

INFORMED CONSENT FOR SERVICES DELIVERED VIA TELEPHONE OR VIDEO CONFERENCE (TELEPSYCHOLOGY)

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on conducting psychotherapy using the telephone or the Internet. Please read this carefully, and let your Cognitive Therapy Orange County (CTOC) clinician 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 or 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 if the client or clinician moves to a different location, takes an extended vacation, or is otherwise unable to continue to meet in person. 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. 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. Your CTOC clinician 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.

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. Your CTOC clinician will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in telepsychology, your CTOC clinician will develop an emergency response plan with you to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of 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

We will decide together which kind of telepsychology service to use. This may be either telephone (audio only conferencing) or tele-video conferencing via the internet. 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, your CTOC clinician only use voice calls or voice mail as this remains the most reliable and confidential method of communication.

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 your CTOC clinician by phone. He/she will try to return your call within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays. If you are unable to reach your CTOC clinician and feel that you cannot wait for him/her to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call.

If your CTOC clinician will be unavailable for an extended time, he/she will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact in their absence if necessary.

Confidentiality

Your CTOC clinician has a legal and ethical responsibility to make his/her best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of CTOC telepsychology. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that they cannot guarantee that the communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. **There is a risk that our electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others.** You should take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications (for example, only using secure internet networks for telepsychology sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telepsychology).

If you are uncomfortable with the possibility of our electronic communications being compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others you should not participate in telepsychology.

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that CTOC outlined in the **Informed Consent (The Psychological Services and Informed Consent Agreement)** still apply in telepsychology.

Please let your CTOC clinician know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

Appropriateness of Telepsychology

From time to time, we will likely schedule in-person sessions to “check-in” with one another. Your CTOC clinician will let you know if he/she decides 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. For CTOC clinicians, telepsychology is a temporary method of service delivery when in office appointments are disrupted due to unforeseen circumstances.

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 authorization 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 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, disconnect from the session and I will wait approximately 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 approximately two (2) minutes, then call me on the phone number I provided you, our office voice mail (714) 437-1686.

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, in 10 minute increments.

COGNITIVE THERAPY ORANGE COUNTY

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Fees

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology as apply for in-person cognitive behavioral therapy. You are expected to pay at the time of service, in the same manner as described in the **Psychological Services and Informed Consent** contract. We do not bill any third party payer. **You are solely responsible for the entire fee of the session.**

Please understand, insurance or other managed care providers (HMOs, PPOs, etc.) may not cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. **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 by mutual consent. This shall be understood to mean CTOC *does not* give any permission to be recorded by you in any format unless in writing and signed by your CTOC clinician *and* the CTOC Clinical Director. Your CTOC clinician will maintain a record of the session in the same way he/she maintain records of in-person sessions in accordance with CTOC 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.

Patient/Client

Date

CTOC Clinician

Date