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## **INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY**

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information regarding psychotherapy services that use 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 agreed supplement to our initial **Agreement** for therapy, consenting to you (and/or your children and family) receiving telepsychology services.

### **Benefits and Risks of Telepsychology**

Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing, electronic written messages, or telephone. Telepsychology requires technical competence on both our parts to be effective. Although there are benefits of telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telepsychology, as well as some risks.

### **Electronic Communications**

We will decide together which kind of telepsychology service to use (video chat vs. telephone). You will need to have certain computer or cell phone systems 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.

I provide video conferencing services through Doxy.me, a secure, HIPAA compatible platform for healthcare professionals. If we schedule a telehealth video session, I will send you an email or text with a link to each session that will connect you with Doxy.me. You do not need to download any apps or software to access this link.

There are many ways that technology issues might impact telepsychology. For example, technology may stop working during a session. If this occurs, close Doxy.me and reopen the platform from the invitation link. I will wait one minute and then re-contact you through Doxy.me. If we cannot reconnect, I will call you on an agreed upon best phone number. If you do not receive a call from me within two minutes, call me at (208) 651-2412.

### **Non-Secure Text Messaging and Email**

If you choose to text or email me directly, please know that this is not a secure platform. You are welcome to use this option for basic scheduling and administrative issues, as long as you understand and agree to the security risks. Should you ever need to email sensitive material, please inquire as to encryption options we may use. If you choose to contact me through non-secure text or email, you are giving consent for non-secure contact.

### **Efficacy and Appropriateness of Telepsychology**

Most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy. However, there is debate about a therapist's ability to fully understand non-verbal information when working remotely. It is not usually indicated for clients who are currently in a crisis situation or who require high levels of support or intervention. We will discuss whether telepsychology continues to be appropriate for you. I will let you know if I decide that telepsychology is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you, and will refer you to more appropriate options for care.

### **Location**

There are legal restrictions on the state you can be in during our telepsychology sessions. I am licenced in Idaho only. Some states allow you to receive services from me while you are in their state, others do not. Please let me know if you would like to receive services in a state other than Idaho. Otherwise I will assume you are physically located in Idaho at the time of our telecommunication.

## Confidentiality

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect communications that are a part of our telepsychology. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that our communications could be compromised, unsecured or accessed by others. I will use methods to help keep your information private (e.g. HIPAA compatible platform, secure internet connection, password protection, computer encryption).

I recommend you also take steps to ensure the security of our communication, such as using only secure networks, and having password protection on the devices you use.

Because telepsychology sessions take place outside of my 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 devices.

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in the initial **Agreement** document still apply in telepsychology (e.g. mandated reporting of child abuse, duty to warn and protect from harm to self or others). Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

## Emergencies and Technology

Assessing and evaluating 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, including confirming your location at the time of each session and identifying an emergency contact person.

If our 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.

## Fees

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology as apply for in-person psychotherapy. However, insurance may not cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. If your insurance does not cover electronic psychotherapy sessions, you will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session. You should contact your insurance company prior to our engaging in telepsychology sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered.

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

## 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 **Agreement** 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 this document's terms and conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sara Morrow, PhD

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date