

INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information concerning psychological services using a smart phone or the internet. Please read this carefully, and let me know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us. You may withdraw your consent at any time by notifying me.

Benefits and Risks of Telepsychology

Telepsychology refers to providing psychological services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telepsychology 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 eliminates the cost and time required by traveling to the office. Telepsychology, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits of telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telepsychology, as well as some risks. For example:

- Risks to confidentiality. Because telepsychology sessions take place outside of the psychologist's private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. On my end I 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 our session on your computer 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 telepsychology. 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. However, the company I am utilizing for telepsychology does not store the telepsychology sessions, and I will not record the sessions without your permission.
- Efficacy. Most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy. However, some therapists believe that something is lost by not being in the same room. For example, there is debate about a therapist's ability to fully understand non-verbal information when working remotely.

Session Protocol

You need to have a broadband Internet connection or a smart phone device with a good cellular connection at home or at the location deemed appropriate for services. You may need to update your operating system or browser if either is too outdated, as this may prevent an adequate transmission. You may need to accept an email or smartphone text containing a hyperlink ("link") to the platform where the telepsychology session will be conducted.

It is important to maintain a setting that is as similar to being in an office together as possible. In order to have effective online therapy sessions, the following guidelines must be followed:

Your device must be placed on a steady surface throughout sessions, and not held in your hand if it can be avoided. If it must be in your hand, please hold it as steady as possible.

Make sure that you are in a private location where your sessions cannot be overheard by others. You may want to adjust the volume on your device to ensure your privacy. Use of earphones with the device's

speaker turned off may lessen audio problems such as electronic feedback and offer improved audio fidelity. Minimize background noise. Turn off televisions, music or other sounds. Consider closing the door to the room you are in. You are required to inform me if there is anyone in the room with you, or who you believe may overhear the session.

Minimize distractions. You should not be playing games on a device, be on social media, or working on other things while in therapy. Make sure that pets, children, incoming phone calls, household members and roommates will not be distractions from treatment. You may not invite others into session time without discussing this with me first.

You must be appropriately attired each session, including being fully dressed, and you should sit in an appropriate setting for our session. Try to have proper lighting so that I can see you clearly.

If the connection is broken for any reason, I will call you to remedy the situation. If transmission should fail, I will resume the session via phone until the internet connection has returned.

Confidentiality

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in my Psychologist-Client Services Agreement still apply in telepsychology. I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telepsychology work. I will not disseminate any identifiable images or information about you to others without your consent. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that I cannot guarantee that our communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. I will use HIPAA-compliant services, encryption methods, electronic “firewalls,” and strong passwords 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 our communications. For example, it is best that you also use a password-protected, secure internet connection, not public, unsecured Wi-Fi. Unless you object, you consent to my inviting you to the sessions via a text message or email.

Appropriateness of Telepsychology

I will let you know if I decide that telepsychology is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you. We will discuss options of engaging in in-person counseling or referral to another professional who can provide appropriate services.

Fees

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology as apply for in-person services. Although many insurance or managed-care providers cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication, yours may not. 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. You may wish to contact your insurance company prior to our engaging in telepsychology sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered.

If there is a technological failure and we are unable to continue the session, you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time.

Informed Consent

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the Psychologist-Client Services Agreement and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement, including the laws regarding patient access to medical records. Your signature below indicates agreement with its terms and conditions.

Client or responsible party

Date