling

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction, not comprehensive. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + some details. (B)
Site	Useful. (A)
Design	Illustrated and warm. (A)
Language	English (Australia)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	It is not psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Friendly but not personal. (B)
Approach	Integrative. Person centred, behaviour, solution-focused. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	\$34 for 60 minutes Email reading and writing. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17 NO

115. <http://www.toltex.com>

Toltex

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	Anonymous. (C)
Site	Useful. (A)
Design	Simple and nice. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	Face-to-face is the preferred way. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Not specified. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16 NO

116. <http://www.egetgoing.com>
eGetgoing

Space	(31) High.
Setting	Interactive group online. (A)
Description	Explanation about their method. (A)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Practical. (A)
Design	Simple and comfortable. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(36) High.
Session length	60 minutes sessions. (A)
Session time	Weekly scheduled sessions. (A)
Therapy length	Some programmes. (A)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Audio + Video + Email. (A)
Empathy	Technical. (C)
Approach	Special programmes. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 31 HIGH

117. <http://www.mommy-muse.com>
Mommy-Muse

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	2 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Simple and easy to use. (A)
Design	Warm and personal. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 24 ours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	Experimental therapy. (B)
Online style	Email therapy. (C)
Empathy	Personal and warm. (A)
Approach	Mothering. (B)
Contract	Client-counselor consent form. A questionnaire. (A)
Fees	\$40 per hour reading and writing a reply. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22.3 LOW

118. <http://www.mifgash.co.il/>
Mifgash for parents

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Information about the therapeutic approach, not about E-counseling. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical (A)

Appendix

Design	Nice and personal. (A)
Language	Hebrew (Israel)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Reply within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	Based on one question. (A)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Parents' supervision. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Adlerian parents' supervision. (A)
Contract	Supervision contract. (A)
Fees	NIS 49.4 (\$9) per Email. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 25.3 LOW

119. http://www.kidshelp.com.au/home_KHL.aspx?s=6
Kids HelpLine

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	Anonymous professional counselors. (C)
Site	Easy and useful. (A)
Design	Nice and friendly. (A)
Language	English (Australia)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Chat between 3pm and 9am. Email response in a few days. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Warm and welcoming. (A)
Approach	Empowering young people. (A)
Contract	Stuff you need to read. (B)
Fees	Free. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 20.6 LOW

120. <http://www.sexology.org/>
Sex Therapy Online

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	FAQ's about the service. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + a team of anonymous experts. (B)
Site	Simple and practical, not very clear. (B)
Design	Quiet but not attractive. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	Based on one question. (A)
Action	(20) LOW.
Therapy	'not a substitute for face-to-face therapy' (C)
Online style	Email consultation. (C)

Appendix

Empathy	Personal but egocentric. (B)
Approach	Sex therapy. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$75 per valid question. (A)
Ethics	APA ethical guidelines. (A)

Average: 20.6 LOW

121. <http://www.netaddiction.com/>
net addiction

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Chat-room. (C)
Description	No satisfying description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + anonymous staff. (B)
Site	Useful. (A)
Design	Not focused. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	60 minute chat. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	'On-line consultation is not intended to replace face-to-face therapy.' (C)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Official. (C)
Approach	Brief, solution-focused interventions. Internet addiction. (A)
Contract	Disclaimer. (A)
Fees	\$95 for 60 minute chat session. \$270 for three sessions. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 18.6 NO

122. http://www.infidelity.com/e-therapy/e-therapy_thp.htm
Infidelity Support Network

Space	(14) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Not a satisfying description. (C)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Comprehensive but confusing. (B)
Design	Colourful and simple. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	Not a substitute for in-person services. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal with no identification. (B)
Approach	Marriage and divorce. (B)
Contract	A questionnaire. Online consultation disclaimer. (A)
Fees	\$29 for Email response. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16.3 NO

123. <http://www.psychoptions.com>
Psych Options

Appendix

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction about Email therapy. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Useful but confusing. (B)
Design	Irritating typography and design. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 48-72 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	'E-therapy is not a substitute for traditional therapy.' (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Solution-focused therapy, cognitive-behavioral. (A)
Contract	Terms of agreement. (A)
Fees	\$50 for one E-consultation or \$35 per on-going sessions. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.6 NO

124. <http://www.julieimorrell.com>

Julie Morrell

Space	(21) Low.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	FAQ's about online counseling. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Minimal. (B)
Design	Quiet and relaxing. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30-50 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	'Online consulting is not a therapy.' (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Marriage and family counseling. (A)
Contract	Confidential client information form. (B)
Fees	\$1 for 1 minute reading and writing. \$36 for 30 minutes chat or \$60 for 50 minutes. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20 LOW

125. <http://www.psychtogo.com>

PsychToGo

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	3 therapist + partly CV's. (B)
Site	Simple, useful with no contents. (B)
Design	Nice but not personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	Not a substitute for ongoing face-to-face psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Email and chat consultation. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Disclaimer. (A)
Fees	\$25 for written question, \$1 per minute of chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.3 NO

126. <http://www.crosscreekcounseling.com>
Cross Creek Family Counseling

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Minimal introduction. (C)
Therapists	3 therapists and 2 Interns + CV's, others are anonymous. (B)
Site	Practical. (A)
Design	Simple and textual. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(31) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal second person style. (A)
Approach	Family counseling. Cognitive, psychodynamic, etc. (A)
Contract	Secure order form. (B)
Fees	\$65 per Email (\$45 with intern). (A)
Ethics	California Business and Professions Code. (A)

Average: 21.3 LOW

127. <http://www.counselingpros.com>
Online Counseling Services

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	A book: Consumers Guide to seeking counseling on the Internet. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + license number. (B)
Site	One long page. (C)
Design	Too simple. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal and warm (audio greeting). (A)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	A promised refund. (B)
Fees	\$49.95 for Email consultation. (A)

Appendix

Ethics	No reference. (C)
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Average: 20.3 LOW

128. <http://www.drfranklin.net/> <http://www.online-treatments.com>
Dr. Franklin Online

Space	(28) High.
Setting	Email, Chat and video conferencing using clients' software. (B)
Description	Short introduction + FAQ's. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + Online Resume. (A)
Site	Practical and useful. (A)
Design	Too much text on the page. Tiring. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	15-30-45 minutes session. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(34) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email, chat and video. (A)
Empathy	Personal. (A)
Approach	Social worker. Various. (A)
Contract	Agreement and consent form and questionnaire. (A)
Fees	\$20 for each 15 minutes of reading and writing Emails or chat. (B)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 26 LOW

129. <http://www.licensedcounselor.com>
Erika Russina

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical. (A)
Design	Focused and quiet. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic relationship. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Confusion of second and third person. (B)
Approach	Humanistic. REBT, Cognitive therapy. (A)
Contract	Client agreement. (A)
Fees	\$35 for Email session. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. ACA ethical guidelines. (A)

