

# HOFFMANN Ψ BURCHETT PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, LLC

## INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using 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 agreement between us.

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

Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telepsychology is that the client and clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the client and clinician are unable to continue to meet in person. Although there are benefits of telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telepsychology, as well as some risks. For example:

- Risks to confidentiality. Because telepsychology sessions take place outside of the therapist's private 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.
- Issues related to technology. There are ways that technology issues might impact telepsychology. For example, technology may stop working during a session, other people might have access to our private conversation, or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized people or companies.
- Crisis management and intervention. Usually, I will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in telepsychology, we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our telepsychology work.
- Efficacy. Most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy. However, some therapists believe that something is lost by not being in the same room. For example, there is debate about a therapist's ability to fully understand non-verbal information when working remotely. To ensure that you receive the most benefit while using telepsychology, we encourage you to maintain an open dialogue with your psychologist and discuss any concerns that you might have.

### **Electronic Communications**

We will discuss options that you will have for telepsychology. I will do everything possible to ensure that you will not need to have any additional equipment, accessories or software to take part in telepsychology. However, if you choose to purchase any such equipment, accessories, or software you will be fully responsible for any cost incurred.

### **Confidentiality**

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telepsychology. I will use only a secure HIPPA-compliant telepsychology service, which does not record your private identifiable information. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that I cannot guarantee that our communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. This applies primarily to unencrypted email or communication by text or over unsecured internet connections. I use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to help keep your information private, but there is a risk that our electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others. You should take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications as well, for example, by using secure networks for telepsychology sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telepsychology.

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that are outlined in our Informed Consent apply in telepsychology as well. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

### **Appropriateness of Telepsychology**

I will let you know if I decide that telepsychology is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you and will discuss the appropriateness of re-engaging in in-person counseling when/as it is feasible.

### **Emergencies and Technology**

Assessing and evaluating threats and other 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. I will ask you to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and who I will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation.

If the 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.

If the session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, you may hang up the call and reconnect by accessing the link sent to you by your psychologist to join the session initially. If you are unable to do this or are communicating by phone then you may contact your psychologist by phone as soon as you are able to do so.

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

**Fees**

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology as apply for in-person psychotherapy. However, insurance or other managed care providers may not cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. If your insurance, HMO, third-party payor, or other managed care provider does not cover electronic psychotherapy sessions, you will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session. Please contact your insurance company prior to our engaging in telepsychology sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered.

**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 general informed consent 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 these terms and conditions.

Print Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Client/Legal Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Psychologist's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Confirm For Our Records**

\*Preferred Email To Receive Telepsychology Link: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Your Authorized Emergency Contact:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Client

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number