



FAMILY THERAPY INSTITUTE MIDWEST

Telehealth Consent Form

This Informed Consent for Telehealth contains important information regarding psychotherapy and psychopharmacotherapy using a telephone or the Internet. Please read this carefully and let us know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Benefits and Risks of Telehealth

Telehealth refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telehealth is that the client and therapist or nurse practitioner can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the client or therapist moves to a different location or is otherwise unable to continue to meet in person. Telehealth, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits of telehealth, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telehealth, as well as some risks. For example:

Risks to confidentiality - Because telehealth sessions take place outside of the provider's private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. On the FTI end, we will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy. But it is important for you to make sure you find a private place for the session where you will not be interrupted. It is also important for you to protect the privacy of your session with FTI providers on your cell phone or other device. You should participate in therapy or pharmacotherapy only while in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation.

Issues related to technology - There are many ways that technology issues might impact telehealth. For example, technology may stop working during a session, other people might be able to get access to our private conversation, or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized people or companies.

Crisis management and intervention - Usually, FTI providers will not engage in telehealth with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in telehealth, we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our telehealth work.

Efficacy - Most research shows that telehealth is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy/pharmacotherapy. However, some believe that something is lost by not being in the same room. For example, there is debate about a provider's ability to fully comprehend non-verbal information when working remotely.

Electronic Communications

Your FTI provider and you will decide together which kind of telehealth service to use. Certain computer or cell phone systems may be required to use telehealth services. You are solely responsible for any cost you accrue to attain the necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telehealth.

For communication between sessions

Provider's only use email communication and text messaging with your permission and only for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. This means that email exchanges and text messages should be limited to administrative matters. This includes things like setting and changing appointments, billing matters, and documentation queries. It is best not to discuss any clinical information by email or text and prefer that you do not either. Phone calls are to be used for clinical or medication concerns. You may text the provider you need to talk about a clinical issue but do not put specifics in the text. Also, providers may not regularly check my email or texts, or may not respond immediately, so these methods **should not** be used if there is an emergency.

Treatment is most effective when clinical discussions occur at your regularly scheduled sessions. But if an urgent issue arises, please attempt to reach your provider by phone. Providers will try to return your call within 24 hours. If you are unable to reach your provider

and feel that you cannot wait for a return call, contact your physician, local community mental health center or the nearest emergency room.

Confidentiality

Family Therapy Institute providers have a legal and ethical responsibility to make their best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telehealth. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that FTI cannot guarantee that FTI communications with you will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. FTI will do it's best to use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to help keep your information private, but there is a risk that our electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others. You should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of your communication with your FTI provider (for example, only using secure networks for telehealth sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telehealth).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that FTI has outlined in Consent to Treatment and Office Policies still apply in telehealth. Please let FTI know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

Appropriateness of Telehealth

The FTI provider will let you know if FTI decides that telehealth is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you. The FTI provider will discuss options of engaging in in-person sessions or referrals to another professional in your location who can provide appropriate services.

Emergencies and Technology

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting telehealth than in traditional in-person therapy. To address some of these difficulties, we will create an emergency plan before engaging in telehealth services. FTI providers will ask you to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and who the FTI provider will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation. The FTI provider will ask that you sign an authorization form allowing the provider to contact your emergency contact person as needed during such a crisis or emergency.

If the session is interrupted for any reason, such as the technological connection fails, and you are having an emergency, do not call the FTI provider back; instead, call 911, your local community mental health center, or go to your nearest emergency room. Call the FTI provider back after you have called or obtained emergency services.

If the session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session the FTI provider will wait two (2) minutes and then re-contact you via the telehealth platform on which was agreed to conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two (2) minutes, then call the FTI provider phone number.

If there is a technological failure and FTI is unable to resume the connection, you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time.

Fees

We have been in contact with many insurance plans and they are covering the provision of telehealth services. But we cannot guarantee that your policy covers it so please contact your insurance company **prior** to our engaging in telehealth sessions to be sure. If your insurance company informs you that your plan does not cover telehealth, the visit will be billed at an adjusted cash rate.

Records

The telehealth sessions shall not be recorded in any way unless agreed to in writing by mutual consent. FTI providers will maintain a record of the session in the same way FTI maintains records of in-person sessions in accordance with policies.

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the Consent for Treatment and Office Policies that we agreed to at the outset of our clinical work together and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement.

Your signature below indicates agreement with its terms and conditions.

Client Signature

Date

FTI Signature

Date