Average: 22 LOW

130. <http://www.geocities.com/counselpro/ProfessionalOnlineCounseling.html>
Erica Russina - Professional Online Counseling

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Confidential Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)

Appendix

Therapists	No details. (C)
Site	One page, strange. (C)
Design	Confusing. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Second person with no personal identification. (B)
Approach	Social worker. (B)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$45 per 60 minutes Email session. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 16.6 NO

131. <http://www.couplecounseling.com/>
Couple counseling

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Nothing. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Easy to navigate, no contents. (B)
Design	Simple but not personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	The online session will not exceed two weeks. (B)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	Therapy (not psychoanalysis). (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Practical style. (C)
Approach	Couple counseling. (A)
Contract	Screening questionnaire. (B)
Fees	\$50 for Email, equivalent to two hours of office counseling. (B)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 19.3 NO

132. <http://www.abuse-recovery-and-marriage-counseling.com/>
Dr. Deb

Space	(21) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short explanation. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Organised and easy to use, not enough information concerning E-therapy. (B)
Design	Focused, nice illustrated and warm. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Action	(31) High.
Therapy	Online therapy is like traditional therapy. (A)
Online style	Letters therapy. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Clinical social worker. Family therapy. (A)
Contract	Consent form. A contract. (A)
Fees	\$150 for 60 minutes online counseling (?). (B)
Ethics	Ethical principles of ISMHO. (A)

Average: 21.3 LOW

133. <http://www.peace-joy-love.org/>
Peace Joy Love

Space	(15) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + personal history. No professional CV or Family name. (C)
Site	Simple with no contents. (B)
Design	Simple, focused and nice. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	20 or 60 minutes. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24-72 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Presents himself in third person. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Disclaimer. (B)
Fees	'Donation' of \$30 for short Email and \$60 for long Email, \$60 for sixty minute chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 18 NO

134. <http://www.family-counseling.org>
Family Counseling Center Association

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Secure Email in the site. (B)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	2 therapists + CV's without professional details. (B)
Site	Simple, not enough information. (B)
Design	Focused and nice. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	Not like face-to-face therapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Warm but not personal. (B)
Approach	Family counseling. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$15 per Email. (A)
Ethics	Link to the ACA site. (B)

Average: 18 NO

135. <http://www.drerononline.com/Counseling.htm>
Dr. Ron Online

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	3 therapists + short CV's. (B)
Site	Online therapy is one page in the site, with no details. (B)
Design	Simple but not attractive. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(15) No.
Therapy	Not a replacement of in-person psychotherapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal style. (C)
Approach	Various. (B)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$45 per Email consultation. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 15 NO

136. <http://www.sunrisecounseling.com>
Sunrise Counselling

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Short but accurate introduction. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Useful. (A)
Design	Focused and personal. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30-60 seconds chat. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Social worker. Client-centered therapy, solution-focused and brief therapy. (A)
Contract	Counseling application and life history questionnaire. (B)
Fees	\$40 for 60 minutes chat session, \$20 for Email exchange or \$150 for a month. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 24 LOW

137. <http://www.lifeworkshelp.com/onlinecounseling.htm>
Life Works

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist without professional CV. (B)
Site	One simple page for online counseling. (B)

Appendix

Design	Simple, focused, not attractive. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Set day and time for sending and replying mails. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Family and parenting. (B)
Contract	Confidential intake form. (B)
Fees	\$70 per hour. ? (B)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20.3 LOW

138. <http://www.counselcareconnection.org/services.asp>
Counsel Care Connection

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	2 counselors + CV's. (A)
Site	Too simple, no relevant contents. (C)
Design	No design. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24-72 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Various. Anger and conflict management. (A)
Contract	Counseling information form. (B)
Fees	\$50 for Email advice. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 19 NO

139. <http://www.girlshrink.com/index.html>
GirlShrink

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Too loaded but functional. (B)
Design	Not focused but personal and warm. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30 minutes intervals in chat sessions. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	'Not intended to replace the help of a mental health professional.' (C)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)

Appendix

Empathy	Warm and personal. (A)
Approach	Women support. (B)
Contract	Disclaimer. (B)
Fees	\$25 for Email exchange, \$35 for chat session, \$200 unlimited counseling package. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20 LOW

140. <http://www.psychology.com/Psychology.com>

Space	(13) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	No contents. (C)
Design	Focused but not personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response up to 48 hours. (B).
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(14) No.
Therapy	'Not a replacement for traditional face-to-face therapy.' (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$25 for Email session. ? (B)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 14.3 NO

141. <http://www.gaymencounseling.com/online.html>
Gay Men's Counseling

Space	(26) Low.
Setting	Email or secure chat room. (B)
Description	FAQ's about online counseling, too short. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical, lack of contents. (B)
Design	Focused and not personal. (B)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	60 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Gay counseling. (A)
Contract	Order form. (B)
Fees	\$85 for 60 minutes chat session, \$120 for three Email exchanges. (A)
Ethics	BCACC ethical standards. (A)

Average: 26.3 LOW

142. <http://www.acctraining.com/counsel.shtml>
Agape Christian Counseling Center

Appendix

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	6 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	Not focused. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Not personal. (C)
Approach	Short-term counseling. (A)
Contract	The Arno profile. (C)
Fees	\$60 for the first session. ? (B)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17 NO

143. <http://www.leademcounseling.com/>
Leadem

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	2 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	Simple but not personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	30 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Marriage and family counseling. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$20 for individual Email response, \$45 for 30 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22.3 LOW

144. <http://www.abel-counseling.com/online.htm>
Abel Counseling Services

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Chat-room. (C)
Description	Links do not respond. (C)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	On page, links do not work. (C)
Design	No design. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	No description. (C)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$50 per 30 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16 NO

145. <http://www.convenient-counseling.com>
Convenient-Counseling

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Almost empty. (C)
Design	Too simple, not personal. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	By appointment. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(15) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Addiction. (B)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 15.6 NO

146. <http://drfranyoung.com/>
Dr. Fran Young

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	No description. A demonstration of chat session. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + certificate and resume. (A)
Site	Simple with no contents referring to online therapy. (C)
Design	Personal and warm. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(31) High.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Personal style with video welcome. (A)
Approach	Online Christian marriage & family counseling. (A)
Contract	Pre-Session Information Form. (B)
Fees	\$35 for 30 minutes chat session or single Email session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21 LOW

147. <http://www.lifecoachchristiancounseling.com>
Listening Care Christian Counseling

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no CV. (C)
Site	Simple with no relevant contents. (C)
Design	Personal but not focused. (B)
Language	English (New Zealand)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	60 minutes. ? (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	Teaching. (C)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal and kind style. (A)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$45-75 per hour. ? (B)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17 NO

