

Telemental Health Services Informed Consent

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Overview

- You will need access to certain technological services and tools to engage in telemental health-based services with me.
- Telemental health has both benefits and risks, which you and I will be monitoring as you proceed with your work.
- It is possible that receiving services by telemental health will turn out to be inappropriate for you, and that you and I may have to cease work by telemental health.
- You can stop working with me by telemental health at any time without prejudice.
- You will need to participate in creating an appropriate space for your telemental health sessions. Please review here <https://personcenteredtech.com/tmh/clients/> for guidance.
- You will need to participate in making a plan with me for managing technology failures, mental health crises, and medical emergencies.
- I use security best practices and legal standards in order to protect your health care information, but you will also need to participate in maintaining your own security and privacy.

What is Telemental Health?

“Telemental health” means, in short, “provision of mental health services with the provider and recipient of services being in separate locations, and the services being delivered over electronic media.”

I typically provide telemental health services using the following tool for videoconferencing: **Doxy.me**. During times of emergency, such as the current coronavirus pandemic, I also use the phone as a backup alternative.

If you have any questions or concerns about the above tools, please address them directly with me so you can discuss their risks, benefits, and specific application to your treatment.

Potential Risks of Telemental Health

Telemental health services can be impacted by technical failures, may introduce risks to your privacy, and may reduce my ability to directly intervene in crises or emergencies. Here is a non-exhaustive list of examples:

- Internet connections and cloud services could cease working or become too unstable to use.
- Cloud-based service personnel, IT assistants, and malicious actors (“hackers”) may have the

ability to access your private information that is transmitted or stored in the process of telemental health-based service delivery.

- Computer or smartphone hardware can have sudden failures or run out of power, or local power services can go out.

Interruptions may disrupt services at important moments, and I may be unable to reach you quickly or by using the most effective tools. I will also be unable to help you in-person.

There may be additional benefits and risks to telemental health services that arise from the lack of in-person contact or presence, the distance between you and I at the time of service, and the technological tools used to deliver services. I will assess these potential benefits and risks, sometimes in collaboration with you, as our telemental health relationship progresses.

Assessing Telemental Health's Fit for You

Although it is well validated by research, service delivery via telemental health is not a good fit for every person. I will continuously assess if working via telemental health is appropriate for your case. If it is not appropriate, we will discuss this directly. Please talk to me if you find the telemental health media so difficult to use that it distracts from the services being provided, if the medium causes trouble focusing on your services, or if there are any other reasons why the telemental health medium seems to be causing problems in receiving services. Raising your questions or concerns will not, by itself, result in termination of services. Bringing your concerns to me is often a part of the process.

You also have a right to stop receiving services by telemental health at any time without prejudice. You will not be prevented from accessing in-person services if you choose to stop using telemental health although I am unable to currently offer in-person services due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Your Telemental Health Environment

You will be responsible for creating a safe and confidential space during sessions. You should use a space that is free of other people. It should also be difficult or impossible for people outside the space to see or hear your interactions with your provider during the session. If you are unsure of how to do this, please ask me for assistance.

Our Communication Plan

At our first session, we will develop a plan for backup communications in case of technology failures and a plan for responding to emergencies and mental health crises. In addition to those plans, I have the following policies regarding communications:

The best way to contact me between sessions is by telephone. My office number is 541-686-2527. I will respond to your messages within 24 business hours.

You may also reach me by email but remember that email is not a secure way to communicate. If you choose to email me, I will assume that you are giving me permission to respond with an email and that you accept the potential risks. Please note that all email messages you exchange with me

will become a part of your health record.

Please note that I may not respond at all on weekends or holidays. I may also respond sooner than stated in this policy. That does not mean I will always respond that quickly.

Your Safety and Emergency Plan

As a recipient of telemental health services, you will need to participate in ensuring your safety during mental health crises, medical emergencies, and sessions that you have with me. I will require you to designate an emergency contact. You will need to provide permission for me to communicate with this person about your care during emergencies. I will also develop with you a plan for what to do during mental health crises and emergencies, and a plan for how to keep your space safe during sessions. It is important that you engage with me in the creation of these plans and that you follow them when you need to.

Your Security and Privacy

Except where otherwise noted, I employ software and hardware tools that adhere to security best practices and applicable legal standards for the purposes of protecting your privacy and ensuring that records of your health care services are not lost or damaged. I use Carepaths as my Electronic Health Records (EHR) system. I also keep a paper file for papers exchanged or items such as art therapy drawings made during session. All paper files are kept under secure lock and key as dictated by my ethics code.

As with all things in telemental health, however, you also have a role to play in maintaining your security. Please use reasonable security protocols to protect the privacy of your own health care information. For example: when communicating with me, use devices and service accounts that are protected by unique passwords that only you know. Also, use the secure tools that I have supplied for communications.

Recordings

Please do not record video or audio sessions without my consent. Making recordings can quickly and easily compromise your privacy, and should be done so with great care. I will not record video or audio sessions

You understand and agree to the above.

Printed Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Therapist: _____ **Date:** _____