

A Day in the Life of an Online Therapist

I work entirely online from my private practice using encrypted email counselling. I work from a Humanistic theoretical foundation and specialise in working with individuals who are experiencing unhappiness in their relationships or are feeling generally stuck. As far as my clients go, I tend to wait ages for one to come along and then, like London taxis, three or four turn up at the same time.



HELEN GLATT

I am more or less glued to my laptop and my work begins the moment I receive a counselling email. If it's a new enquiry, I tend to trust my gut instinct in terms of whether I feel I'd be useful to the client and if I feel we'd be able to form a working relationship. Recently, I received an email from someone I felt I wouldn't be comfortable working with, so I crafted a response which was designed to help her find more appropriate support. But if the enquiry is from someone I feel is likely to benefit from online therapy, I'll read and re-read the email, then get on with my day, thinking about and processing what I've read. I always respond back by creating a Word document, then responding within the client's text, in a new colour. The client then responds back to me in yet another colour and our relationship develops and grows along with our document.


Since launching my online practice three years ago, I've worked with all kinds of people, both men and women, some wishing they were in relationships, some wishing they weren't ... and their problems have ranged from feeling upset about their partner's behaviour, to feeling anxious they won't complete their PhD. I don't know if there is a correlation between my website content and design and the kinds of clients I hear from, but generally speaking, I find that the people who find me are people I feel happy to work with.

The best piece of advice I've ever had was to wait 24 hours before pressing 'send'. I'm naturally quite an impatient person with a drive to do everything NOW, plus I'm very aware that my clients is awaiting my response, so I've had to work hard to learn to restrain myself and not rush to 'please'. Nevertheless, I do note down my initial

responses as I read through the client's material and sometimes feel retrospectively that I was very much 'with' the client, but sometimes realise I really wasn't at all.

The absolute joy of working online (for me) is to have the time to think. I find myself thinking about my clients' stories, words and patterns throughout the day and often as I'm falling asleep (am I a bit obsessed?) I also really love working with words. In online work it's possible to 'interrupt' without affecting the flow and encourage the client to have another look at what they've written, notice and wonder about their use of vocabulary, invite them to think about how they've responded or not responded and share my own reactions and feelings about their material as a way of inviting deeper exploration. I really encourage my clients to 'disagree' with me, ie. 'no NO...I didn't feel at all upset/angry/disappointed... I was relieved', because this indicates to me that my client is reaching and expressing their real feelings and I also encourage humour, shorthand and the use of images and metaphors. 'Yes...yes! that's exactly it! I didn't bury those feelings....I hid them in the back of my wardrobe'.

I have clients who have had six or seven sessions with me who then vanish into the 'black hole', only to return sometimes months and months later asking for more sessions. Others disappear after their first session, never to return. I've learnt not to take it personally or worry about 'was it something I said?' My greatest sense of achievement was when a client, who'd suffered a miscarriage then failed to conceive again for over 18 months, became pregnant after her second counselling session. My supervisor and I decided to take full credit for that fantastic result!



Offload online counselling

Helen Glatt Dip. Couns. MBACP

Welcome

What is online counselling?

About Helen Glatt

Try online counselling?

Terms of service

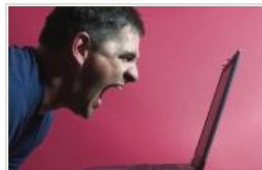
Safeguards

Sample Registration

Welcome

Offload is the online counselling practice of Helen Glatt (Dip. Couns. MBACP) a qualified face to face and online counsellor and member of the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP therapists directory)

If you're feeling depressed, insecure or generally stuck or you're having problems in your relationships, online counselling can help you explore your feelings and thoughts from the comfort and privacy of your own space. Using encrypted emails, I'll join forces with you to look at the areas that are troubling you and support and encourage you to find new ways of reflecting on and resolving your issues.



Supervision for me is with a group of peers. Three of us get together every fortnight on Skype and discuss our various clients and support each other's work after first emailing some background material to the group. I often think about how much support and care our clients are actually receiving, if they only knew it, having not only their counsellor on the case, but their supervisor and their supervisor... and I wonder how aware they are of this?

Other aspects of my online counselling day include general admin (keeping secure records of all my client work and supervision) maintaining my website and updating any advertising I have, as well as making sure my insurance, data protection status, BACP membership etc. are all up to date. I am also on the ACTO (Association of Counselling and Therapy Online) Executive Committee, where I

hold the Administration Officer post and help with Membership processing. I'm very enthusiastic about online counselling and do my best to try to widen access to and spread the word about this creative and engaging therapeutic activity.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Helen Glatt is a BACP integrative, humanistic counsellor with additional training in online counselling, launching her private online practice at www.offload-onlinecounselling.co.uk in 2008. She is an Executive Committee member of ACTO, the Association for Counselling and Therapy Online. Helen lives in North London with her partner, daughter and dogs.