

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN TELETHERAPY TREATMENT

Welcome to our practice. This document (the Agreement) contains important information about our professional services and business policies. It also contains summary information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a new federal law that provides new privacy protections and new patient rights with regard to the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) used for the purpose of treatment, payment, and health care operations. HIPAA requires that we provide you with a Notice of Privacy Practices (the Notice) for use and disclosure of PHI for treatment, payment and health care operations. The Notice, which is attached to this Agreement, explains HIPAA and its application to your personal health information in greater detail. The law requires that we obtain your signature acknowledging that I have provided you with this information at the end of this session. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is very important that you read them carefully before our first session. We can discuss any questions you have about the procedures at that time. When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between us. You may revoke this Agreement in writing at any time. That revocation will be binding on us unless we have taken action in reliance on it; if there are obligations imposed on us by your health insurer in order to process or substantiate claims made under your policy; or if you have not satisfied any financial obligations you have incurred.

Georgetown Psychology Associates offers teletherapy services to allow our psychologists and social workers to interact face-to-face with clients in Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, and internationally as licensing laws allow.

ADVANTAGES OF TELETHERAPY

Teletherapy is an effective platform for therapy sessions because it combines the intimate and confidential atmosphere of the therapist’s office with the convenience of logging on to a video call from the comfort of your own home. All teletherapy sessions are encrypted to ensure privacy and allow therapists and their clients to develop the trust necessary to discuss personal matters. Teletherapy allows real-time communication and provides a therapeutic resource to clients with limited mobility, accessibility to services, and/or busy schedules.

HOW DOES TELETHERAPY WORK

Before engaging in telepsychology services, we conduct an initial assessment to determine the appropriateness of the teletherapy service to be provided for the client. It is encouraged that this assessment occurs in person. Such an assessment will include the examination of the potential risks and benefits to provide teletherapy services for a client's particular needs, the cultural and ethical issues that may arise, and a review of the best options available for the service delivery. If teletherapy is deemed to be the most appropriate method of service delivery, our psychologists will then carefully assess the environment in which services will be provided, to determine what impact, if any, there might be to the efficacy, privacy and/or safety of the proposed intervention offered via teletherapy. Such an assessment of the remote environment may include a discussion of the client's situation within the home, the availability of emergency or technical personnel or supports, risk of distractions, potential for privacy breaches or any other impediments that may impact the effective delivery of teletherapy services.

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Suite 312
Washington, DC 2000
(202) 333-6251

McLean Office
1355 Beverly Rd
Suite 320
McLean, VA 22101
(703) 556-6655

Bethesda Office
4915 Auburn Avenue
Suite 303
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 652-5550

You will need access to, and familiarity with, the appropriate technology to participate in teletherapy -- Georgetown Psychology Associates uses VSee technology. Teletherapy refers to scheduled sessions utilizing VSee technology and does not include phone or email contact outside the purposes of scheduling.

Our psychologists regularly monitor and assess the progress of their client when offering teletherapy services in order to determine if the provision of teletherapy services is still appropriate and beneficial to the client. If there is a significant change in the client or in the therapeutic interaction to cause concern, we will make reasonable efforts to adjust and reassess the appropriateness of the services delivered via teletherapy. Where it is believed that continuing to provide remote services is no longer beneficial or presents a risk to a client's emotional or physical well-being, our therapists will thoroughly discuss these concerns with the client and refer or offer any needed alternative services to the client.

The laws and professional standards that apply to regular psychological services apply to Telepsychology services. See www.apa.org for further information.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Similar to in-person sessions, teletherapy will last 45 or 60 minutes depending on client need. Appointments will be scheduled during sessions and you will be provided a link to click for scheduled appointments. Please keep in mind to choose a quiet, private area with adequate lighting and limited interruptions to engage in teletherapy. Keep a telephone handy in case there are technical difficulties. You may provide feedback to Georgetown Psychology Associates should you find the quality insufficient for your needs.

It is important to note that teletherapy sessions have limitations compared to in-person sessions, which include lack of "personal" face-to-face interactions and the lack of visual and audio cues in the therapy process. Potential risks involved include those associated with technological problems and service limitations that may arise because of the continuity, availability, and appropriateness of specific teletherapy services. Exchange of information will not be direct and any paperwork exchanged will likely be exchanged through electronic means or through postal delivery.

