

INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the 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.

Benefits and Risks of Telepsychology

Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy 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. It is more convenient and takes less time. 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 therapist'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 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 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.
- Crisis management and intervention. Usually, I will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in telepsychology, we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our telepsychology work. It is possible that at some point I will determine that you are no longer appropriate for telepsychology and will refer you for in-person services.
- Efficacy. Most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy, and I have found this to be the case in my practice. However, some believe that something is lost by not being in the same room.

Electronic Communications

You will have to have computer or cell phone systems with good internet connection to use telepsychology services. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telepsychology.

For communication between sessions, I only use phone (voice) or encrypted email communication. I do not text. I do not check my email and voice mail constantly, nor do I respond immediately, so these methods **should not** be used if there is an emergency. Instead, please call -911 or go to your local emergency room.

Treatment is most effective when clinical discussions occur at your regularly scheduled sessions. But if an urgent issue arises, you should feel free to attempt to reach me by phone. I will try to return your call within 24 hours except on Fridays, weekends and holidays. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, call -911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

Confidentiality

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telepsychology. 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 try to use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems 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, only using secure networks for telepsychology sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telepsychology).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in my Psychologist-Patient Services Agreement still apply in telepsychology. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

Emergencies and Technology

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting telepsychology than in traditional in-person therapy. To address some of these difficulties, we will create an emergency plan before engaging in telepsychology services. I will ask you to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and whom I will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation.

If the session is interrupted for any reason, such as the technological connection fails, and you are having an emergency, do not call me back; instead, call -911 or go to your nearest emergency room. Call me 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 I will wait two (2) minutes and then re-contact you via the telepsychology platform on which we conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two (2) minutes, then call me on the phone number I provided you (317-815-5680). I will also ask you to provide me with the phone number for the phone you will have available during our session.

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

Fees

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology 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 telepsychology sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered.

Records

The telepsychology sessions shall not be recorded in any way unless agreed to in writing by mutual consent. I will maintain a record of our session in the same way I maintain records of in-person sessions in accordance with my policies.

Informed Consent

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

Client

Date

Client’s phone number (available during sessions): _____

Name of emergency contact person (available during sessions): _____

Phone number of emergency contact person:_____

Phone number of local emergency services:_____