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Informed Consent and Agreement for Distance Sessions

What is telepsychology?

Telepsychology services (also known as teletherapy) are a form of psychological service provided via phone or other telecommunications technology, such as video chat. Teletherapy has the same purpose as face-to-face, in-person psychotherapy. The same laws and professional standards that apply to in-person psychological services also apply to telepsychology services.

Technology Requirements

To engage in telepsychology services with Dr. Swales, you will need a network-connected phone or a computer with private, secure internet access and webcam ability. By signing this consent, you agree to use only adequate, secure, private, password-protected technology for telepsychology services.

Security and Technology Issues

Dr. Swales uses doxy.me for video telepsychology services. Doxy.me is HIPAA, GDPR, PHIPA/PIPEDA, & HITECH compliant. It has been used by many large health care companies, including Quest Diagnostics. Dr. Swales always utilizes a password protected, private internet connection when providing telepsychology services. Despite best efforts to ensure security, there is always a risk that the transmission could be accessed by unauthorized persons. In addition, telepsychology services could be disrupted by unforeseen technical problems.

Confidentiality

While using telepsychology services there is a risk that you will be overheard by someone nearby. It is important that you have full confidence that you will not be overheard during your telepsychology sessions. You are responsible for ensuring your privacy on your end of the transmission. Dr. Swales will ensure that your privacy is secured on her end of the transmission.

Note also that exceptions to your confidentiality that exist for face-to-face therapy also apply to telepsychology services. Such exceptions can occur if you pose a serious threat to someone's health or safety, including your own, if you disclose child or elder abuse, or if a court order mandates disclosure of your information.

Record Keeping

Telepsychology sessions will not be recorded in any way by anyone unless agreed upon in writing by you and Dr. Swales. Dr. Swales will maintain a record of your treatment in the same way she does for in-person sessions.

Backup Plan and Emergencies

If a phone session is interrupted by technological problems, Dr. Swales will call you back immediately. If a video session is interrupted by technological problems, please sign back in to the Doxy.me waiting room, and Dr. Swales will reconnect you to the video session. If that does not work, or if the connection is too poor for you and Dr. Swales to hear one another consistently, Dr.

Swales will call you and the session will continue by phone. If you are unable to connect in these ways, Dr. Swales will text or email you to make further arrangements.

If you are having an emergency and your telepsychology session is interrupted for any reason, if your connection with Dr. Swales is not immediately re-established, go to your nearest emergency room, call 911, or call your local crisis services provider, such as the Dallas Suicide and Crisis Center (214) 828-1000 or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Appropriateness of Telepsychology Services

Although research suggests that teletherapy is just as effective as in-person therapy, you may have concerns or problems with meeting for sessions in this way. If so, you agree to discuss these concerns or problems with Dr. Swales. You may withdraw your consent for telepsychology services at any time and it will not affect your right to further treatment. Dr. Swales may also decide that telepsychology sessions are not appropriate for your therapy. If so, you may opt to continue sessions in-person—once Dr. Swales feels it is safe to do so, on account of COVID-19—or request referrals for other services.

Agreement

By signing this document, you acknowledge that you understand all of the information in this document and agree to the terms described.

Informed Consent and Agreement for Distance Sessions

Please acknowledge your understanding by initialing each item below:

_____ I consent to undergoing some or all of my therapy or analytic sessions by phone.

_____ I consent to undergoing some or all of my therapy or analytic sessions by Doxy.me or another HIPAA-compliant videochat service.

_____ I understand that it is my responsibility to find a private place in which to conduct my sessions by phone or by HIPAA-compliant videochat, and that it is important that I have full confidence that I will not be overheard. (*Getting a white noise maker to put outside a door often helps.)

_____ If I begin to have reservations or concerns about having sessions by phone or HIPAA-compliant videochat as opposed to in-person I will discuss them with Dr. Swales so that we can decide the best way to move forward with treatment.

I hereby agree to have sessions, as needed, by HIPAA-compliant video-chat or phone with Dr. Swales.

Patient's Signature

Date

Patient's Printed Name