148. <http://www.basicgoodness.org/>
Basic Goodness

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple and practical. (A)
Design	Nice and focused. (A)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	A new kind of therapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Anti-therapy. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	Free of charge. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.3 NO

149. <http://www.edotcounsellor.com/>
eDot Counsellor

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Secure Email and chat. (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	2 therapists + short CV's. (B)
Site	Simple, useful, lack of contents. (B)

Design	Focused, simple, dull typography. (B)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30-60 minutes chat session. (B)
Session time	Email response within 5-10 days. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(33) High.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	REBT, TA and play therapy. (A)
Contract	Application form. (B)
Fees	£25 for 60 minutes chat, £30 for two Email exchanges. (A)
Ethics	HONcode, BACP and ACC code of ethics. (A)

Average: 23.6 LOW

150. <http://www.onlinecounsel.org/index.html>
Effective Life Management Services

Space	(21) Low.
Setting	Chat. (C)
Description	Short introduction to chat therapy. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + personal and professional CV. (A)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Focused but not attractive (long pages). (B)
Language	English (Australia)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic relationship. (A)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal and inviting. (A)
Approach	Marriage counseling and crisis counseling. (A)
Contract	Requirements in the counseling relationship. (A)
Fees	\$50 per chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21.6 LOW

151. <http://www.counselingcorner.net/services/online.html>
Counseling Corner

Space	(15) No.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	6 therapists, some with detailed CV's. (B)
Site	Not dedicated to online therapy. (C)
Design	Simple, focused and not personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	'Online counseling can cover most minor problems'. (B)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)

Appendix

Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Child, adolescent and couples counseling. (A)
Contract	Feedback form. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 15.6 NO

152. <http://www.robinsoncounseling.com>

Robinson Counseling

Space	(25) Low.
Setting	Secure chat. (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 Therapist + professional CV. (A)
Site	Practical with no relevant contents. (C)
Design	Focused and personal. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	55 minutes. (A)
Session time	Weekly sessions. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	No second person. (C)
Approach	REBT, reality therapy, existential counseling, multicultural counseling. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$85 per session. (A)
Ethics	Ethical guidelines of the ACA and others. (A)

Average: 26.3 LOW

153. <http://business.gorge.net/CBC/page10.html>

Is Online Counseling for Me

Space	(15) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 Therapist with no professional CV. (B)
Site	Does not work so well. (C)
Design	Intruding music, focused, difficult typography. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	60 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	'Face to face is best'. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Second person but not personal. (B)
Approach	Marriage and family therapy. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$10-60 for Email exchange (200-1,500 words), \$27 for 60 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 18.3 NO

Appendix

154. <http://www.merrymauiweddings.com/counseling.html>

On Doves Wings

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no information. (C)
Site	Almost empty. (C)
Design	Commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Marital, family and individual counseling. (B)
Contract	Counseling request form. (B)
Fees	\$35 for Email consultation. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 13.3 NO

155. http://www.calmspirit.net/online_counseling.htm

Calm Spirit Online Counseling

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 Therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical with no relevant texts. (B)
Design	Personal and focused, long pages. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	'Agreed upon time'. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	'Online counseling is not therapy'. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Not personal. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Counseling form. (A)
Fees	\$5 per Email session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.3 NO

156. <http://www.bcharcenter.cz/en/frameset.htm>

Behar Center

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and Chat. (C)
Description	No satisfying introduction. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	One page for online therapy. (B)

Appendix

Design	Focused, personal. (A)
Language	English and Czech (Czech)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Up to 30 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	'It is not psychotherapy'. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal style. (C)
Approach	Family, marital and individual. (A)
Contract	Request form. (C)
Fees	\$18 per Email exchange or 30 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.6 NO

157. http://www.stepcircle.com/eservices_ecounseling.htm
Step Circle

Space	(12) No.
Setting	No reference. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	Famous therapists with no CV. (C)
Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	No focus. (C)
Language	English (India)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(14) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	No reference. (C)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$60 per month. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 12.6 NO

158. <http://www.emotionet.com>
Emotionet Intelligent Emotions for Life

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	FAQ's about online consultation. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + not professional CV. (B)
Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	Loaded, not focused. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Action	(19) No.
Therapy	'this is not "traditional" therapy'. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Marriage counseling, sex and sexuality, relationship. (B)
Contract	Terms & conditions. (B)
Fees	One-time symbolic submission payment of \$35. \$290 for long term Email counseling, up to 5 sessions. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 17 NO

159. <http://www.e-counsellingonline.com>
E-Counsellingonline

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Secure Email and audio-mail (audio response to Emails) in the site. (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Simple and practical with not enough contents. (B)
Design	Problematic typography (black background). (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Email audio response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(15) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Audio-mail. (C)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	\$49.95 for one year membership in the community + 2 Ecounseling chat sessions. \$15 for additional session. \$30 per chat session for non-members. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16.6 No.

160. <http://www.kingdompathway.com>
Dr. Gena G. Foster

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Secured Email and chat. (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple, no contents. (C)
Design	Focused, personal, difficult lettering. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	30 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	Email response within 12 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	Not a substitute for the face-to-face therapy. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Pastoral therapy. Christian E-counseling for families. (A)
Contract	Disclaimer. (B)

Appendix

Fees	\$20 for Email exchange, \$50 for 3, \$100 for 10. \$30 per 30 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 22.3 LOW

161. <http://www.mcstalk.com>

Michiana Counseling Services

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Email and secure chat. (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no professional CV. (B)
Site	Simple and useful, not enough contents. (B)
Design	Focused and personal. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	50 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Effective alternative to face-to-face counseling, but not effective as traditional therapy. (B)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Individual, couples and relationship counseling. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$35 for Email exchange, \$65 for secure chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 23 LOW

162. <http://www.adhdsite.com>

ADHD Free

Space	(15) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	2 therapists with no professional CV. (B)
Site	Online therapy has one page in a loaded site. Too long pages. (C)
Design	Focused but not attractive. (B)
Language	English (Australia)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	Five or Eight sessions suggested. (A)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal and warm. (A)
Approach	ADD. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$25 for Email session, \$100 for 5 sessions (two responses each). (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22.3 LOW

163. http://www.wholelifegym.com/online_counselling_about.htm

Whole Life Gym

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short comparison between online and traditional counseling. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical. Part of a huge portal. (B)
Design	Focused but dull typography. (B)
Language	English (British Columbia, Canada)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	100 words. (A)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	Not the same as traditional offline therapy but very efficient. (B)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Anxiety, depression, marriage/relationship, parenting and addictions. (A)
Contract	A disclaimer. (B)
Fees	\$12 for Email exchange (100 words), \$200 for 20 Emails. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 23 LOW

164. <http://career-crossroads.com>

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no CV. (C)
Site	Practical. Online counseling is a page in the site. (C)
Design	Simple and focused. (C)
Language	English
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (B)
Empathy	Formal style. (C)
Approach	Career counseling. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$50 for 30 minutes session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 14 NO

