

INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELETHERAPY

Able Family Counseling, LLC

This Informed Consent for Teletherapy 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 Teletherapy

Teletherapy refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of teletherapy 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 or clinician moves to a different location, takes an extended vacation, or is otherwise unable to continue to meet in person. It is also more convenient and takes less time.

Teletherapy, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits of teletherapy, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and teletherapy, as well as some risks.

Risks to Confidentiality

Because teletherapy 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. It is also important for you to protect the privacy of our session on your cell phone or other device. You should participate in therapy only while in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation.

Issues Related to Technology

There are many ways that technology issues might impact teletherapy. For example, technology may stop working during a session, other people might be able to get 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 teletherapy with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in teletherapy, we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our teletherapy work.

Efficacy

Most research shows that teletherapy 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.

Electronic Communications

We will decide together which kind of teletherapy service to use. You may have to have certain computer or cell phone systems to use teletherapy services. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in teletherapy.

For communication between sessions, I only use email communication and text messaging with your permission and only for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. This means that email exchanges and text messages with my office should be limited to administrative matters. This includes things like setting and changing appointments, billing matters, and other related issues. You should be aware that I cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information communicated by email or text. Therefore, I will not discuss any clinical information by email or text and prefer that you do not either. Also, I do not regularly check my email or texts, nor do I respond immediately, so these methods should not be used if there is an emergency.

Treatment is most effective when clinical discussions occur at your regularly scheduled sessions. But if an urgent issue arises, you should feel free to attempt to reach me by the office phone. I will try to return your call within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact in my absence if necessary.

Confidentiality

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our teletherapy. 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. I will try to 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 also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications (for example, only using secure networks for teletherapy sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for teletherapy).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in my Informed Consent for outpatient treatment still applies in teletherapy. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

Appropriateness of Teletherapy

From time to time, we may schedule in-person sessions to “check-in” with one another. I will let you know if I decide that teletherapy is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you. We will discuss options of engaging in in-person counseling or referrals to another professional in your location who can provide appropriate services.

Emergencies and Technology

There is a possibility with teletherapy that disruptions to services will take place. Should I be unavailable due to technology failure, clients will be expected to rely on appropriate hotline, local resources, and other trusted individuals identified in the course of treatment. A non-exhaustive list of resources is also available via my website under the ‘Forms’ tab in the on-line Informed Consent.

Another potential downfall of teletherapy is that sessions may be ended by clients at any time, leaving this clinician unable to make contact. In the event this should occur, I will take appropriate steps to ensure your safety. These steps may include and are not limited to contacting emergency contacts, contacting local law enforcement and contacting other local agencies who may provide support.

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, disconnect from the session and I will wait two (2) minutes and then re-contact you via the teletherapy platform on which we agreed to conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two (2) minutes, then call me at (502)509-4308.

Fees

The same fee rates will apply for teletherapy as apply for in-person psychotherapy. Please be aware, 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. In order to secure a scheduled appointment, **fees will be paid at least 24 hours in advance** via the website at ablefamilycounseling.com.

Records

The teletherapy 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 its terms and conditions.

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Full Name: _____

Physical Address: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone Number: _____