

Telemental Health Services Informed Consent

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Overview

<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ You will need access to the certain technological services and tools to engage in telemental health-based services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Telemental health has both benefits and risks, which you and I will be monitoring as we proceed with your work
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ It is possible that receiving services by telemental health will turn out to be inappropriate for you, and that we may have to cease work by telemental health
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ You can stop work by telemental health at any time without prejudice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ You will need to participate in creating an appropriate space for your telemental health sessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ You will need to participate in making a plan for managing technology failures, mental health crises, and medical emergencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ I follow 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, “the provision of mental health services with the provider and recipient of services being in separate locations, and the services being delivered over electronic media.”

Services delivered via telemental health rely on a number of electronic, often Internet-based, technology tools. These tools can include videoconferencing software, email, text messaging, virtual environments, specialized mobile health (“mHealth”) apps, and others.

I provide telemental health services using the following tools:

Doxy.me – HIPAA compliant video-conferencing application.

You will need access to Internet service and technological tools needed to use the above-listed tools in order to engage in telemental health work with me. If you have any questions or concerns about the above tools, please address them directly to me so you can discuss their risks, benefits, and specific application to your treatment.

Benefits and Risks of Telemental Health

Receiving services via telemental health allows you to:

Receive services at times or in places where the service may not otherwise be available.
Receive services in a fashion that may be more convenient and less prone to delays than in-person meetings.
Receive services when you are unable to travel to my office. The unique characteristics of telemental health media may also help some people make improved progress on health goals that may not have been otherwise achievable without telemental health.

Receiving services via telemental health has the following risks:

Telemental health services can be impacted by technical failures, may introduce risks to your privacy, and may reduce your service provider’s 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 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 us 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 your 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, I will help you find in-person providers with whom to continue services.

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. When I can also provide services in-person and you are reasonably able to get to my office, you will not be prevented from accessing those services if you choose to stop using telemental health.

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 me 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 412-682-2573. You can use this number to call or text.

I will make every attempt to respond to your message within 24 business hours.
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With a signed consent form, I may coordinate care with one or more of your other providers and will use reasonable care to ensure that those communications are secure and that they safeguard your privacy.

Our Safety and Emergency Plan

As a recipient of telemental health-based 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.

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.

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 me, use devices and service accounts that are protected by unique passwords that only you know.

Recordings

Please do not record video or audio sessions without your provider's 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.

Consent

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the “Telemental Health Services Informed Consent” form. I also understand that I may talk with the therapist about the document at any time. With my signature, I agree to act according to the points in the document. I agree to enter into teletherapy with this therapist and to participate fully and to the best of my ability, as indicated by my signature below.

Client signature

Date

Client printed name

I, the therapist, have provided this client with all of the information I have for them to consent to engaging in the use of teletherapy. I believe this person fully understands the issues, and I have no reason to believe this person is not fully competent to give informed consent to treatment. I agree to enter into therapy with the client.

Nancy L. Hammond, LPC, NCC

Date