By consenting to this form, you are acknowledging your understanding that teletherapy is not a substitute for medication under the care of a psychiatrist or medical doctor. While our teletherapy sessions will address social, emotional and personal issues, it may be required for you to consult with a specialist for pharmacotherapy in addition to our work. You acknowledge your understanding that teletherapy may not be appropriate if you are experiencing a crisis, having suicidal/homicidal thoughts, severe addiction issues or impulse regulation difficulties. If a life-threatening crisis occurs, you agree to contact the National Suicide Hotline at 800-784-2433, call 911, or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. Please be aware that if a crisis develops, your therapist can also help you locate immediate care. You understand that Georgetown Psychology Associates follows the laws and professional regulations of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, and that teletherapy treatment will be considered to take place in Maryland, Virginia, or the District of Columbia (USA) where your therapist is located and licensed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is the responsibility of my therapist to maintain the privacy of client communication. Insurance companies, those authorized by the client, and those permitted by law may also have access to records or communications.

Content discussed during sessions will be kept confidential with some exceptions. These include if the client indicates an intention to hurt themselves, or someone else, if the client reports someone is currently or in danger of being neglected or abused, or if the client is involved in legal action and the therapist gets subpoenaed by a judge. Please see the general Georgetown Psychology Associates Consent for Treatment form for further

explanation of limits to confidentiality. The HIPAA forms provided will detail how private information about your health care will be protected and under what circumstances they may, if ever, be shared. As mentioned, our Telemedicine communication, VSee, is HIPAA compliant.

Teletherapy services rely on technology, which allows for greater convenience in service delivery. There are risks in transmitting information over the internet that include, but are not limited to, breaches of confidentiality, theft of personal information, and disruption of service due to technical difficulties. If you choose to email a Georgetown Psychology Associates therapist from your personal email account, please limit the contents to basic issues such as cancellation or change in contact information. Therapists will not respond to personal and clinical concerns via regular email. If you call your therapist, please be aware that unless you are both on land line phones, the conversation is not confidential. Additionally, text messages are not confidential. When working online together, the therapist will ask that you determine who has access to your computer and electronic information from your location, which can include family members, co-workers, supervisors and friends. Your therapist will encourage you to only communicate through a computer that you know is safe, i.e., wherein confidentiality can be ensured. It is important to fully exit all VSee applications when sessions are done.

Georgetown Psychology Associates will make an effort to encrypt confidential client data for storage or transmission. We will utilize secure methods such as safe hardware and software and robust passwords to protect electronically stored or transmitted data and information. If there is a breach of unencrypted electronically communicated or maintained data, therapists will notify clients and other appropriate individuals or organizations as soon as possible.

By signing this form you are agreeing not to record any teletherapy sessions without written consent from Georgetown Psychology Associates, and that Georgetown Psychology Associates will not record any of teletherapy sessions without the client's written consent. The client also agrees to be responsible for the configuration of any electronic equipment used on your computer, which is used for teletherapy, as well as the proper functioning of all electronic equipment before the session begins.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The integrity and confidentiality of the therapeutic working relationship between therapist and client is extremely important. As such, therapists will not accept any invitations via social networking.

TELEPHONE AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If you need to speak with your therapist about an urgent issue between teletherapy sessions, please call (301) 652-5550. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. Should a life-threatening crisis occur before a member of our staff is able to contact you, you agree to call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

Payments for teletherapy must be made on the day of service via credit card. Insurance may not reimburse for teletherapy sessions; you should contact your provider before starting treatment.

Clients may incur charges for any service interruptions or technological failures encountered. It is up to the discretion of the therapist to determine if providing a fee at a prorated rate is appropriate should service interruptions or technological failures impede the full session time.

Cancellation policy

We require 48-hour notice to cancel or reschedule an appointment. It is important to note that insurance companies do not provide reimbursements for cancelled sessions.

You have the right to withdraw consent at any time. It will not affect your right to further treatment.

YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES YOU HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT AND AGREE TO ITS TERMS, AND ALSO SERVES AS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE HIPAA NOTICE FORM DESCRIBED ABOVE.

Client / Parent Signature **Date**

Parent 2 Signature* **Date**

***Note:** If you are currently separated or have a joint custody agreement in place, both parents must sign this form. Both signatures are also required when one parent has legal/medical decision-making authority. Therapy cannot be initiated without the expressed consent of both parents. If you have a sole custody agreement in place, please submit documentation to your therapist prior to your first appointment.