



INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGICAL OR OUTDOOR SERVICES

Psychotherapy may be delivered by telephone or videoconferencing (“telepsychological services,” “telepsychology,” or “teletherapy”). Telepsychology may be useful or necessary when either a therapist or client cannot participate in face-to-face sessions because of issues related to transportation, health and safety, and/or mobility. Additionally, teletherapy is a vital resource for people without equivalent local resources. However, there are some risks and limitations specific to teletherapy. This document is intended to outline potential risks as well as general guidelines. Please read the following carefully so that you can provide fully informed consent for engaging in telepsychological services.

Prior to beginning telepsychological services, I and my therapist discussed and agreed to the following:

- It is important to be in a quiet, private space that is free of interruptions and distractions (including cell phone or other devices) during the session. I will put a sign on the door of the room I am in asking not to be disturbed.
- We need a back-up plan (e.g., phone number(s) where each of us can be reached) to restart the session or to reschedule it, in case technical problems cause us to be disconnected.
- It is important for my therapist to know my physical location during the tele-appointment, in case an emergency arises. I will not participate in teletherapy while driving.
- During times with an unusually high volume of internet and phone traffic, it is possible for internet connections to become unstable, phone calls not to go through, or for text messages to be delayed.
- The same confidentiality provisions apply for telepsychology as for in-person services. It is important to use a secure internet connection rather than public/free Wi-Fi, for confidentiality.
- Even though my therapist may use state of the art encryption methods, firewalls, and/or back-up systems to help secure our communication, there is a risk that the electronic or telephone communications may be compromised, unsecured, and/or accessed by an unintended third-party. There is never a 100% guarantee that information will remain confidential when transmitted electronically.
- We agree to use a secure, encrypted video-conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, VSee) for our virtual sessions, with unencrypted and less secure options (e.g. Skype) used only in the event of emergency if no other options are available. Sometimes a blend of approaches may be necessary, such as video connection via video-conferencing and audio connection via phone.
- It is important to plug in whatever device is being used for telepsychology services, because videoconferencing rapidly drains batteries, resulting in disconnection.
- It is possible that progress in teletherapy may be somewhat slower because nonverbal communication, eye contact, and audio quality may be of lower quality than an in-person session. It is also possible that teletherapy may provide certain advantages (such as being able to do something at home during the session) that are not possible with in-person sessions.
- If at any time it is my therapist's professional opinion that teletherapy is insufficient to meet my needs, they can stop offering teletherapy sessions and ask that we either meet in person or will help me locate other, more suitable services.
- It is important to be on time. If either of us needs to cancel or change your tele-appointment, we will notify each other in advance by phone or text.
- If another person is present during the teletherapy session, I must inform my therapist, and I and the other person must review and sign relevant agreements (or in lieu of signing, verbally agree to with the intention of future signature), such as a Release Authorization (permitting my therapist to speak

with that other person about me) and/or a Collateral Consent Form (allowing the other person to give informed consent to participating in my therapy with understanding about confidentiality and not being the client themselves).

- It is important to be fully dressed as one would be for an in-person appointment.
- As is true for in-person appointments, my therapist may end the session if they believe I am under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- The standard fee agreement for in-person sessions still applies.
- If technological difficulties on my end force us to cancel or shorten a session, I will be responsible for paying the pro-rated amount of time spent in session and attempting to re-connect.
- We need a safety plan that includes at least one emergency contact, local crisis services, and the closest ER to my location, in case a crisis occurs.

Prior to beginning outdoor therapy services, I and my therapist discussed and agreed to the following:

- The same confidentiality provisions apply for outdoor therapy as for in-person services. It is important to make sure that no one can overhear anything that is said during an outdoor session.
- If at any time it appears that someone could come close enough to overhear what is said, my therapist and I agreed to stop talking while that person was within “earshot” and/or to move to a different location with more privacy if needed.
- My therapist and I agreed to maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet from each other while outdoors.
- My therapist agreed to honor my wishes regarding health and safety for wearing a mask during an outdoor session, and to provide hand sanitizer and nitrile gloves if needed for physically handling anything during a session (e.g. paper/pens).

By signing below, I am indicating that I have read the preceding information and have had an opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my therapist is happy to try to help me locate in-person in-office resources now or at any time in the course of our treatment should I decide that teletherapy or outdoor therapy is not sufficiently meeting my needs.

Patient Signature

Date

Printed Name

Therapist/Witness Signature

Date