165. <http://www.askdoctor.md>
ASK Doctor

Space	(26) Low.
Setting	Private chat-forum. (A)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Practical, useful, no contents. (B)
Design	Focused and nice, not personal. (B)
Language	English. (Italy)

Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	Not a substitute for in-person services or treatment for severe problems. (B)
Online style	Forum. (A)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Individual, couple/relationship, marriage. (C)
Contract	Disclaimer. Informed consent agreement. (B)
Fees	\$29.95 for 5 questions confidential forum. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20.3 LOW

166. <http://homeroaster.com/proccdur.html>
Cyber psych

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Chat room. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Part of a portal. Very simple. Not enough contents. (C)
Design	Focused, simple, difficult typography. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Minimum of one hour. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	Minimum of three chat session. (B)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Almost. (B)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Informed consent page. (B)
Fees	\$15 per chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 18.6 NO

167. <http://www.professionalcounseloronline.com>
Professional Counselor Online

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Comprehensive description. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical and easy. (A)
Design	Personal, focused and calm. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	30-55 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. Scheduling calendar for chat sessions. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(34) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic relationship. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)

Appendix

Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Integrative, eclectic and holistic. (A)
Contract	Terms of use. Counseling session form. (A)
Fees	\$28 for Email exchange, \$200 for 10. \$65 for 30 minutes chat, \$80 for 55 minutes. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality and the ethics of the counseling profession. (A)

Average: 26.3 LOW

168. <http://www.therapyworks.ws/ecounseling1.html>

Conscious Choices Counseling

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with some details. (B)
Site	Small and simple, not enough contents on online therapy. (B)
Design	Simple, focused. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30-60 minutes chat session. (B)
Session time	No reference .(C)
Therapy length	No reference .(C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Individual, couples and family counseling. (A)
Contract	No reference .(C)
Fees	\$19.95 for Email exchange, \$290 for 30 days unlimited responses. \$50 for 30 minutes chat session, \$89 per hour. (A)
Ethics	No reference .(C)

Average: 19.6 NO

169. <http://empowermentnavigator.com>

Empowerment Navigator

Space	(28) High.
Setting	Email or private chat in the site. (B)
Description	FAQ's about online therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist +CV. (A)
Site	Simple with little contents. (B)
Design	Focused but not attractive. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30-60 seconds chat session. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference .(C)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic relationship. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Social worker. Individual therapy, self-esteem, aging, etc. (A)
Contract	Client information form .(B)
Fees	\$30 for 30 minutes chat, \$25 for Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 26.6 LOW

170. <http://www.lifeonline.co.za>
LifeLine

Space	(15) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	No reference .(C)
Site	Simple, not clear. (B)
Design	Focused, illustrative. (A)
Language	English (South Africa)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference .(C)
Therapy length	No reference .(C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Very therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email counseling. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Rape crisis centre. (A)
Contract	No reference .(C)
Fees	No reference .(C)
Ethics	No reference .(C)

Average: 17.6 NO

171. <http://www.4counselling.com.au>
4counselling

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email and private chatroom in the site. (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	No reference .(C)
Site	Long pages, not friendly. (C)
Design	Simple and warm. (A)
Language	English (Australia)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Email response within 12 hours. (A)
Therapy length	No reference .(C)
Action	(19) No.
Therapy	No reference .(C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	No reference .(C)
Contract	Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	AUD \$2 per minute chat session. AUD \$40 for Email response. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. Professional and ethical guidelines. (B)

Average: 19.6 NO

172. <http://www.gcocities.com/a2zcounselling/index.html>
a2z Counselling

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)

Therapists	14 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Practical. (A)
Design	Not personal. Dull typography. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Everything. (B)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	£8 for Email exchange or £40 for weekly rate. £15 for 30 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	Metanoia and BACP ethical standards. (A)

Average: 22 LOW

173. <http://www.therapywithsusan.com>
Becoming Your Best Self

Space	(31) High.
Setting	Email and video-conferencing. (A)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple, not enough contents. (B)
Design	Focused and graphical. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30-50 minutes chat session. (B)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	Therapy. (A)
Online style	Email and videoconferencing. (A)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Social worker. (B)
Contract	Clients' background information. (B)
Fees	\$1 per minute reading and writing Email session. \$50 for 30 minutes videoconferencing, \$80 for 50 minutes. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 26.6 LOW

174. <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/therapie.centre/center/>
Counseling Center Psychotherapy.

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Chat – ICQ. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no personal or professional information. (C)
Site	Too simple with no content. (C)
Design	Not designed. (C)
Language	French, German, English (France)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	25 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Constructive therapeutic relationship. (A)
Online style	Chat. (B)
Empathy	Telegraphic style. (C)
Approach	Client-centered therapy. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	Euro 25 for 25 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 19.6 NO

175. <http://www.drjudith.com>
Ask Dr. Judith!

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Some reflections on Email therapy. (B)
Therapists	1 famous therapist with no CV. (B)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply 'within a short time'. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	'The most helpful and cost-effective approach'. (A)
Online style	Email counseling. (C)
Empathy	Personal and warm style, very egocentric. (A)
Approach	Marriage therapy, sex therapy, anxiety, etc. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$90 for 60 minutes session (reading and writing), \$135 for 90 minutes, \$180 for two hours. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 21 LOW

176. <http://counselingservices.tripod.com>
Counseling Services

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and chat in the site or AOL. (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no CV. (C)
Site	Primitive with no contents. (C)
Design	Simple + photograph. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Minimum of 30 minutes. (B)
Session time	Scheduled time for chat. Email response within 36 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic relationship. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Family counseling. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Fees	\$1 per minute for chat session, \$15 for Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 22 LOW

177. <http://www.gcocities.com/Athens/Styx/9698/counseling.htm>
Golden Angel Counseling

Space	(13) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no CV. (C)
Site	Under construction. (C)
Design	Simple and illustrated. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30 + minutes chat. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Parent/child relationships, marital relationships, etc. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$19.95 for Email exchange or 30 minutes chat session, \$9.95 for additional Email or chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17 NO

178. <http://webcamcounselling.com>
International Counselling Services

Space	(17) Low.
Setting	Video-conferencing in NetMeeting. (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no CV. (C)
Site	Too simple with no content. (C)
Design	Focused and commercial. (B)
Language	English (Australia)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	60 minutes. (A)
Session time	Scheduled appointments. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(21) Low.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Video-conferencing. (A)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Social worker, relationship counselling, domestic violence, etc. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$80 Australian per hour. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 22 LOW

179. <http://www.net-therapist.com>
net-therapist

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical, not enough contents. (B)
Design	Simple, focused and nice. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 12 hours. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic relationships. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Social worker. Object relations, self-psychology and family systems theory. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$30 per two Email exchanges. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21 LOW

