



# The Knowns and Unknowns of Online Group Psychotherapy: Responding to the Pandemic

Dr Katrina Andrews

University of the  
Sunshine Coast

# About Me

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Lecturer in Counselling  
Moreton Bay Campus UniSC  
BCouns  
BPsychScience/Couns

Humanistic Framework  
Person-Centred Foundations  
Advanced Frameworks

[KAndrews1@usc.edu.au](mailto:KAndrews1@usc.edu.au)



# By the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

## Apply


- Apply best-practice guidelines for online group therapy that can be referred to if needing to deliver online group therapy

## Adjust

- Adjust your verbal and non-verbal communication skills in the online space

## Recognise

- Recognise the importance of increasing therapeutic presence and cohesion when facilitating online group therapy

A person with short brown hair, wearing a dark jacket, is sitting on a wooden bench. They are seen from behind, looking out over a scenic landscape that includes a lake and distant mountains. Their right arm is raised, with their hand open, as if they are agreeing with something. The image is partially obscured by a white curved shape on the right side.

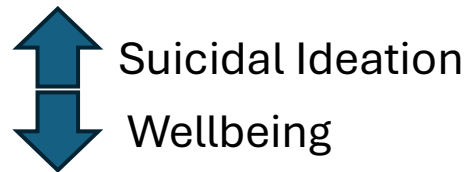
# Raise your hand if you agree with the following statements...

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- ✓ My university training in facilitating therapy groups prepared me well when facilitating therapy groups online
- ✓ Online therapy groups can never replace in-person therapy groups
- ✓ I know how to build group cohesion when facilitating groups online




# The Problem...



 Therapy




Rapid Pivot to Online  Guidelines

Members 

Therapists 

# The Research...

- Systematic Review
- Published and Grey Literature
- Keywords: Online, Group, Therapy, Psychotherapy, Counselling, Counseling
- 2024 papers  33 papers

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Published in English 2012-2022	Support Education/Teaching Task



# The Findings...



# T1: Online In-Person

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## **Advantages**

Reduced Stigma  
Convenient and Accessible  
Increased participation  
options  
Increased Universality  
Facial Expressions  
Attendance by populations  
usually excluded  
Completion rates improved

## **Disadvantages**

Reduced Group Presence &  
Connection  
Anxiety provoking  
Frustrating  
Artificial  
More demanding and  
fatiguing  
Less competent  
Non-verbals are hindered



# T2: Pre-Group Planning

Scheduling

Screening

Pre-Group Preparation

Online Group Leadership

Online Group Rules



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## T3: Group Processes

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Therapeutic  
Presence

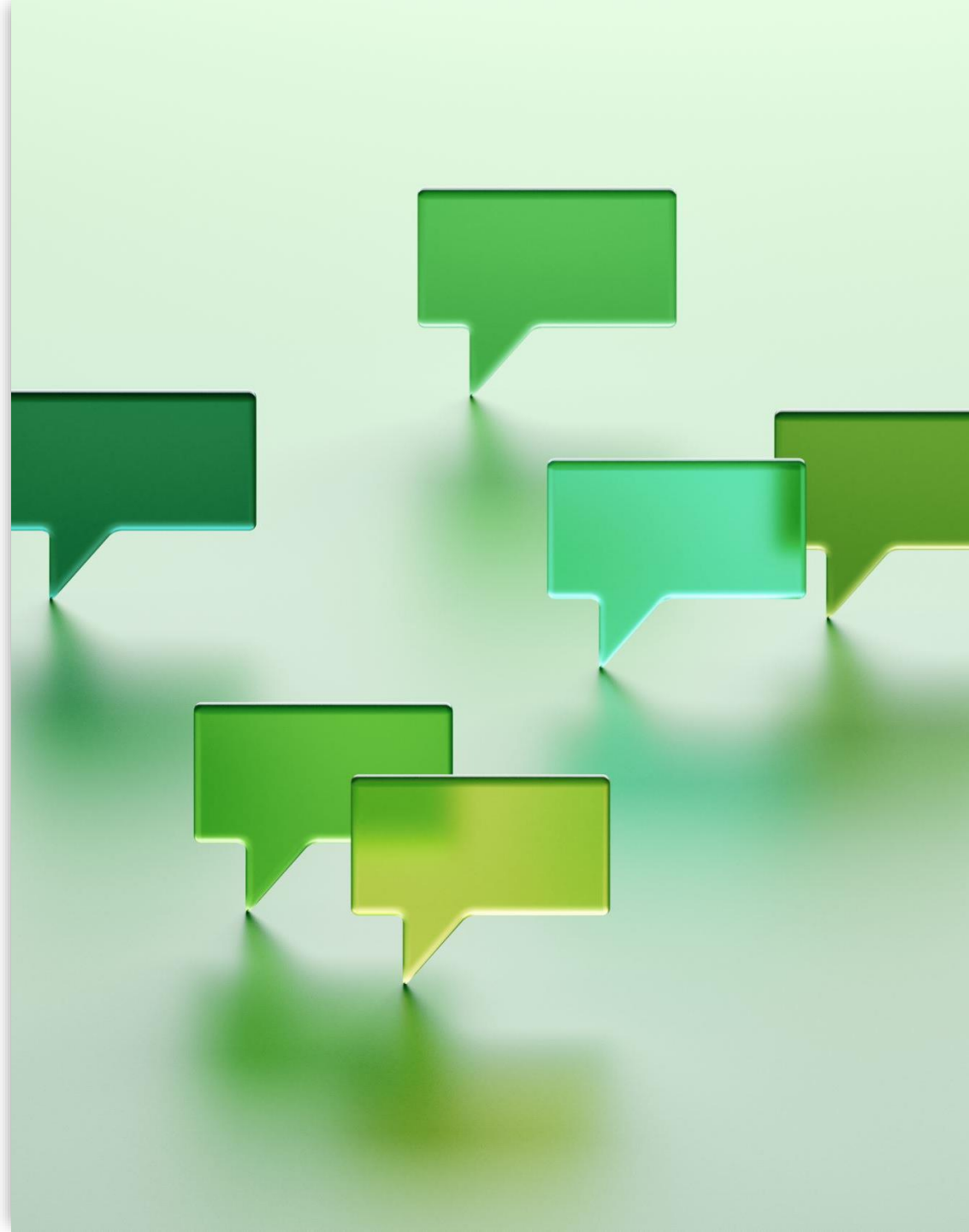
Group Cohesion

Holding Environment

Member Dynamics

# T4: Micro-Skills

Verbal Communication  
Non-Verbal Communication







## T5: Ethics

Safety

Boundary  
Breakdowns

Confidentiality



# T6: Technology

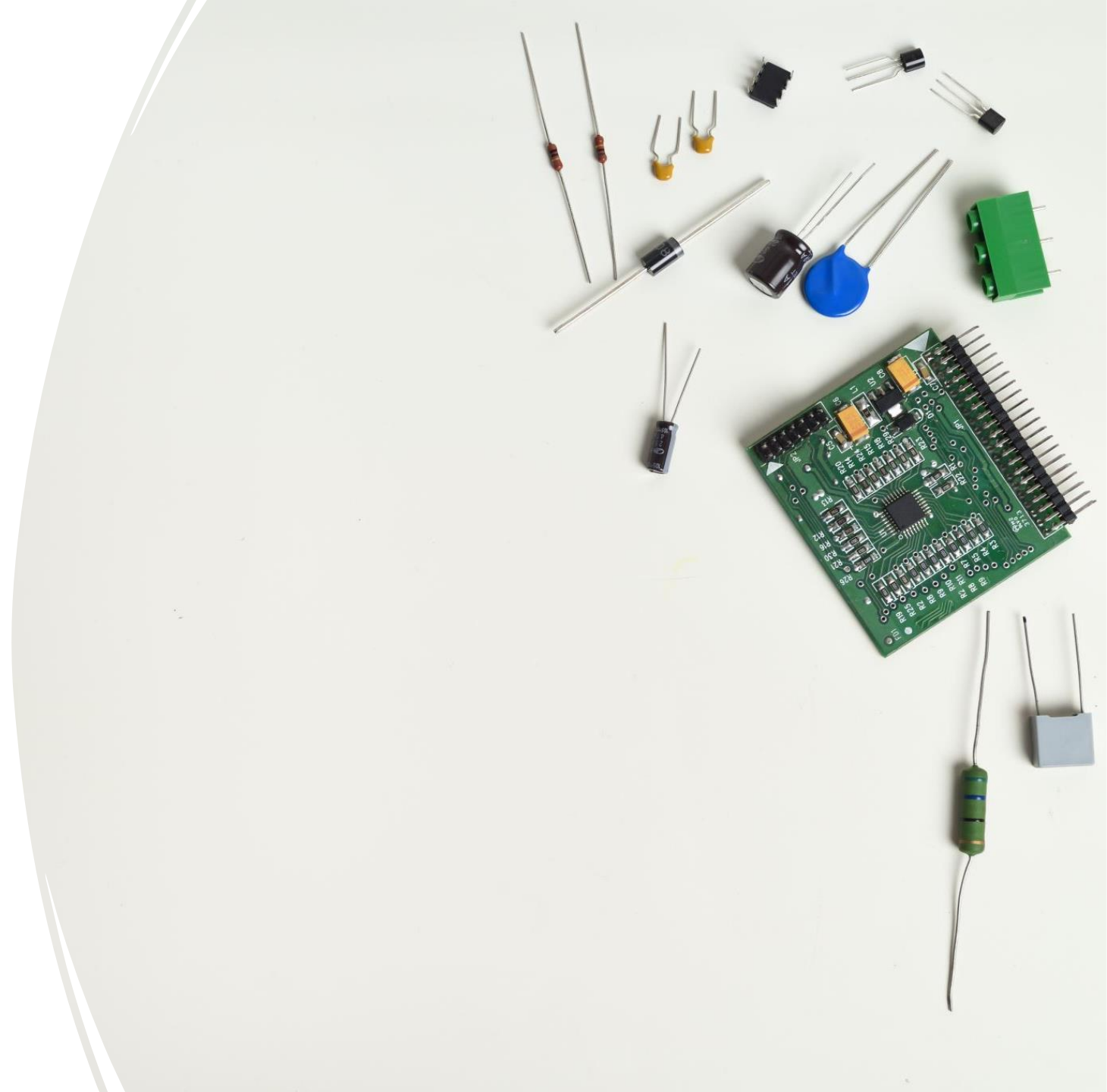
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Software

