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## **INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING**

Client information:

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth:

\_\_\_\_\_

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.

As we have an established therapeutic relationship, it may be possible for treatment delivery to occur via interactive video-conferencing (i.e., virtual “face-to-face” sessions) in lieu of, or in addition to, “in-person” sessions. Video conferencing (VC) is a real-time interactive audio and visual technology that enables clinicians to provide mental health services remotely. The VC system I use (Go To Meeting) meets HIPAA standards of encryption and privacy protection, but we cannot guarantee privacy. You will not have to purchase a plan or provide your name when you “join” our online meeting.

Although VC may be used when the clinician and client are in different locations, licensure regulations only allow a session to be conducted in the state in which the clinician is licensed and the client is located (I am licensed in Washington DC and in Maryland). An occasional exception can be made if temporary permission is available from another state.

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

Benefits. 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 is otherwise unable to continue to meet in person. It is also more convenient and takes less time.

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.

Issues related to technology. There are many ways that technology issues might impact telepsychology. Telepsychology requires technical competence on both our parts in order to be helpful. Further, 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 (the Go To Meeting format I use takes precautions to prevent unauthorized access to stored data).

Emergencies. Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting telepsychology than in traditional in-person therapy. When using telepsychology, parties have limited access to immediate resources if risk of self-harm or harm to others becomes apparent.

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.

### **Practice Procedures**

Privacy. The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in my Practice Policies and Consent to Treatment Form still apply in telepsychology.

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.

Emergencies. It is possible I will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. Please provide your location where you will be when participating in remote sessions and an emergency contact person near your location whom I will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation.

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Name

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Phone Number

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.

Technology. If the session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session and I will wait a few minutes and then re-contact you via GoToMeeting. If you do not receive a call back within a few minutes, then call me on 301-455-8825.

Efficacy. 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 telepsychology 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.

Fees. The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology as apply for in-person psychotherapy. If there is a technological failure and we are unable to resume the connection, you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time.

Although more and more insurance companies are covering sessions that are conducted via telecommunication, please check with your health insurance company or third-party payor to determine if they cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. If your insurance 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 you prefer that my office contact your insurance company, please provide the following information:

- Insurance company
- Group number
- ID number
- Phone number of insurance company (often listed on back of insurance card)
- Subscriber name
- Subscriber date of birth

Questions to ask insurance company:

Do you cover telepsychology via video-conferencing?

Does a particular video-conferencing platform need to be used?

Are the reimbursement rates the same as for in-person sessions?

What are the dates that video-conferencing is permissible/reimbursable?

How will we know when the video-conferencing is no longer permissible/reimbursable?

Records. The telepsychology sessions shall not be recorded in any way unless agreed to via 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.

My signature below indicates I have carefully read this document, had an opportunity to ask questions, received satisfactory answers, understand, and agree with its terms and conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client or Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheryl Frank

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date