

## **6. Informed Consent for Teletherapy**

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the Internet. Please read this carefully, and let us know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and IntraSpectrum Counseling.

### **Benefits and Risks**

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

- Risks to confidentiality. Because telepsychology sessions take place outside of the therapist's private office (for example, your home), there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. Your therapist will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy by conducting the session from their office. But it is important for you to make sure you find a private place for your session where you will not be interrupted. It is also important for you to protect the privacy of our session on your 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 telepsychology. 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, we 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, you and your therapist will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of your 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.

### **Telepsychology Platform**

We use Google Meet, a HIPAA compliant platform, for telepsychology sessions. You may have to have certain computer or other systems to use telepsychology services. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telepsychology.

### **Confidentiality & Electronic Communications**

Please refer to the Confidentiality and Electronic Communications sections of the Informed Consent for Psychotherapy.

## **Appropriateness of Telepsychology**

From time to time, you and your therapist may schedule in-person sessions to “check-in” with one another. Your therapist will let you know if they decide that telepsychology is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you. You and your therapist 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**

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, you and your therapist will create an emergency plan during your first or second session of telepsychology services. Your therapist will ask you to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and who your therapist will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation. Your therapist will ask that you sign a separate authorization form allowing them to contact your emergency contact person as needed during such a crisis or emergency.

If the session is interrupted for any reason, such as the technological connection fails, and you are having an emergency, do not call your therapist back; instead, call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital's intake line at (312) 926- 8100, or contact Weiss Memorial Hospital's intake line at (773) 564-6250. You may also call National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) to be connected with the nearest certified national crisis call center. Additionally, you may call the Trevor Project's TrevorLifeline at 1-866-488-7386 for crisis intervention and suicide prevention or text START to 678-678 to confidentially text message with a Trevor Project counselor.

After you have secured your safety, please inform your therapist of the arrangements that you have made, and your therapist will help coordinate your care.

If there is a technological failure and you and your therapist 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, and you should refer to the "Professional Fees" section of your Informed Consent for 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.

If there is a technological failure, and if your insurance, HMO, third-party payor, or other managed care provider may does not cover the prorated amount of the actual session time, you will be solely responsible for the entire amount of the prorated fee.

## **CONSENT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the Informed Consent for Psychotherapy between you and IntraSpectrum Counseling and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement.

By checking this box, I understand that I am acknowledging and agreeing to the terms and conditions of this Informed Consent for Telepsychology.

Client Legal Name (First and Last):

If Minor, Client Parent/Guardian Legal Name (First and Last):

Today's Date: