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Informed Consent for Telepsychology

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains information focusing on 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. These services include video conferencing and 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 should it become difficult or unsafe to meet in person. It can also be a more convenient and time-saving option. However, telepsychology 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 risks. For example:

Risks to confidentiality

Because telepsychology sessions take place outside of my private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. I will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy, including working from my private office. At the same time, 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 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, I will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis 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 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.

Electronic Communications

I use Doxy.me for therapy sessions which has shown a high level of security. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telepsychology.

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 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 use secure networks for our sessions and have passwords to protect the device you use for telepsychology).

Confidentiality and its exceptions are outlined in my Informed Consent for Therapy and still apply in telepsychology. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

Appropriateness of Telepsychology

From time to time, we may schedule in-person sessions to "check-in" with one another. I will let you know if I believe 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.

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. I will ask that you sign a separate form allowing me 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 me back. Instead, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) 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, we will attempt to reconnect. Should that not be possible due to technological failure, you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time.

Fees

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

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the general informed consent and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement.

Client Signature _____ Date _____