

Teletherapy Agreement & Informed Consent

SA Counseling, PLLC

Unless we explicitly agree otherwise, our Teletherapy exchange is confidential. Any personal information you choose to share with me will be held in the strictest confidence. Just as for my face-to-face clients, I will not release your information to anyone without your prior approval, or I am required to do so by law. In Texas we are not required to notify authorities if we become convinced a client is about to physically harm someone. We do, however, have a duty to inform the authorities if there is suspicion or evidence of abuse of children, the elderly (over 65) or people with disabilities.

You understand that our Teletherapy occurs in the state of Texas, (USA), and is governed by the laws of that state. In a manner of speaking, you can use this modality to visit me in my Texas office or secure home office; where we meet to do our work.

Helping you build the life you want is what our exchange is all about. We should not continue any process that is counter-productive in that respect. Either of us is free to terminate our relationship at any time and for any reason. If you decide to terminate, I believe it would be to your benefit to communicate a short note stating the reasons for your leaving. There would, of course, be no charge for such a note. In the unlikely event I become convinced our Teletherapy is not in your best interests (see below), I will explain that to you and suggest some alternative options better suited to your needs.

While Teletherapy is a great way to get help with many of life's problems, overwhelming or potentially dangerous challenges are best met with face-to-face professional support. You understand that Teletherapy is neither a universal substitute, nor the same as, face-to-face psychotherapy treatment. You accept the distinctions made using Teletherapy vs. face-to-face psychotherapy. In particular, you accept that Teletherapy does not provide emergency services.

You are responsible for information security on your computer. If you decide to keep copies of our emails or communication on your computer, it's up to you to keep that information secure. Unfortunately, I cannot guarantee the security of our emails as they travel between our computers but the Telehealth platform used is encrypted (unless the state of federal government lifts such restrictions), so it is confidential. It is possible, though unlikely, to intercept emails in transit.

Our Teletherapy is a means by which you, the e-client, can receive coaching, counseling, information and guidance from a psychotherapist. It is perhaps most accurately perceived as a process creating, over time, a trusting and collaborative relationship. In our collaboration, you retain the right to determine which topics we cover and the depth of consideration each receives. In other words, as an e-client, you are free to contribute or withhold any information you choose. Moreover, you are under no obligation to apply information and/ or interventions provided in our Teletherapy. While I hope that you will find our exchange useful in your efforts to help yourself

and improve your life, it is not possible to guarantee that; despite the ever-increasing positive feed-back from e-clients, Teletherapy has been validated scientifically.

Telecommunication: Telehealth (e-therapy) is the use of electronic transmissions to treat the needs of a patient. In this case, we offer both video and audio forms of communication via the Internet and/or telephone. This means the practice of health care delivery, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, transfer of medical data, and education using interactive audio, video, or data communications.

The risks involved with Telehealth include the potential release of private information due to the complexities and abnormalities involved with the Internet. Viruses, Trojans, and other involuntary intrusions have the ability to grab and release information you may desire to keep private. Furthermore, there is the risk of being overheard by anyone near you if you do not place yourself in a private area and are open to other's intrusion. One advantage of Telehealth is the ability to be treated from any location at any time. It is YOUR responsibility to create an environment on your end of the Teletherapy transmission that is not subject to unexpected or unauthorized intrusion of your personal information. It is MY responsibility for me, the therapist, to do the same.

For a client who resides outside their e-therapist's state of residence and professional licensure, there is an important issue that should be understood by clients before therapy begins: By utilizing these therapeutic services, the client agrees that he or she is soliciting the services of a professional outside of his or her state of residence. By doing this, the client agrees that the "point-of-service" of therapy is to occur in the therapist's state of residence and licensure, not the client's (unless state of federal exceptions have been put in place). In essence, the client is using the telephone or the Internet to virtually travel to the therapist (the therapist's state of professional practice). Hence, therapists are accountable to and agree to abide by the ethical and legal guidelines prescribed by their state of licensure and residence. By agreeing to solicit the therapist's services, the client agrees to these terms. If you do not understand, or have any questions regarding this issue, please feel free to ask me about this issue.

In order to provide efficient services to clients and ensure patient confidentiality, I will be utilizing Google Meet for Telehealth services. SA Counseling, PLLC has a Business Associate Agreement to utilize Google Meet in a manner that is compliant with HIPAA requirements. Before the first session, client should ensure Google Chrome has been downloaded onto their computer, as Google Meet works best with this web browser and does not work with others.

At the initial session the client will be required to provide proof of identity (TX Driver's License, Passport, etc.). After initial verification has been provided, the client will be asked to verify their identity each session by answering a few security questions. In addition to verifying identity, clients will also be asked to identify their location at the time of the session.

For any minor participating in Teletherapy, the parent must provide proof of the child's identity (e.g. school I.D. with photo, passport, other parent verbally confirming child identity) as well as their own. If there are custody orders in place, a copy of the entire divorce decree must be provided so that parent's rights to consent for treatment can be verified. An additional consent

for the treatment of a minor must be on file in order for services to be rendered.

Should a video or telephone session experience a disruption/technological failure the therapist will re-establish the connection (place a new video or telephone call) unless other arrangements between client and therapist are agreed upon. If videoconferencing is temporarily unavailable, the session will resume via telephone. If, after 15 minutes connection cannot be re-established or the session resumed on the phone, then the session will be rescheduled. If the technological failure occurs on the therapist's end, the client will not be charged for the remainder of the appointment time; however, if the failure occurs on the client's end they are still subject to the full fee of the scheduled session.

There are no other explicit or implied commitments in our Teletherapy relationship.

I accept this agreement and herewith consent to Teletherapy with SA Counseling, PLLC.

_____ Client or Legal Guardian Signature	_____ Printed Name	_____ Date
_____ Client or Legal Guardian Signature	_____ Printed Name	_____ Date
_____ Counselor Signature	_____ Printed Name	_____ Date