



INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELETHERAPY

Psychotherapy may be delivered by telephone or videoconferencing (“teletherapy”). Teletherapy is especially useful when either a therapist or client cannot participate in face-to-face sessions because of issues related to transportation, health and safety, and/or mobility. Additionally, teletherapy is a vital resource for people without equivalent local resources. However, there are some risks and limitations specific to teletherapy. This document is intended to outline potential risks as well as general guidelines for teletherapy. It is up to each client-therapist dyad to determine if the likely benefits of teletherapy outweigh the potential risks. Please read the following carefully so that you can provide fully informed consent for engaging in teletherapy services.

- You and your therapist both should be in a quiet, private place with limited interruptions and distractions. This includes turning off “apps” and notifications on your electronic device(s).
- Ideally you will have the ability to take notes or to do exercises that involve closing your eyes or moving around (for example). Therefore, we suggest that you not drive during sessions.
- Please inform your therapist if there is another person present during a session.
- Subtleties of communication, such as tone of voice and nonverbal cues, may be compromised when communicating via telephone or videoconferencing. This may result in an increased need to clarify what we heard from each other, which could at times slow progress.
- It can be challenging to share, exchange, or sign documents when you and your therapist are in different locations. You and your therapist should discuss technologies that are available to you both (e.g., fax; encrypted text messaging; encrypted email), and use the most secure mode of document exchange possible. Documents sent via unencrypted email should be password protected, and the password should be shared with the other party through a communication channel other than email. However, a password-protected file is still quite vulnerable to breaches of confidentiality.
- When communicating via telephone or internet videoconferencing there is a non-zero risk that your privacy and confidentiality will in some way be compromised.
- It is important to use a secure internet connection rather than public/free Wi-Fi.
- Another potential risk of teletherapy is service interruptions or technical difficulties that compromise the quality or productivity of a session.
 - We may need to end a teletherapy session if our connection is poor.
 - You may have better service for videoconferencing if you are able to connect to the internet using an ethernet cable rather than wireless technology.
 - For videoconferencing sessions, please have available a telephone so we can switch to this mode of communication if necessary.

- We encourage you to have your electronic device plugged in, or to have a charger available in the event that your battery runs down during the session.
(Videoconferencing especially depletes phone batteries.)
- The same confidentiality protections, limits to confidentiality, and rules around medical records apply to a teletherapy session as they would to an in-person session.
- If you previously consented to having sessions recorded, that consent extends to teletherapy sessions. Please do not record sessions yourself without first discussing this with your therapist.
- Your therapist should know where you are physically located during each teletherapy session. This will allow us to alert your emergency contact or emergency personnel in the unlikely event that a medical, psychiatric, or other emergency occurs during the session.
- It is important for us to develop a safety plan, including identifying emergency contacts, local crisis services, and accessible hospitals in the event of a crisis situation.
- If at any time it is my professional opinion that teletherapy is insufficient to meet your needs I can stop offering teletherapy sessions and ask that we either meet in person or locate other, more suitable services.
- All standard fees apply (including session, late cancel, and missed appointment fees).
- If technological difficulties on your end force us to cancel or shorten a session, you still will be responsible for paying for the scheduled time.
- You will be billed for international phone charges exceeding \$5/call.

Guidelines Specific to Group Teletherapy

- If your connection drops out, try to reconnect. If you cannot reconnect, text the therapist(s) and let them know that you are unable to rejoin the group and that you are safe. This will help to settle your fellow group members and therapist(s) if they are concerned about you.
- It is essential that you protect the privacy of your fellow group members. You must be in a private location, where no other person can see or hear you or any other participant.

By signing below you are indicating that you have read the preceding information and have had an opportunity to ask questions. You understand that I am happy to try to help you locate in-person resources now or at any time in the course of our treatment should you decide that teletherapy is not sufficiently meeting your needs.

Patient Signature

Date

Printed Name

Therapist/Witness Signature

Date