180. <http://www.heiko.com>

Phoenix Psychotherapy

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Chat and video (?). (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	4 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Too loaded. (C)
Design	Confusing. Difficult typography. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(20) Low.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Chat and video. (A)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$45 per half hour chat. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20.6 LOW

181. <http://www.sex-therapists.org.uk>

Sex Therapy

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Information about sex, not about therapy. (C)
Design	Confusing. (C)

Appendix

Language	English (UK)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Sex therapy. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	Complicated billings for short terms membership and Email exchanges. (B)
Ethics	Normal professional codes of ethics. (B)

Average: 13.3 NO

182. <http://www.onlinecounselling.co.uk>
Online Counselling from Kim Smith

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	FAQ's about online counselling. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist with no CV. (B)
Site	Practical, not much content. (B)
Design	Difficult typography, not focused. (C)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	It is 'a stepping stone to something more appropriate'. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal and warm style. (A)
Approach	Gestalt, NLP. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	£20 for Email exchange or chat session. (A)
Ethics	His private code of ethics and the English law. (A)

Average: 17.6 NO

183. <http://www.therapysession.net>
Therapy Session

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV without a family name. (B)
Site	Practical with little contents. (B)
Design	Focused and clear. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29)
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)

Appendix

Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Social worker. Solution focused therapy, crisis intervention. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$20 for Email exchange. \$35 for three Email exchanges. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 20.6 LOW

184. <http://www.getadvicethatworks.com>

Beverley Glazer

Space	(21) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Some FAQ's about online counseling. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Professional and practical. (A)
Design	Focused with no personal design. (B)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	1 or ongoing correspondence of 3. (A)
Action	(17) No.
Therapy	Direct advice. 'Not a replacement for professional psychological services.' (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Addiction counseling. RET. (A)
Contract	Disclaimer. (B)
Fees	\$25 for Email exchange. \$69 for 3. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 20.6 LOW

185. <http://home.earthlink.net/~jaril/online.htm>

Northlight Counseling

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Short comparison between online and f-2-f therapy. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical. (A)
Design	Focused and clear. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30-60 minutes chat session. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	Experimental procedure. (B)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Not a personal style. (C)
Approach	Social work. Individual, group and family counseling. (A)
Contract	Client-Counselor Consent Form. Counseling Questionnaire. (A)
Fees	\$45 for 30 minutes reading and writing Email session or Chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22 LOW

186. <http://www.counselingcentersofamerica.com>
ICCSO

Space	(13) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	Anonymous team. (C)
Site	Practical with almost no content. (C)
Design	Focused and simple. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	50 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal and commercial. (C)
Approach	Individual, family and corporate orientations. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$45 for Email exchange. \$100 for 50 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 21 LOW

187. <http://www.enhancedhealing.com/counseling.php>
Enhanced Healing through Music

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Text format. (?) (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical with no relevant content. (C)
Design	Simple and focused. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Approximately one hour. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Text format. (?) (C)
Empathy	Not personal. (C)
Approach	Music therapy. Transformational counseling. (A)
Contract	Contact page. (B)
Fees	\$45 for a session. (?) (B)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 19.3 NO

188. <http://www.breakthrucounseling.com/>
Breakthru Counseling Care

Space	(14) NO.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	8 therapists with no CV's. (B)

Appendix

Site	A combination of two sites, confusing. (C)
Design	Commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 1 business day. (B)
Therapy length	1-6 sessions. (B)
Action	(15) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Application form. (B)
Fees	\$40 for Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16.3 NO

189. <http://www.onlinecounselingnow.com>
Online Counseling Now

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical with not enough contents. (B)
Design	Focused and simple. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Minimum of 30 minutes for chat session. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal style. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$30 for 30 minutes chat, \$55 for 60 minutes. \$40 for 1,000 words of Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: (20) LOW

190. <http://www.onlinelifecoach.org/>
Online Life Coach

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple, not enough information. (C)
Design	Focused but not personal and not attractive. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	25-50 chat sessions. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy	No reference. (C)

Appendix

length	
Action	(31) High.
Therapy	Psycho-educational training. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Gay and lesbian, sexuality and relationship. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$25 for Email exchange, \$30 for 25 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 21.3 LOW

191. <http://shanemjones.com/mainpage.html>
Shane M. Jones

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	5 therapists + CV. (A)
Site	Practical but dull with no contents. (B)
Design	Focused but not personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(14) No.
Therapy	Not a complete alternative to face-to-face counseling. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Marriage and family therapy. Christian therapists. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 14.6 NO

192. <http://healthy-living-solutions.com/online.htm>
Healthy living solutions

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no CV. (A)
Site	1 page simple site. (C)
Design	Personal but primitive design. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	25-50 seconds chat. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (C)
Empathy	Third person. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Pre-session form, terms of service. (B)
Fees	\$30 for 25 minutes, \$75 for 50 minutes. (A)

Appendix

Ethics	No reference. (C)
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Average: 18.6 NO

193. <http://www.sophiasolutions.net/sevasworld/default.asp>
Sevas World

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Email in the site. (A)
Description	Not satisfying. (C)
Therapists	Anonymous women's team. (C)
Site	Not satisfying content. (C)
Design	Commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Question submitted: Monday through Friday. 24 hours of less response for immediate solutions, 48 hours response for customary solutions. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(17) No.
Therapy	Not a professional advice. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Superior online personal counselling. (B)
Contract	Counseling agreement. (A)
Fees	\$35 for immediate solution, \$25 for customary solutions. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 18.3 NO

194. <http://online-treatments.com> <http://www.drfranklin.com>
Online-Treatments, Dr. David Franklin

Space	(29) High.
Setting	Email, chat and video conferencing, not in the site. (B)
Description	Short but satisfying introduction. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical and useful. (A)
Design	Simple but not personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	15-60 minutes. (B)
Session time	Email response within 12-24 hours. Scheduled chat and video. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(32) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email, chat or video. (A)
Empathy	Not personal. (C)
Approach	Clinical social worker. Grief, traumatic stress, domestic violence. (A)
Contract	Agreement & questionnaire. (A)
Fees	\$10 for 15 minutes reading and writing Email response, chat or video. (A)
Ethics	The Texas Social Work Licensing laws and statutes. (A)

Average: 28.3 HIGH

195. <http://www.journeys.com.au/>
Journeys, online counselling, narrative counselling

Appendix

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple and practical. (A)
Design	Focused, personal and nice. (A)
Language	English (Australia)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Narrative counselling. (A)
Contract	A free questionnaire. (B)
Fees	\$25 AUD for Email response to the questionnaire, \$70 AUD for an Email counselling session of one hour minimum. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 19 NO

196. <http://www.mentalhealthhelpline.com>
Mental Health Helpline

Space	(15) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist with no professional CV. (B)
Site	Practical and loaded. (B)
Design	Not personal, commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	Clinical psychologist, cognitive-behavioral therapy. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$14.99 for Email exchange. \$9.99 for follow-up consultations. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 18 NO

