



## illuminate THERAPY & WELLNESS

### **Informed Consent and Authorization For Teletherapy**

This informed consent contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the phone or Internet. Please read this carefully and let your therapist know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between Illuminate Therapy & Wellness (IT&W) and you, the Client.

#### **Benefits and Risks Of Teletherapy**

Teletherapy refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of teletherapy is that the client and clinician can engage in therapy services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the client or clinician is unable to access transportation to the session, has health concerns which prevent the level of safety needed to meet in-person, moves to a different location making access to the session problematic, encounters a pandemic and in-person sessions are restricted, and/or for any other reason in-person sessions cannot take place. Teletherapy can also be more convenient and take less time; it does, however, require technical competence with both clinician and client to be effective. Although teletherapy has its own benefits, it does differ from in-person psychotherapy. For example:

~ Risks to Confidentiality: Because teletherapy sessions take place outside of the therapist's private office, there is potential for other people to overhear the session if it does not occur in a private place. Your therapist will take reasonable steps to ensure privacy on his/her end, but it is important that you find a private place for your session free from disruptions. You should participate in therapy only while in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation. Lastly, it is essential to take steps to protect the privacy of the session on the device you will use.

~ Issues related to technology: Technology and/or privacy-related issues might impact teletherapy in several ways. For example, technology may stop working during a session, other individuals might be able to gain access to your private conversation, or unauthorized users could access stored data.

~ Crisis management and intervention: Therapists typically do not engage in teletherapy sessions with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in teletherapy, an emergency response plan will be developed to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of your teletherapy work.

#### **Technology**

You and your therapist will decide together which teletherapy service platform to use (audio or video) for sessions. You agree to use the video-conferencing platform selected by your therapist,

who will instruct you on how to use it. The platform may require you to have certain computer or cell phone systems to take part in our virtual sessions.

If the session is interrupted for any reason, such as the technological connection fails, your therapist will re-contact you via the teletherapy platform on which was agreed to conduct therapy. The need to switch platforms to the phone may occur should the Internet access be limited and prevent reconnecting via video.

Should there be a technological failure and the session cannot be resumed, your therapist will contact you to reschedule your session based on the amount of time disrupted.

## **Confidentiality**

Your therapist has a legal and ethical responsibility to make his/her best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of your teletherapy. Your therapist will use a HIPAA compliant platform to help keep your information private, but there is a risk that others could compromise your electronic communications.

You understand and agree that there will be no recording of any of the online sessions by either party, without expressed consent. The extent and exceptions of confidentiality outlined, and agreed to, in IT&W's general Informed Consent still apply in teletherapy.

You understand and agree to the importance of using a secure Internet connection rather than public/free Wi-Fi.

You understand and agree that if you are a minor, you need the permission of your parent or legal guardian, as well as their contact information, to participate in teletherapy.

## **Emergencies**

You understand and agree that the privacy laws that protect the confidentiality of your protected health information (PHI) also apply to teletherapy unless an exception to confidentiality applies (i.e. mandatory reporting of child, elder, or vulnerable adult abuse; danger to self or others; if mental/emotional health issues raised with relation to a legal proceeding.)

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting teletherapy than traditional in-person therapy. To address some of these difficulties, an emergency plan will be created before engaging in teletherapy services. You will identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and who will be contacted in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the safety needs of the situation.

You understand and agree that if you are having suicidal or homicidal thoughts, actively experiencing psychotic symptoms or experiencing a mental health crisis that cannot be resolved remotely, it may be determined that teletherapy services are not appropriate and a higher level of care is required.

If the session is interrupted for any reason and you are having an emergency, do not call your therapist back; instead, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. You understand and agree that at this time my therapist will also call my emergency contact and/or appropriate authorities.

## **General Information**

You understand and agree that it is important to be on time. If you need to cancel or change your teletherapy appointment, you will notify your therapist within the 24-hour cancellation requirement as stated and agreed-to in the Financial Policy and Agreement signed upon starting psychotherapy with IT&W. A late cancellation fee will be assessed per the policy agreed to if the session is not cancelled at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled appointment.

You understand and agree that your therapist may determine that due to certain circumstances, teletherapy may no longer be appropriate and the return to in-person sessions is recommended. Your therapist and you will discuss options for engaging in in-person sessions or referrals to another professional who can provide appropriate level of care.

It is your responsibility to confirm with your insurance company regarding my teletherapy benefits. The same fee rates will apply for teletherapy 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 carrier does not cover electronic psychotherapy sessions, you will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session pursuant to said Financial Policy and Agreement.

### **Informed Consent**

This agreement is intended to supplement the general Informed Consent already agreed-to at the outset of treatment and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement.

Your signature below indicates that you agree to these terms and conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client Signature/Signature of Legal Guardian or Parent if client is under 12

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Therapist Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **In case of emergency, my emergency contact is:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State