



# Up Counseling Services

SUPPORT TO LOOK UP, CHEER UP, STAND UP

## TELETHERAPY INFORMED CONSENT

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The following information is provided to clients who are seeking Teletherapy services. This document covers your rights, risks and benefits associated with receiving services, and Up Counseling Services' policies and your authorization.

### Teletherapy Services Defined

Teletherapy refers to the delivery of therapy remotely via digital/technological means. This includes various clinical services and forms of technology. Up Counseling Services utilizes video conferencing and telephone technology that are HIPAA compliant. Synchronous (at the same time) secure video conferencing is the preferred method of service delivery. Up Counseling Services provides the following services via teletherapy: individual, couples, and premarital counseling.

### Benefits and Limitations of Teletherapy Services

Teletherapy services offer several advantages such as convenience and flexibility. It is also advantageous when you are not able to come to the office. While it is an alternative form of therapy or adjunct to therapy, it does involve disadvantages and limitations. For example, there may be a disruption to the service (e.g., phone or video disconnects). This can be frustrating and interrupt the normal flow of personal interaction. Primarily, there is a risk of misunderstanding one another when communication lacks visual or auditory cues. For example, if video quality is lacking, your counselor might not see various details such as facial expressions. Or, if audio quality is lacking, your counselor might not hear differences in your tone of voice that he/she could easily pick up if conducting an in-person session in the office. Additionally, the therapy office decreases the likelihood of interruptions. However, there are ways to minimize interruptions and maximize privacy and effectiveness. These are discussed further under Client Responsibilities.

### Therapist Responsibilities

The therapist will determine on an on-going basis whether the condition being assessed or treated is appropriate for teletherapy. The therapist is required to verify your identity (if using non-video technology) and location at the start of each session. Teletherapy can only be conducted if the client has a home address in Texas.

### Client Responsibilities

Up Counseling Services strongly suggests that you only communicate through a device that you know is safe and technologically secure (e.g., has a firewall, anti-virus software installed, is password protected, not accessing the internet through a public wireless network, etc.). Please do not use "auto-remember" names and passwords.

You will need to find a location that is private, quiet, and free from distractions and interruptions. **Sessions are not able to take place if other individuals are present in your location. If the therapist deems that your location is not private and/or there are interruptions, then your session will be cancelled, and you will be charged for the cost of your session.** For couples teletherapy, you will need to use one device, so find a way to sit comfortably within the view of the camera on your device. If you will be attending therapy from two, separate locations, please notify your counselor prior to the counseling session.

### In Case of Technology Failure

During a teletherapy session, we could encounter a technological failure. Difficulties with hardware, software, equipment, and/or services provided 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 your counselor back via telephone. Please make sure you have a phone with you and your therapist has that phone number. Your appointment may also be rescheduled, without a fee charged, if there are problems with connectivity.

### Video Conferencing

Up Counseling Services utilizes Doxy.me for video conferencing which complies with HIPAA and HITECH requirements. Doxy.me uses Secure Socket Layer (SSL) with 256-bit encryption.



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### Email

Email may compromise your confidentiality. Up Counseling Services does not use email as a confidential method of communication with your counselor. **Email should not be used in times of crisis or emergency.**

### Emergency Management Plan:

For emergency or crisis situations, it is imperative you are aware of resources available to you:

1. Call National Crisis Hotline 800-273-8255
2. Call 911
3. Go to the emergency room of your choice

**I agree to take full responsibility for the security of any communications or treatment on my own computer or electronic device and in my own physical location.** I understand I am solely responsible for maintaining the strict confidentiality of my user ID, password, and/or connectivity link. I shall not allow another person to use my user ID or connectivity link to access services. I also understand that I am responsible for using this technology in a secure and private location so that others cannot hear my conversations.

Signature:

**I understand that there will be no recording (by the therapist and myself) of any of the online sessions and that all information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without my written permission, except where disclosure is required by law.**

Signature:

### Consent for Teletherapy Services Treatment

I voluntarily agree to receive online therapy services for an assessment, continued care, treatment, or other services and authorize Up Counseling Services to provide such care, treatment or services as are considered necessary and advisable. I understand and agree that I will participate in the planning of my care, treatment or services and that I may withdraw consent for such care, treatment or services that I receive through Up Counseling Services at any time. By signing this Informed Consent for Teletherapy Services, I, the undersigned client, acknowledge that I have both read and understood all the terms and information contained herein.

Signature: