

Telemental Health Services Informed Consent

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Overview

* You will need access to the certain technological services and tools to engage in telemental health-based services with me
* Telemental health has both benefits and risks, which you and I will be monitoring as you proceed with your work
* It is possible that receiving services by telemental health will turn out to be inappropriate for you, and that you and I may have to cease work by telemental health
* You can stop work by telemental health at any time without prejudice
* You will need to participate in creating an appropriate space for your telemental health sessions
* You will need to participate in making a plan for managing technology failures, mental health crises, and medical emergencies
* I follow security best practices and legal standards in order to protect your health care information, but you will also need to participate in maintaining your own security and privacy

What is Telemental Health?

Telemental Health includes the use of telecommunications and web-based applications to provide assessment, diagnosis, intervention, consultation, supervision, education and information across distance. It may include providing non face-to-face psychological, mental health, marriage and family, creative arts, psychoanalytic, psychotherapy and social work services via technology such as telephone, e-mail, chat, and videoconferencing (NYS Office of the Professions 2020).

I typically provide telemental health services using Doxy.me for videoconferencing.

- ▶ You will need access to Internet service and a phone, tablet or computer that is equipped to handle videoconferencing
- ▶ If you have any questions or concerns about Doxy.me, please let me know and we can discuss any risks, benefits, and specific application to your treatment

Benefits and Risks of Telemental Health

Receiving services via telemental health allows you to:

- ▶ Receive services at times or in places where the service may not otherwise be available
- ▶ Receive services in a fashion that may be more convenient and less prone to delays than in-person meetings
- ▶ Receive services when you are unable to travel to my office

Receiving services via telemental health has the following risks:

Telemental health services can be impacted by technical failures, may introduce risks to your privacy, and may reduce your service provider's ability to directly intervene in crises or emergencies. Here is a non-exhaustive list of examples:

- ▶ Internet connections and cloud services could cease working or become too unstable to use
- ▶ Cloud-based service personnel, IT assistants, and malicious actors (“hackers”) may have the ability to access your private information that is transmitted or stored in the process of telemental health-based service delivery
- ▶ Computer or smartphone hardware can have sudden failures or run out of power, or local power services can go out

Interruptions may disrupt services at important moments, and I may be unable to reach you quickly or using the most effective tools. I may also be unable to help you in-person.

There may be additional benefits and risks to telemental health services that arise from the lack of in-person contact or presence, the distance between you and I at the time of service, and the technological tools used to deliver services. I will assess these potential benefits and risks, sometimes in collaboration with you, as our relationship progresses.

Assessing Telemental Health's Fit for You

Although it is well validated by research, service delivery via telemental health is not a good fit for every person. I will continuously assess if working via telemental health is appropriate for your case. If it is not appropriate, we can either transition to face-to-face counseling. Please tell me if you find the telemental health media so difficult to use that it distracts from the services being provided, if the medium causes trouble focusing on your services, or if there are any other reasons why the telemental health medium seems to be causing problems in receiving services. Raising your questions or concerns will not, by itself, result in termination of services. Bringing your concerns to me is often a part of the process. You also have a right to stop receiving services by telemental health at any time without prejudice.

Your Telemental Health Environment

You will be responsible for creating a safe and confidential space during sessions. You should use a space that is free of other people. It should also be difficult or impossible for people outside the space to see or hear your interactions with your provider during the session. I will do the same. If you are unsure of how to do this, please ask me for assistance.

Our Communication Plan

At our first session, we will develop a plan for backup communications in case of technology failures and a plan for responding to emergencies and mental health crises. In addition to those plans, I have the following policies regarding communications:

- ▶ If our telemental health session is interrupted, please sign out and back in. If we are unable to continue via video, I will contact you at the phone number you provided on your intake paperwork. If you want me to call you at a different number, please email me immediately (DrLegge@roadrunner.com) with that number
- ▶ Generally, the best way to contact me is via email (DrLegge@roadrunner.com)
- ▶ Alternately, you can leave me a voicemail at 716/204-5552 x 406 (weekdays)

- ▶ Our work is done during our sessions. Contact between sessions should be limited to making or changing appointments, or billing questions or issues
- ▶ All messages you exchange with me will become a part of your health record
- ▶ With your permission (or in case of emergency) I will coordinate care with one or more of your other providers. I'll use reasonable care to ensure that those communications are secure, and they safeguard your privacy

Our Safety and Emergency Plan

As a recipient of telemental health-based services, you will need to participate in ensuring your safety during mental health crises, medical emergencies, and sessions that you have with me. I will require you to designate an emergency contact. You will need to provide permission for me to communicate with this person about your care during emergencies. I will also develop with you a plan for what to do during mental health crises and emergencies, and a plan for how to keep your space safe during sessions. It is important that you engage with me in the creation of these plans and that you follow them when you need to.

Your Security and Privacy

Except where otherwise noted, I employ software and hardware tools that adhere to security best practices and applicable legal standards for the purposes of protecting your privacy and ensuring that records of your health care services are not lost or damaged.

As with all things in telemental health, however, you also have a role to play in maintaining your security. Please use reasonable security protocols to protect the privacy of your own health care information. For example: when communicating with me, use devices and service accounts that are protected by unique passwords that only you know. Also, use the secure tools that I have supplied for communications.

Recordings

Please do not record video or audio sessions without my consent. Making recordings can quickly and easily compromise your privacy and should be done so with great care. I will not record video or audio sessions.

I have read and consent to the above-stated policies and procedures:

Signed,

(Client)

Print name here:

Date: