



INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

UPDATED 9/16/20

What is Telemental Health?

Telemental health means using electronic communication to provide psychotherapy services. This may include various forms of technology, including a telephone, video, internet, a smartphone, tablet, PC desktop system or other electronic means. The delivery method must be secured by two-way encryption to be considered secure. This is available in some but not all means of electronic communication.

Before the 2020 pandemic, I rarely used telemental health for ongoing therapy; rather, it was used as a temporary measure to ensure continuity of care in cases where in-person visits were not possible due to travel, illness, etc., or in cases of an urgent need for contact outside of normal business hours. Since the pandemic, I moved my entire practice to telemental health and will continue to offer it until our offices reopen and for select clients who prefer it to in-person therapy.

Options for Telemental Health in My Practice

After trying out various platforms, I have decided to use Zoom. The current version of Zoom I use is not 100% secure, so please let me know if you have any privacy concerns before we meet. At your scheduled appointment time, you simply go to my Personal Meeting Room (link will be emailed to you before our first appointment) and when I see you have “arrived” I will admit you to our meeting at our scheduled time.

If you prefer to use another form of communication for our session, I am willing to use FaceTime (if you have an iPhone) or speak on the phone. We may also choose to use these options if one of us has an unexpected interruption in our internet service. Please know that these are not secure modes of communication and are not HIPPA compliant (see Use of Technology Consent Form).

Limitations to Telemental Health

There are some limitations to telemental health compared with in-person visits. It is important that both of us be located in a private place during our sessions, and that the security protection of our technology be up-to-date. There may be a disruption to service (e.g., poor reception, dropped video/calls). This can be frustrating and interrupt the normal flow of personal interaction. Further, there can be limitations with virtual communication from an interpersonal standpoint; sometimes, there can be a lack of awareness of certain visual, auditory, or other non-verbal cues that are not as likely to be missed in person. Sometimes, complete privacy cannot be ensured on either end. As your therapist, I will take every precaution to insure a technologically secure and environmentally private psychotherapy session. As the client, you are responsible for finding a private and quiet location where sessions can be conducted with minimal disruption. Consider using a “do not disturb” sign/note on the door. Finally, our virtual sessions must be conducted on a Wi-Fi connection for the best connection and to minimize interruption.

In Case of Technology Failure

I understand that during a telemental health session we could encounter technological difficulties. Problems with hardware, software, equipment, and/or services supplied by a 3rd party may result in service interruptions. If something occurs to prevent or disrupt any scheduled appointment due to technical complications and the session cannot be completed via online video conferencing, please call me directly at (404) 313-0464. Prior to our telehealth session, make sure you have a phone with you, and that I have your phone number. We may also choose to reschedule if there are problems with connectivity.

Other Important Notes About Telemental Health

1. The laws that protect the privacy and confidentiality of client information also apply to telemental health; no information obtained in the use of telemental health that identifies you will be disclosed to other entities without my consent.
2. Some, but not all, forms of electronic communication are secure; in all cases of telemental health, however, there is a possibility of a security breach. Your signature at the end of this document represents your acceptance of this unlikely risk.
3. All laws related to the limits of confidentiality (see Consent for Treatment) apply to telemental health.
4. All office policies related to my fee, billing, payment, time of payment, use of insurance, and cancellations apply to telemental health treatment (see Office Policies Agreement). Fees for late cancellations due to unexpected technological difficulties are not waived; please test your equipment a full 24 hours before we are scheduled to meet, or arrange for an alternative (e.g., the phone) in case a video meeting is not possible.
5. Telemental health may not be appropriate for every client; if I believe you would be better served by another type of service, and if I am unable to provide that service, I will provide you with a thoughtful referral.

Client Acknowledgement and Agreement

I understand and agree to the information provided above regarding telemental health. I have discussed the contents of this consent with my therapist, if needed, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have also reviewed the Consent for Treatment, Use of Technology Consent, and Office Policies Agreement forms, which I have already signed at the start of treatment with Dr. Blandino, and which contain information relevant to telemental health, as stated above. I hereby give my informed consent for the use of telemental health in my care.

Therapist name: Jaime A Blandino, Ph.D., P.C.

Client name, printed: _____ Date: _____

Client signature: _____