Hardware

Technical Issues

Chat Function



# T7: Unique to Online

Role Confusion

Embodied Presence

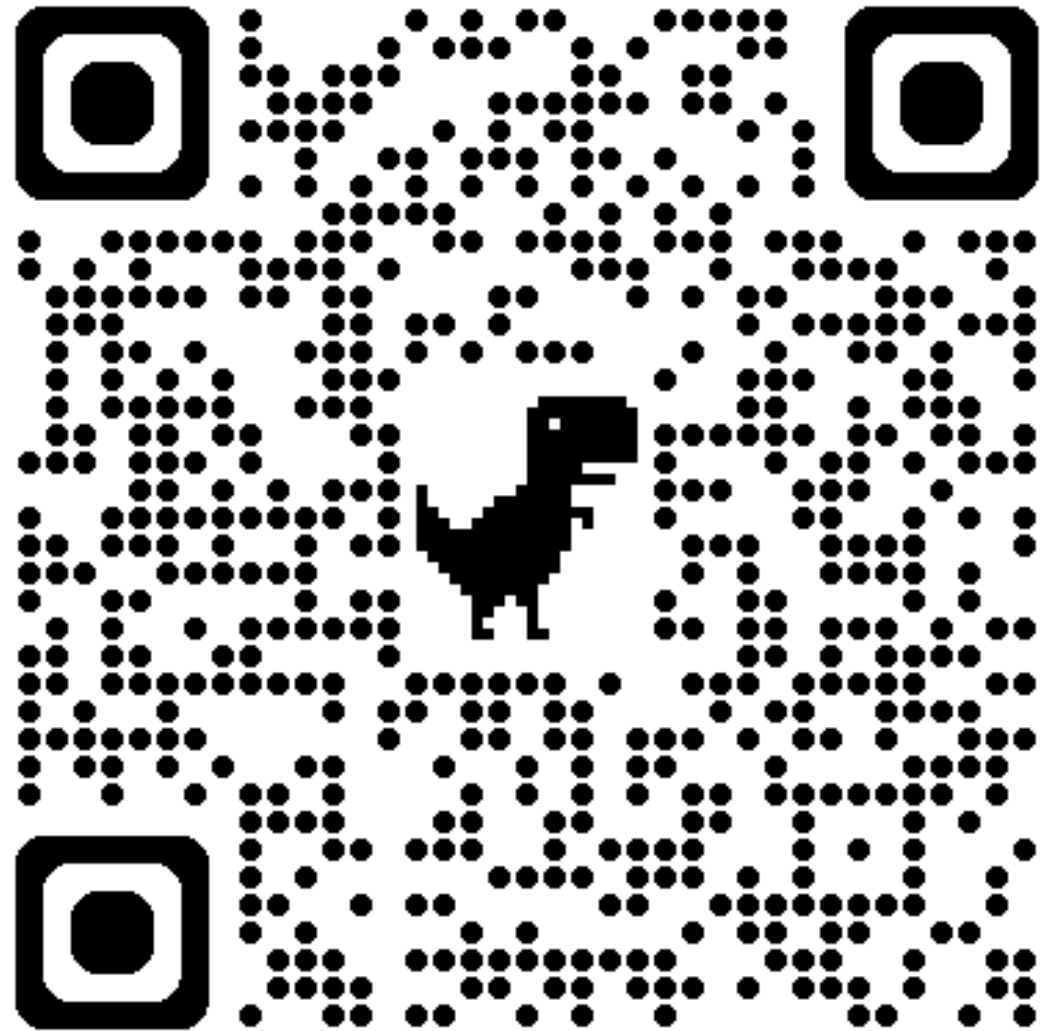
Members' Physical Space

Self/Others on Screen

Self-Care



If  
interested....





Questions



# Take Homes.....

**One Take Away that you will adopt when  
next online...**

**KAndrews1@usc.edu.au**