197. <http://www.dowcounseling.com>
Hope for the journey

Space	(13) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 anonymous therapist. (C)
Site	1 page simple site. (C)
Design	Simple and focused. (B)
Language	English (US)

Appendix

Time	(20) No.
Session length	30 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Systemically oriented. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$30 for up to 2 printed pages and a response. \$67.5 for up to 6 printed pages and response. \$30 for 30 minutes chat. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. The code of ethics of Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists. (A)

Average: 20.3 LOW

198. <http://www.churchangel.com/counselor>
Personal Christian Counseling

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	List of advantages. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV with no family name. (B)
Site	Practical, not enough contents. (B)
Design	Simple, not personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 12 hours. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Not personal in second person. (B)
Approach	Relationships, marital infidelity, online addiction, etc. (A)
Contract	Counseling agreement. (?) (C)
Fees	\$45 per Email session. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 21.6 LOW

199. <http://www.find-a-therapist.com>
Find-a-Therapist (linked to 4eTherapy.com)

Space	(14) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Brief description in the other site. (B)
Therapists	A search machine for therapists and a link to another site. (C)
Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	Loaded and commercial. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) No.
Session length	30-60 minutes chat session. (B)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Action	(16) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Commercial. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$35 for Email exchange, \$50 for 30 minutes chat session, \$85 for 60 minutes. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16.6 NO

200. <http://www.timidez.com/english.htm>
CAT Online, Love and Shyness Clinic

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	2 therapists with no CV's. (C)
Site	Practical and easy. (A)
Design	Focused and simple. (A)
Language	English (UK), Spanish (Brazil)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Group and individual therapy. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Cognitive-behavioral therapy. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$60 for monthly membership. \$120 for membership + two individual 50 minute chat sessions. \$180 for four chat sessions and unlimited Email support. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 18 NO

201. <http://emotionalrescue.net>
Emotional Rescue

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple and primitive page. (C)
Design	Focused, primitive typography. (B)
Language	English (Ireland)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	30-60 minutes chat. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(27) Low.
Therapy	Online therapeutic service. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal style. (C)
Approach	Social worker. Relationship, work stress, family issues etc. (A)
Contract	Brief intake. (C)
Fees	\$20 for Email exchange. \$25 for 15 minute chat, \$40 for 30 minutes. (A)

Appendix

Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)
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Average: 20 LOW

202. <http://www.womentscounselingonline.com>
 Woment's Counseling Online – Internet Counseling Service

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	An international anonymous team. (C)
Site	Practical and detailed (except for online therapy information). (B)
Design	Simple, focused and designed. (A)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email therapy. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Women empower. Marriage & relationship, Christian counseling. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. Intake form. (B)
Fees	\$30 for Email exchange, \$100 for 4 Emails, \$250 for two weeks, \$300 for one month. (A)
Ethics	Privacy and confidentiality. (B)

Average: 18.3 NO

203. <http://www.nyccc.org/nyccc012.htm>
 On Line Counseling – New York Christian Counseling Center

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	2 therapists with no details. (C)
Site	One simple page. Confusing links. (C)
Design	Almost empty. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(14) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$25 for Email exchange, \$40 for 3 Emails and \$65 for 5 Emails. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 12.6 NO

204. <http://www.e-psychonline.com/ecounseling.html>
 e-Psychonline

Appendix

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical, some features do not work. (B)
Design	Focused but not personal. (B)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30-60 minute chat. (B)
Session time	Email response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	Psychotherapy services but do not replace the need for in person psychotherapy. (B)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Assessment form. Disclaimer. (B)
Fees	£25 for Email exchange, £20 for additional Email. £45 for 30 minute chat session, £80 for 60 minute chat. (A)
Ethics	The ethical and professional guidelines of the ABA, BPA, NBCC and BACP. (A)

Average: 21 LOW

205. <http://www.letstalkaboutitonline.com>

Space	(18) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Short comprehensive introduction. (A)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Confusing, not enough information. (B)
Design	Focused but not personal. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	30 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	Effective psychotherapy. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Questionnaire. (B)
Fees	\$9.99 membership + \$5 for question, \$25 for Email dialogue, \$65 for 30 minutes chat session, \$100 for 60 minute group session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22.3 LOW

206. <http://www.beautifulnewzealand.com/help.htm>
HelpUCounselling

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Satisfying. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)

Appendix

Site	Simple and practical. (A)
Design	Focused with primitive design. (B)
Language	English (New Zealand)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Catharsis + cognitive behavioural therapy. (A)
Contract	A tailored written agreement. Terms of service. (A)
Fees	\$25 for 30 minutes Email exchange or chat session. \$45 for 60 minutes. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. Ethical guidelines of the New Zealand Counseling Association. (A)

Average: 21.6 LOW

207. <http://www.alittlebitoftherapy.com>
Kim Stanton, E-Therapy for Today's Family

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Too short introduction. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Simple and practical, not enough information. (B)
Design	Focused and simple. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	45 minute chat. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	'online counseling is not the be all and end all for therapy. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Marriage and family relationship. (A)
Contract	Questionnaire. (B)
Fees	\$40 per session (45 minute chat or Email exchange). (A)
Ethics	HIPAA standards. (A)

Average: 21.3 LOW

208. <http://accessnorth.net.ic>
CILNM Internet Community

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email, chat and videophone sessions. (B)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	No reference. (C)
Site	Primitive, problematic links. (C)
Design	No design. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	15 minutes fragments chat session. (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Effective online therapy. (A)
Online style	Email, chat and video. (A)
Empathy	Not personal. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Terms of use. (B)
Fees	\$13.71 per 15 minutes Web Cam Therapy or a chat session. \$35 per Email exchange, \$150 for one month unlimited Emails. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 21.3 LOW

209. <http://drjulicann.com>

Allender, Lecensed Psychologist, Dr. Julie Ann Allender

Space	(21) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	One page for online therapy. (B)
Design	Personal, focused and amusing. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email response within 24-72 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Individual and group therapy. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. (B)
Fees	\$1.5 per minute reading and writing Email session. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 22.3 LOW

210. <http://www.e-therapy.us>

E-Therapy, Kerry L Morrison

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	FAQ's about e-therapy. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical. Not enough contents. (B)
Design	Too long pages. (B)
Language	English (US)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	60 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(23) Low
Therapy	Not a substitute for 'real, traditional, face to face therapy of counseling. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Depression, anxiety, abuse, grief, etc. (A)
Contract	Disclaimer. (B)
Fees	\$60 for 60 minute chat session, \$30 for Email package. (A)

Appendix

Ethics	No reference. (C)
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Average: 22.3 LOW

