

ADDENDUM TO ORIGINALLY SIGNED CONSENT: INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEHEALTH

This Informed Consent for Telehealth contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the phone or the Internet. Please read this carefully and let your clinician know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and your clinician.

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 clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the client or clinician moves to a different location, takes an extended vacation, or is otherwise unable to continue to meet in person. It is also more convenient and takes less time. 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 therapist's private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. Your clinician will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy. But it is important for you to make sure you find a private place for our session where you will not be interrupted. It is also important for you to protect the privacy of your session on your cell phone or other device. You should participate in therapy 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 gain access to our private conversation, or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized people or companies.
- Crisis management and intervention. Usually, your clinician 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. However, some therapists believe that something is lost by not being in the same room.

Electronic Communications

We will decide together which kind of telehealth service to use. You may have to have certain computer or cell phone systems to use telehealth services.

Confidentiality

Your clinician has a legal and ethical responsibility to make best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telehealth. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that it cannot be guaranteed that our communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. Your clinician will use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to help keep your information private, but there is a risk that your electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others. You should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications (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 are outlined in your Informed Consent still apply in telehealth. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

Appropriateness of Telehealth

From time to time, we may schedule in-person sessions to "check-in" with one another. Your clinician will let you know if they decide that telehealth is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you. Your clinician will discuss options of engaging in in-person counseling 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, you and your clinician will create an emergency plan before engaging in telehealth services. Your clinician will ask you to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and who they will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation.

Identified Emergency Contact Person (Name and Phone Number): _____

If the session is interrupted for any reason, such as the technological connection fails, and you are having an emergency, do not call your clinician back; instead, call 911, or go to your nearest emergency room. Call your clinician 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 and your clinician will wait two (2) minutes and then re-contact you via the telehealth platform on which we agreed to conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two (2) minutes, then call your clinician on the phone number provided to you.

Fees

The same fee rates will apply for telehealth as apply for in-person psychotherapy. However, insurance or other managed care providers may not cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. If your insurance, HMO, third-party payor, or other managed care provider does not cover electronic psychotherapy sessions, you will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session. Please contact your insurance company prior to our engaging in telehealth sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered.

Records

The telehealth sessions shall not be recorded in any way unless agreed to in writing by mutual consent. Your clinician will maintain a record of our session in the same way they maintain records of in-person sessions in accordance with legal and ethical standards.

Informed Consent

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the general informed consent that you agreed to at the outset of your clinical work with your clinician and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement. Your signature below indicates agreement with its terms and conditions.

Client

Date

Legal Representative

Date

Clinician

Date