



MacGregor Behavioral Health Services, LLC
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TeleHealth Sessions

TeleHealth sessions are different than office appointments, and you will need to schedule and prepare differently. However, they are simple and convenient (as long as the technology co-operates) and you only need a computer, laptop, tablet, or cell phone with an internet connection.

Prior to the scheduled appointment, you will receive an email with a link to connect to the virtual waiting room. There is an option to test your connection prior to the appointment.

PLAN FOR YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY. You need to decide ahead of time WHERE you will be for the TeleHealth session. Make sure you are in a private location. BE AWARE of who else will be around during your session, and that voice sounds easily carry through most house and office walls. You don't want your kids, spouse, co-workers, or boss listening to your session.

You will need to consider your internet source. Make sure you are not accruing unexpected data charges if you are using a cell phone. If you leave your home or office for privacy (e.g., sitting in your car), then make sure you have unlimited data or that you remain connected to WiFi.

Finding a private location with an internet connection may require some planning.

Make sure that you are using an encrypted internet source with a password, and do not attempt to use public WiFi (e.g., restaurants, stores, coffee shops, etc). The computer/cell phone/device that you use for TeleHealth should also have a password to protect your electronic data.

Consider distractions. You may not be driving or engaging in any other activities during the session.

You may not involve anyone else in the session without prior approval (e.g., please don't include your spouse in the session because they happened to arrive home during your session). If you have children, even if you do not mind if they hear your session, it is very difficult to maintain focus during a session when there are children running around in the background and/or interrupting your session. **Please arrange care for your children in the same manner as you would for in-person sessions.**

Even if you plan well, unexpected things may happen. If you suspect your privacy has become compromised or you need to immediately end the call for any reason (e.g., a co-worker arrives unexpectedly), then use anything similar to the "code words" **OK, I'LL TALK TO YOU LATER** and end the connection. Your psychologist will be alerted that you need to end the connection **and will not attempt to re-establish the connection or call you.** Using these code words indicates that you are NOT in any danger, and your psychologist will wait for your contact to reschedule the session.

If the connection is lost during the session due to technical difficulties, then you will be called on the phone number that you provided at the beginning of the session.

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INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEHEALTH AGREEMENT

This agreement provides information and requirements regarding conducting psychotherapy through video conferencing and/or phone call sessions. Both the “Consent for Psychological Services Agreement” and this “Informed Consent for Telehealth Agreement” are required to participate in telehealth sessions.

Benefits and Risks of Telehealth

Benefits. The primary benefit of Telehealth sessions is the ability to engage in services without requiring the provider and the client being in the same physical location. Telehealth is more convenient to schedule and reduces travel time. Most research shows that Telehealth psychotherapy is nearly as effective as in-person psychotherapy.

Risks to confidentiality. Telehealth sessions are conducted outside of a therapist’s private office, and there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you do not insure that you are in a private location. Your psychologist will take all reasonable precautions to insure that your session will not be overheard within his/her physical location, however, when sessions are conducted outside of the protected and secured office location, it is always possible that voice security could be compromised or that the session could be unexpectedly interrupted by environment noises or individuals. It is your responsibility to take reasonable precautions to insure that you are in a private location that the session cannot be overheard and/or interrupted. Be aware that most homes and businesses have walls that transfer even normal speaking volume.

Risks related to technology. Telehealth sessions require that both you and your psychologist have access to the necessary technological resources to conduct the session, including devices and adequate internet or cell data. It is your responsibility to make sure that your device and your internet source are secured, and that you are not accruing unexpected charges for your internet use (e.g., make sure you have unlimited data, or that you are connected to wifi rather than using your cell phone or device data). There are additional risks related to electronic data being recorded, stolen, or illegally accessed by unauthorized persons. There are reliability risks related to becoming disconnected during the session.

Crisis Management for Telehealth

Telehealth is not appropriate for individuals who are experiencing or are likely to experience emotional crisis situations. The provisions for crisis management and confidentiality are the same for in-person psychotherapy and Telehealth, and are detailed in the “Consent for Psychological Services Agreement”. If an unanticipated crisis occurs during a Telehealth session, your psychologist may need a person near your location who can physically assist you. It is your responsibility to make sure that the individual whom you identified as your emergency contact remains updated. If your emergency contact cannot be reached and you are in imminent danger of harming yourself or others, then your psychologist will need to contact the authorities to assure your safety. If the Telehealth connection is interrupted due to technological difficulties and you are unable to reach your psychologist to assist with the crisis, then you will need to call a family member or friend, call your local crisis intervention, call 911, or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

Fees and Health Insurance

The fee rates for Telehealth sessions are the same as in-person psychotherapy. However, the technological requirements and fee coverage is dictated by your insurance company. MBHS makes all reasonable efforts to determine your health insurance coverage as indicated by your health insurance representative, however, it is recommended that you personally call your insurance company to verify your own health insurance coverage for Telehealth sessions because any fees that are not reimbursed by your insurance company become your responsibility. If there is a technological failure and we are unable to resume the connection, then your insurance company and/or you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time.

Records

You must not record sessions without obtaining explicit written permission from your psychologist. It is a felony in PA and most states to record any individual without their knowledge. Your psychologist will maintain documentation of the Telehealth session in accordance with the laws and professional guidelines established for psychological services.

Your signature below indicates agreement with its terms and conditions.

Client Printed Name

Signature of Client (or Parent if younger than 14 years)

Date

