

## **INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY**

**James M. Claiborn Ph.D. ABPP ACT**

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using 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. One of the benefits of telepsychology is that the client and clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location. It also provides an opportunity for treatment that may not be available in your locale.

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, 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 computer 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 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. I will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis requiring high levels of support and intervention. If a crisis arises in treatment, I will make efforts to provide assistance but I can not provide routine emergency services.
- I will ask you to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and who I can contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation. You will need to identify emergency services and other resources in your area to address any need for crisis or emergencies.

- Efficacy. Most research shows that telepsychology is not significantly different in effectiveness from 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 telepsychology service to use. You may have to have certain computer or cell phone 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

For communication between sessions, I only use email communication and text messaging with your permission and only for administrative purposes. 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 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, local mental health crisis service or the nearest emergency room and ask for the mental health professional on call.

### **Confidentiality**

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telepsychology. 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 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 telepsychology sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telepsychology).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in my Informed Consent still apply in telepsychology. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

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 telepsychology platform on which

we agreed to conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two (2) minutes, then call me at the office phone number (207 799-0408).

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.

**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, in advance, by mutual consent. I will maintain a record of our session equivalent to 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
James M. Claiborn Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Home street address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt.: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home/evening phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please direct mail to 7 W. Figueroa St, Suite 300, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

To email your forms, click my email address: [anxietyshrink@gmail.com](mailto:anxietyshrink@gmail.com) and attach your completed forms.