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INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information regarding engaging in psychotherapy using the phone or the Internet (“telepsychology”). 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. As with any modality, there are risks and benefits to engaging in telepsychology. Benefits may include psychotherapy sessions being more convenient to access, reducing time spent commuting to session, and reduction of risk of spreading infection during the COVID-19 pandemic. Risks are outlined below.

Electronic Communications

You may need certain computer or cell phone systems to use telepsychology services, and are solely responsible for any cost to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telepsychology.

Communications between sessions can be made via text message or email, although these communications should be limited to administrative matters (scheduling, billing, etc.) as I cannot guarantee the security of text and email platforms. Text message and email **should not** be used in the case of an emergency.

If a clinical emergency does arise, please contact 911 or your local emergency room. For non-emergency clinical issues, I can be reached by phone and will return your call within 24 hours excluding weekends and holidays.

A potential risk of engaging in telepsychology is that we may become disconnected during session as a result of internet or phone connection. I will make reasonable efforts during the session to contact you should we become disconnected.

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 make a reasonable effort to use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to help keep your information private. I utilize a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant video conferencing software (Zoom) for telepsychology; however I cannot guarantee the security of this platform, and there may be 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 Informed Consent apply in telepsychology. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

Appropriateness of Telepsychology

Telepsychology is not the right fit for all clients, and I reserve the right to determine whether this modality is appropriate based on my clinical judgement. If telepsychology is not a good fit, we will discuss other options including in person sessions or a referral to another professional.

Emergencies and Technology

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies is an important aspect in telepsychology as well as traditional in-person therapy. However, due to our lack of proximity while engaging in telepsychology, we will create an emergency plan before engaging in telepsychology services. This plan will include indicating your current location, providing consent for me to contact a chosen emergency contact person and identifying local resources to use in case of an emergency including your nearest hospital or police department. I will also provide you with important information for virtual emergency services such as hotlines.

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.

Physical Location

Currently, the California Board of Psychology allows psychotherapy sessions to occur if the client is a California resident temporarily residing outside of the State of California, as long as this also complies with that state’s rules and regulations. This regulation can be changed at any time at the discretion of the Board. It is your responsibility to communicate to me if you will temporarily reside in another state and what your location is (see Emergencies and Technology).

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

Therapist

Date

Verbal Consent Obtained

Therapist reviewed Telehealth Consent Form with Patient, Patient understands and agrees to the above advisements, and Patient has verbally consented to receiving psychotherapy services from Therapist via Telehealth.

Therapist’s Signature

Date