



Hope4Family

Christian Counseling
Hope and Help in Hard Times

INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELETHERAPY

This Informed Consent for Teletherapy contains important information concerning engaging in electronic psychotherapy or teletherapy. Please read this consent carefully.

Benefits and Risks of Teletherapy

Teletherapy refers to the remote provision of psychotherapy services using telecommunications technologies such as videoconferencing or telephone therapy. One of the benefits of teletherapy is that the client and therapist can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the client or therapist are in a situation where they are unable to continue to meet in person due to extenuating circumstances. It can also increase the convenience and time efficiency of both parties.

There are benefits of teletherapy, as well as some inherent risks of teletherapy. There are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and teletherapy.

Risks to confidentiality: Because teletherapy sessions take place outside of the typical office setting, there is potential for third parties to overhear sessions if they are not conducted in a secure environment. We will take reasonable steps to ensure the privacy and security of your information, and it is important for you to review your own security measures and ensure that they are adequate to protect information on your end. 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: Although Agape Psychological Services uses technology that is secure and HIPAA compliant, there are risks inherent in the use of technology for therapy that are important to understand, such as potential for technology to fail during a session, potential that transmission of confidential information could be interrupted by unauthorized parties or potential for electronically stored information to be accessed by unauthorized parties.

Crisis Management And Intervention: As a general rule we will not engage in teletherapy with patients who are in a crisis situation. Before engaging in teletherapy, we will develop an emergency response plan or safety plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our teletherapy work. It is urgent that you share with your therapist and he thought that you may have of harming yourself and any history that you may have of suicide attempts or hospital treatment which you received for suicidal thoughts.

Efficacy: While most research has failed to demonstrate that teletherapy is less effective than in person psychotherapy, some experienced mental health professionals believe that something is lost by not being in the same room. For example, there is debate about one's ability when doing remote work to fully process nonverbal information. If you ever have concerns about misunderstandings between you and your therapist related to the use of technology, please bring up such concerns immediately and your therapist will address the potential misunderstanding.



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Electronic Communications:

We will discuss which is the most appropriate platform to use for teletherapy services. You may be required to have certain system requirements to access electronic psychotherapy via the method chosen. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any additional necessary system requirements, accessories, or software to use electronic psychotherapy.

For communication between sessions, email exchanges and text messages with the office should be limited to matters such as setting and changing appointments, and other related issues. You should be aware that no therapist can guarantee the confidentiality of any information communicated by email or text. Therefore, we will not include any clinical material by email and request that you do not as well.

Treatment is most effective when clinical discussions occur at your regularly scheduled sessions, however if an urgent issue arises, you should feel free to attempt to reach us by phone. We will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it. If you are unable to reach us and feel that you cannot wait for us to return your call, please contact our on-call therapist or 911 in the case of an emergency.

Confidentiality:

Counselors have a legal and ethical responsibility to make our best efforts to protect all communications, electronic and otherwise, that are a part of our teletherapy. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that we cannot guarantee that our communications will be kept confidential and/or that a third party may not gain access to our communications. Even though we may utilize state-of-the-art encryption methods, firewalls, and backup systems to help secure our communication, there is a risk that our electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, and/or accessed by a third party. So, any information sent via email or text should be considered insecure.

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that are outlined in our disclosure statement still apply in teletherapy. Please let us 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 teletherapy than in traditional in-person therapy. In order to address some of these difficulties, we will ask you where you are located at the beginning of each session and we will ask that you identify emergency resources that are near your location that we may contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation. We may also ask that you sign a separate authorization form allowing us to contact your emergency contact person as needed during such a crisis or emergency.

If the session cuts out, meaning the technological connection fails, and you're having an emergency do not call us back, but call 911, or go to your nearest emergency room. Be sure to contact your therapist after you have called or obtained emergency services.



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If the session cuts out and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session, reinitiate your connection, and if you are unable to connect again wait five minutes and your therapist will contact you as soon as possible with instructions to reconnect. If you do not receive a call back within five minutes, call Hope4Family for instructions at 775-525-5353.

If there is a technological failure and we are unable to resume the connection, your therapist will work out and agreeable solution regarding your fees.

Fees:

The same fee rates shall apply for teletherapy as apply for in person psychotherapy unless other arrangements have been made prior to your session.

Consent:

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the general informed consent that we may have agreed to at the outset of treatment. Your signature below indicates agreement with its terms and conditions. This agreement is supplemental to the consent for treatment that is given when you sign your paperwork prior to treatment and does not change or amend any of the terms of that agreement.

I, _____, the client, having been fully informed of the risks and benefits of teletherapy, the security measures in place which include procedures for emergency situations, the fees associated with psychotherapy via telemedicine, the technological requirements needed to engage in teletherapy, and all other information provided in this informed consent for teletherapy, agreed to and understand the procedures and policies set forth in this consent.

Signature of Client

Date