

Rationale for these guidelines

These guidelines are for the personal protection of both client and UL Éist team memberⁱ, by providing instructions for how to professionally interact onlineⁱⁱ/on the phone. This type of online etiquette is termed “netiquette”.

Session terms

- Both online and phone sessions offer the provision of psychoeducational support, rather than therapy.
- The UL Éist team will engage in their work throughout their normal working hours during the week.
- All session times refer to Greenwich Mean-Time (GMT).
- Due to cost, international calls are not possible, but Skype for Business is available in both audio and visual formats.
- Prior to setting you up with a team member, a next of kin or trusted contact person must be named and their telephone contact number provided in the registration form sent to you. UL Éist will only use that contact should you (the client) be considered at risk by a team member. We will always talk to you prior to contacting your named person.
- You do not have to agree to phone, email, or online support. You are welcome to decline this support. However, should you engage in such support you are demonstrating that you have agreed to do so. Should you change your mind about wanting to work in such a way, please talk to your assigned team member about this. If you feel you cannot do that, please email counselling@ul.ie to inform us that you no longer wish to engage in support this way.
- Phone and online support requires you to use your words. This is more important than in face-to-face support because we cannot read your emotions over the phone, unless you communicate it to us. This is a condition of our support.

Systems employed

Éist can engage in online support via: UL Skype for Business; Phone; and Email. These are each outlined below.

Skype for Business

UL Éist uses Skype for Business to engage students in online visual support. This will take place between you and the team member via both party's UL email account only. Please keep an eye on your UL emails and UL Microsoft calendar, as the Éist team member will set up the sessions by inviting you to click on a Skype for Business link via email.

Phone

If you do not have a way of engaging with online support or if you feel it doesn't suit you, you are welcome to engage in support over the phone. If you are an international student or outside of Ireland, it is possible for you to choose Skype for Business audio only as your medium for support.

Email

If neither online or phone mediums suits you or you cannot find a confidential space, email might be a preferred option for you. You can send an email before the set time. One of our team members will still engage with you at the pre-established time, for the same period of time as a typical support session.

Online/phone/email netiquette

When engaging in online and phone support, both parties (client and team member) should:

- Treat the session the same as you would a face to face session
- Be ready for the session
- Be up, dressed, and alert
- Be in a confidential and quiet space
- If using camera, sit facing the camera
- Assume you can be seen and heard by one another prior to knowing for sure (i.e., do not talk to or about other people whilst the session is connecting)
- Keep pets and children out of the room
- Ensure that they are not interrupted by friends/family
- Have practiced use of online system prior to the session
- Agree a back-up plan in case online system fails (e.g., team member will immediately phone/email client)
- Keep alternative modes of contact on mute throughout the session
- Contract and set the boundaries around the support (e.g., length of sessions, number of sessions, DNA policy)

Friending/Following/Sharing

Although you may be in contact with the Éist team member in an online capacity, this is not a typical online relationship. Team members do not accept friend requests or follow requests for personal social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). You are asked not to share the team member's online contact with anyone else. Likewise, no team member will request your friendship on such accounts nor share details of your online contact with anyone else outside of the centralised counselling database.

Recording of sessions

For the sake of confidentiality, no online or phone support sessions should be electronically recorded by either party. Failure to comply with this will lead the service to reconsider the offer of support.

ⁱ Team member refers to any member of the UL Éist counselling team, including intern team members, qualified team members, Assistant Psychologists, and Clinical Psychologists. Emails and phone calls from the administrator should also be treated with confidentiality and netiquette, as outlined above.

ⁱⁱ Online psychoeducational support refers to any form of support occurring over the internet, including email, Skype for Business (including audio only and audio-visual), or messaging via Skype for Business