**Skowronski Counseling**

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**Technology Services Consent Form**

In addition to my informed consent this form serves as additional informed consent specifically for Technology Assisted Services (TAS), also known as Teletherapy or Telehealth.

# **I. Technology Services Provided**

* **Video Sessions**- Video sessions are a great option for distance counseling. This method allows both the client and therapist to visit with each other face-to-face and communicate both verbally and nonverbally (through movement and facial expressions). I utilize Google Meet for video sessions as it is HIPAA-compliant, and I hold a Business Association Agreement (BAA) with this company.
* **Phone Call**- Phone sessions are not my preferred method, as we miss out on the nonverbal communication piece of therapy. However, I do still offer it for people who cannot otherwise meet with me in person or via video. Clients may also choose to call me outside of the hours of our scheduled sessions, however, please be aware that I am not always available to answer and will reach out whenever possible. Therefore, in emergencies clients should call 911, contact local authorities, or seek out the nearest hospital.
* **Text messaging/Email**- While I am set up to receive both text messages and emails, please keep these messages strictly to appointment scheduling. I do not conduct real time or asynchronous counseling through email or text message and as such my responses will be brief.

## II. Appropriateness for the Use of Technology

# Throughout the course of our work together, I will continue to assess whether technology services are providing the best care for you. If at any time I deem technology services no longer fitting, I will either ask that we hold sessions in person (if applicable) or provide you with references within your area of residence.

# **III. Plan for Connection Errors**

While technology can be a great option for a myriad of reasons, we also must acknowledge that even the best technology may fail us. If during a scheduled video session, you are unable to login or connect we will switch to a phone call session instead. If a particular videoconferencing service seems to cause problems continuously a different HIPAA compliant platform will be utilized in future sessions. In the case of poor connection during phone sessions the therapist and client will hang up and the therapist will begin a new phone call. If we are not able to establish connection with either a video or phone session, we will cancel the session and re-schedule. If connectivity continues to be a problem in the form of both video and phone sessions the therapist will re-evaluate the appropriateness of technology services and either suggest in person meetings (if possible) or refer the client to services within their area of residence. This is a part of the ongoing evaluation of appropriateness of using technology services for therapy. Sessions will be prorated to reflect actual time conducting therapy, for instance, if we are only able to connect for half of the session the client will only be expected to pay for 50% of the hourly rate.

## IV. Emergency Procedures

In the case of emergencies, please call 911, contact local authorities, or seek out the nearest hospital. I am not always available and may not be able to answer calls in times of crisis.

# **V. Credentials and Training**

Original training for technology assisted services was achieved through Our Lady of the Lake University at the Houston Campus. Each renewal period CEUs specific to these services will be sought out in the future in order to stay informed about the technology advances and recommendations for practice.

# **VI. Third Party Websites**

For my practice I utilize G Suite to store information as well as their HIPAA compliant email service. My Electronic Medical Records (EMR) are stored in a HIPAA-compliant system called Theranest. I only use HIPAA-compliant methods of communication with clients for technology sessions. I take measures to protect your information and I will spend time with you at the beginning and throughout our sessions to help you ensure that your sessions are being kept private on your end as well. When we use technology, the therapy room extends not only from where I am but to where you are as well. Therefore, we will work together to ensure you have access to a confidential space during our video sessions.

**VII. Information Collected**

Client information will be collected and stored through G Suite. G Suite is a HIPAA compliant service of which the therapist also holds a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) with which states the company’s agreement to protect client information.

**VIII. Electronic Maintenance of Client Records**

Client records will be maintained through G Suite, a HIPAA compliant webservice through Google. G Suite operates with a 128+ bit key management system (KMS) with automatic rotating key updates every 90 days to provide advanced security and limit the chances of breaches to confidential information. The therapist also holds a BAA with G Suite. In line with board regulations and ethical considerations, client records will be stored through G Suite for 6 years (or 5 years after the age of majority) after which client files will be deleted.

**IX. Security Measures**

HIPAA compliant regulations are followed in every process related to collecting, storing, and managing client information. I utilize G Suite’s HIPAA compliant and secure email service and storage program as well as utilizing Google Meet or other HIPAA compliant platforms for video sessions. I also ensure that at least two passwords are necessary to access client records. In the event that a breach does occur I will contact any clients that I believe have been affected and notify them of the information that may have been reached. At the beginning of our first session, I will also provide some recommendations that will also help to keep your information confidential on your end. While I take strict measures to keep your information confidential, I am not responsible for any breaches that may occur at your end.

**X. Risks and Benefits to Technology Assisted Services**

Some of the benefits to receiving technology assisted services are saving both time and finances on travel expenses as well as being able to connect with a therapist from the comfort of your own home. This may also be a great option for clients who live far away from in person services. However, there are also some risks that come with technology services. For instance, as the therapy session occurs in the client’s environment as well there may be a greater risk of interruptions. There may also be connection issues such as screen freezing and lag which can be disruptive in sessions. Use of technology services also requires a familiarity with technology that some might not have. Therefore, it is important to have a conversation with your therapist to determine the appropriateness of technology services when considering these alternatives.

By signing this form, you are acknowledging that you have read the information above and agree to receiving technology services

(Signature) (Date)

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(Printed Name)