

## MacGregor Behavioral Health Services, LLC

1400 Proline Place, Suite 1000, Gettysburg, PA 17325 717.337.3005 phone 717.337.3301 fax www.MacGregorBHS.com office@MacBHS.com

### **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

<u>Benefits</u>. 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

Your signature below indicates agreement with its terms and conditions.

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.

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

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#### **Authorization for Electronic Communications**

*Email Communications.* MacGregor Behavioral Health Services LLC (MBHS) offers a range of HIPAA-compliant communication services, however, many people are requesting standard email communications for their simplicity and convenience. To clarify, MBHS's email is HIPAA-compliant and encrypts our email contents in transit and while being stored in our email accounts. However, AFTER the email and any attachments are delivered to YOUR email account, the contents of the email are not likely stored as encrypted (depending on your email service), and are vulnerable to unauthorized access or someone "hacking" into YOUR account and illegally accessing the contents of the emails and attachments sent to and from MBHS. Similarly, any emails and attachments that YOU send to MBHS, may not be sent as encrypted and may not be stored as encrypted in YOUR email account (in your sent mail). However, once MBHS receives the email, then the email and attachments are stored with bank-level encryption on the MBHS email servers.

The subject lines of ALL emails are never encrypted and should not contain any information you consider private/confidential. The MBHS email domain name "ConsultProfessionals.com" does not identify any type of treatment-related service to protect your privacy.

# **Check only ONE (at least one box is required for HIPAA-compliant TeleCommunication appointments):**

Check this box if you want to use "regular" email.

I understand the risks and authorize MBHS to use my email address to communicate information regarding my (or my child's) treatment and/or evaluation services. I understand that I may limit the type of information transmitted through email (e.g., only scheduling information) by specifically identifying those limitations within the email communications, and I may also choose to use the HIPAA-compliant communication options for more sensitive information.

Email addresses authorized for use:

I am providing my email address ONLY for use with fully encrypted and HIPAA-compliant communications. I understand that these services may require links, portals, accounts, and passwords to insure protection. I understand that there are no electronic communications that insure 100% protection against illegal or unauthorized access to my (or my child's) treatment and/or evaluation information.

Email addresses authorized for use:

If you do not want to use an email address for communication, then check no boxes and you will receive only US Mail, fax, and phone communications, with no option for video/audio telecommunication sessions.

**Messaging Communications.** MBHS currently offers only HIPAA-compliant messaging. Although very convenient and simple (very similar to text messaging), secure messaging does require that you download an app and create an account to send and receive messages from your cell phone.

Your signature indicates that you understand that even though these services provide bank-level encryption protections, there are no electronic communications that insure 100% protection against illegal or unauthorized access to your private information, and you are releasing MBHS and all employees from any liability or damages related to electronic communications for yourself (and/or your child).

Printed Name of Client / Evaluation	Signature (Guardian if younger than 14 years)	Date