211. <http://www.innerchildhealing.com>
Inner Child Healing

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Video conferencing. (B)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	E-therapy is a section in the site, with no content. (C)
Design	Focused and pleasant. (A)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Exactly the right therapy. (A)
Online style	Video conferencing. (A)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Family system theory, inner child work. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22 LOW

212. <http://www.net-therapy.com>
net-therapy

Space	(30) High.
Setting	Secure chat in the site and Email. (B)
Description	Comprehensive description. (A)
Therapists	3 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Practical and comprehensive. (A)
Design	Simple, focused and nice. (A)
Language	English (Australia)
Time	(32) High.
Session length	60 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	Scheduled appointments. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(34) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Chat and Email. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	A formal counseling agreement. Legal disclaimer. Registration form. (A)
Fees	\$40 AUD per Email exchange. \$200 AUD per month, with a maximum of 4 Email exchanges per week. \$100 AUD per 60 minute chat session. (A)
Ethics	ACA and CAPA codes of ethics. (A)

Average: 32 HIGH

213. <http://www.e-therapist.us>
e-THERAPIST

Appendix

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Chat and Email. (C)
Description	Not comprehensive. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Slow, confusing but detailed. (B)
Design	Difficult typography and language. (B)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	A minimum of one hour chat. (B)
Session time	Email response within 36 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic but not equal to face to face psychotherapy. (B)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Confusion between personal style and third person. (B)
Approach	Eclectic behavioural approach. (A)
Contract	Agreement for online psychotherapy services. (A)
Fees	\$35 for Email exchange or 60 minute chat. \$100 for 3. Express advice service at \$40 per Email exchange. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22 LOW

214. <http://www.cathylees.com>
Cathy Lees Counselling

Space	(27) Low.
Setting	Email, and chat in the site. (B)
Description	Short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical and useful. (A)
Design	Very personal with difficult typography. (B)
Language	English (UK)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30-60 minute chat. (B)
Session time	Email response within 48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(33) High.
Therapy	Counselling. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal and warm style. (A)
Approach	Disability, relationship, depression and abuse. (A)
Contract	Informed consent. (B)
Fees	£18 for Email response. £16 for 30 minutes chat session. (A)
Ethics	BACP guidelines for online counselling and psychotherapy. (A)

Average: 26.6 LOW

215. <http://lifesspecialvalues.com>
LifesSpecialValues

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	FAQ's about online counseling. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist with some details. (B)
Site	Online counselling is on of the products in the site. (C)
Design	One page. Technical. Links do not work. (C)
Language	English (US)

Appendix

Time	(16) No.
Session length	30 minutes Email session. (?) (B)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Counseling. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Technical. (C)
Approach	Individual, family and couples therapy. (?) (B)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$35 per Email session of 30 minutes. (?) (B)
Ethics	Ethical standards. (?) (C)

Average: 18 NO

216. http://www.aut.ac.nz/studentj_services/counselling/online_counselling.shtml
 AUT (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) student services – Online Counselling

Space	(17) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Detailed but not enough about the services. (B)
Therapists	4 therapists + unknown interns. (short CV's). (B)
Site	One page for online therapy + links. (B)
Design	Simple, difficult typography. (C)
Language	English (New Zealand)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Limited chat sessions or by appointment. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	Relatively new and as such is less well-researched. (B)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	Terms and conditions. Welcome Form. (B)
Fees	Free. (B)
Ethics	Confidentiality, the Privacy Act 1993. NZAC and NZAP code of ethics. (A)

Average: 19 NO

217. <http://www.etherapy.com.au>
 etherapy – Therapy at your fingertips

Space	(26) Low
Setting	Email and secure chat. (B)
Description	Partial description. (B)
Therapists	19 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Loaded but practical. (B)
Design	Invested but not personal. (B)
Language	English (Australia)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	60 minutes chat. (A)
Session time	Scheduled + SMS. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)

Appendix

Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	A form. Privacy statement. (C)
Fees	Average cost: \$60 for Email session, \$200 for 5 Email sessions. \$130 for 1 hour chat session, \$410 for 4 sessions. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 26.6 LOW

218. christiancounselling.on.ca
Christian Counseling / Counselling Inner Healing

Space	(24) Low.
Setting	Email, chat and video. (B)
Description	Technical explanations. (B)
Therapists	2 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	1 page in the site. (C)
Design	Simple and formal. (C)
Language	English (Canada)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	50 minutes chat or video. (A)
Session time	Scheduled on Thursdays. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(26) Low.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email, chat and video therapy. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Clinical pastoral counselling. Marital and family work. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$20 for 15 minutes Email, \$35 for 30 minutes, \$55 for 50 minutes. \$55 for 50 minutes chat or video. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 26 LOW

219. <http://www.dnafoundation.com/sub01/empsy/status.htm>
Dr. William Theaux - eMail Psychotherapy

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	No information. (C)
Site	One simple page + confusing links. (C)
Design	Too simple. (C)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(15) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Psychoanalytic background. (B)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$30 per Email session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 13 NO

Appendix

220. <http://www.ny-psychotherapy.com/linkd.html>
New York Psychotherapy Collective

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	No personal information. (C)
Site	On page. (C)
Design	Formal. (C)
Language	English (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(12) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 12 NO

221. <http://www.cosmoedu.net/therapy.html>
Prof. Dr. Eric de Marr, Cosmopolitan University

Space	(14) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No reference. Link to irrelevant essay. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + some details. (B)
Site	1 page site. (C)
Design	No design. (C)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Reply within 36 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	'Not substitute for personal advice from a psychologist, physician or psychiatrist.' (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Rogerian. (B)
Contract	Disclaimer. (A)
Fees	\$25 per Email advice. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 16 NO

222. http://www.nvo.com/psych_heop/onlinepsychotherapy
Dr. Paul Hannig - PsychotherapyHELP

Space	(23) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Comprehensive introduction. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Detailed and useful. (A)

Appendix

Design	Personal but too loaded. (B)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30 or 60 minutes reading and writing. (B)
Session time	Email reply within 24 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Therapy. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	No personal style. (C)
Approach	Behavioural. (A)
Contract	A screening tool, intake and confidentiality forms. (A)
Fees	\$50 per 30 minutes reading and writing. (A)
Ethics	Guidelines of The California Board of Behavioral Sciences. (A)

Average: 23.6 LOW

223. <http://www.sexualtherapy.com/index.htm>

Institute for Marital and Sexual Therapy – Dr. Mark G. Wiesner

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical. (A)
Design	Simple but not personal. (B)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 24-72 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Informational in nature. (B)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Sex therapy. (A)
Contract	Email question form. (B)
Fees	\$50 per valid question. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 19 NO

224. <http://www.hotkey.net.au/~bobrich/psych/index1.html>

Dr. Bob Rich – Help Against Anxiety, Depression and Other Emotional or Interpersonal Problems

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Encrypted Email. (C)
Description	Not sufficient. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + details. (A)
Site	Loaded with interesting contents. (B)
Design	Confusing. (C)
Language	English. (Australia)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)

Appendix

Action	(25) Low.
Therapy	'Internet counseling has its unique advantages'. (B)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Narrative? (B)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$40 per message from the therapist. (A)
Ethics	ACA Ethical Standards for Internet On-Line Counseling. (A)

Average: 17.6 NO

225. <http://www.bridgecounseling.com>
Bridge Counseling and Therapy Center

Space	(12) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 online therapist with no credentials. (C)
Site	Simple with no contents. (C)
Design	Simple and formal. (C)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(28) High.
Session length	45 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	Email reply once a day 4 days a week. (A)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(29) High.
Therapy	Therapy. (A)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Various. (B)
Contract	Agreement. Patient information form. (A)
Fees	\$90 for chat session, \$30 per Email, \$130 per month. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 23 LOW

226. <http://gloria-brame.com/therapy>
Counseling with Gloria

Space	(18) No.
Setting	No reference. (C)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	No contents concerning online therapy. (C)
Design	Personal and clear. (A)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	'Phone/internet counseling has proven enormously successful for my clients.' (A)
Online style	No reference. (C)
Empathy	Personal but commercial. (B)
Approach	Sex therapy. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.3 NO

227. <http://www.theseelfesteem.com>
The Self Esteem Institute

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	No reference. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Useful but no contents concerning online therapy. (B)
Design	Personal and easy to use. (A)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(12) NO.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(18) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal and commercial. (B)
Approach	Self esteem. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$75 for 20 minutes, \$100 for 30 minutes, \$150 for 45 minutes. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 16.3 NO

228. <http://www.elifeline.co.nz>
LifeLine Email Counselling

Space	(25) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Short but accurate. (A)
Therapists	Anonymous. This is a help line. (A)
Site	Simple and useful. (A)
Design	Simple. (B)
Language	English. (New Zealand)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	Email. (C)
Session time	Email reply within 3 days. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	No reference. (C)
Contract	Short disclaimer. (B)
Fees	Free. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 19 NO

229. <http://www.queendom.com/portls/advice.html>
Queendom

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)

Appendix

Description	No description. Open Email answers. (B)
Therapists	A counseling network of 9 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	A referral site, no contents concerning online therapy. (C)
Design	Simple and useful personal pages. (B)
Language	English. (Canada)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(16) No.
Therapy	No reference. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	No reference. (C)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 15.6 NO

230. <http://www.onlinecounseling.50megs.com/onlinecounseling.html>
Dr. Castillo

Space	(20) Low.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Short introduction. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Confusing, some links does not work. (C)
Design	Simple and not personal. (C)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(12) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(21) Low.
Therapy	'Online counseling is not psychotherapy'. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Almost personal. (B)
Approach	Relational. (A)
Contract	Client consent form, client information form. (B)
Fees	\$30 per email exchange. \$75 per chat session. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 17.6 NO

231. <http://www.ecounseling.com>
eCounseling

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	Short chat and eMail benefits. (B)
Therapists	A list of three counsellors, limited personal information. (B)
Site	Commercial with no contents. (C)
Design	Nice but commercial and not personal. (C)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	50 minutes chat session. (A)

Appendix

Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Not a substitute for a professional consultation. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Various. (A)
Contract	User Agreement / Terms and Conditions. (A)
Fees	\$40-65 per Email, \$65 per chat. (A)
Ethics	Codes of ISMHO, nbcc, and APA. (A)

Average: 19.3 NO

232. <http://lindasonlinetherapy.com>

Linda's On-Line Therapy

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Too short introduction. (B)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Useful and practical. (A)
Design	Personal and illustrated. (A)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(16) No.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Response within 24-48 hours. (B)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(22) Low.
Therapy	Should not replace face-to-face therapy. (C)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Clinical social worker. (A)
Contract	Intake form, disclaimer. (B)
Fees	\$25 per Email exchange, \$45 per two Emails, \$60 per three Emails. (A)
Ethics	Confidentiality. (B)

Average: 20 LOW

233. <http://www.millsconsulting.com>

MILLS CONSULTING – Attention Deficit in Adults

Space	(32) High.
Setting	Video conferencing. (A)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical + relevant information. (A)
Design	Simple and personal. (A)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	50 minutes. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(23) Low.
Therapy	Not as complete as face-to-face services. (C)
Online style	Video Conferencing. (A)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	ADHD. (A)

Appendix

Contract	Telemedicine informed consent form. Practice Policies. (B)
Fees	\$25 per 25 minutes. \$120 per 50 minutes. (A)
Ethics	HIPPA notice of privacy practices. (A)

Average: 25 LOW

234. <http://linepsy.tripod.com>

Space	(16) No.
Setting	Email. (C)
Description	Personal description of online therapy. (A)
Therapists	1 therapist, self educated with no CV. (C)
Site	Confusing. (C)
Design	Confusing, to many colours and fonts. (C)
Language	English and French. (Canada)
Time	(24) Low.
Session length	No reference. (C)
Session time	Weekly. (B)
Therapy length	6-12 months. (A)
Action	(28) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic, sometimes better than face-to-face. (A)
Online style	Email. (C)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Neo Freudian discipline. Psychoanalysis. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$70 per one week Email consultation (3 emails and 3 replies). \$2400 per year, \$1320 per 6 months. (A)
Ethics	No reference. (C)

Average: 22.6 LOW

235. <http://www.talksolutions.net/home.htm>

TALKSOLUTIONS

Space	(22) Low.
Setting	Email, chat and videoconferencing. (A)
Description	FAQ's about online counseling. (B)
Therapists	2 therapists + CV's. (A)
Site	Practical and useful. (A)
Design	Simple and nice. (A)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	30 minutes Email reading. 45-50 minutes chat or video conferencing session. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(30) High.
Therapy	Therapeutic. (A)
Online style	Email, chat and video conferencing. (A)
Empathy	Formal. (C)
Approach	Client-centred. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$30 per Email. \$60 per chat or video conferencing session. (A)
Ethics	Codes of ethics of the ACA and ISMHO. (A)

Average: 24 LOW

236. <http://www.mcstalk.com>

MCS talk

Space	(19) No.
Setting	Email and chat. (C)
Description	No description. (C)
Therapists	1 therapist + CV. (A)
Site	Practical with no contents. (B)
Design	Simple and personal. (A)
Language	English. (US)
Time	(20) Low.
Session length	50 minutes chat session. (A)
Session time	No reference. (C)
Therapy length	No reference. (C)
Action	(24) Low.
Therapy	'Online counseling is NOT as effective as traditional therapy'. (C)
Online style	Email and chat. (B)
Empathy	Personal style. (A)
Approach	Relationship counseling. (A)
Contract	No reference. (C)
Fees	\$35 per Email exchange, 3 for \$90, \$65 per chat session. (A)
Ethics	Codes of ACA and nbcc. (A)

Average: