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Telehealth Consent

Addendum to Informed Consent for Psychotherapy

This form is to educate my psychotherapy clients about videoconferencing psychotherapy sessions. When we cannot meet in person due to health or other concerns, videoconferencing is an option available to us.

Technology for Videoconferencing Sessions

Videoconferencing psychotherapy sessions are provided on my HIPAA-compliant Zoom platform and on doxy.me. These platforms allow for real-time video communication. You do not need your own Zoom or doxy.me accounts to join me in my “Zoom room” or doxy.me “room”. However, you will need a computer with a video-camera. A day or so before the meeting, I will send you a doxy.me or Zoom link. At the time of the meeting, click on the link. A video screen will pop up. You may have to click on icons in the lower left corner of the video box to turn on your microphone and camera.

Limitations Due to Use of this Technology

A variety of technological problems can cause delays in starting meetings or can interrupt a meeting. If case we lose our connection, please call my office telephone: (413) 584-2617, voicemailbox #2. I will check for messages there.

Please provide the phone number that I can call in case our internet connection fails: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Keep this phone with you while we meet so that I may call you as needed. If we cannot successfully reconnect on the internet, we can reschedule or continue on the telephone.

The audibility of videoconferencing is usually not as good as in face-to-face meetings. My experience is that participants often need to ask each other to repeat what we each said. We will also be less able to observe each other’s body language. All of this can result in a less “felt” sense of each other as compared to meeting face-to-face. If you sense that I have missed your meaning or responded in an unhelpful way, please tell me as soon as possible so that we can work to repair the mis-communication or mis-step.

Confidentiality Caveats

Communication via the internet cannot be guaranteed to be 100% secure.

The following are steps that we can take to increase security and confidentiality.

1. The Zoom videoconferencing platform and its Epic software as well as doxy.me are HIPAA-compliant. Our meetings are encrypted and secure.

2. We both agree not to record our videoconference meetings.

3. To prevent non-participants from joining our confidential meetings electronically, we must both secure the links to our doxy.me or Zoom meetings that I send to you via email. Ensure your email account and mobile device have secure passwords and ensure that you close your email platforms when not in use. I will do the same.

4. We both agree not to have any other people in the rooms where we hold our video-conference – with the exception for couples therapy.

5. In my experience, interruptions at home tend to occur during videoconferencing sessions and we should anticipate these. We can limit interruptions by telling people in our homes that we are having a confidential meeting, closing the doors to our rooms, and by placing a “Do Not Disturb” sign on our doors. Nonetheless, people may forget and walk in, other phone lines and doorbells ring, pets make their presence known, etc.

Payment for Sessions

Clients paying out-of-pocket for therapy will pay the same fee as when we meet in person. For clients using health insurance, **Governor Baker of Massachusetts has just ordered all insurance companies to pay for tele-care. Also, at the MA Secretary of Health and Human Services news conference – under the current state of emergency in MA, all insurance carriers are required to reimburse telehealth visits the same as for F2F visits without the need for prior authorization.**

Co-payments will still apply. If the insurance company will not authorize this service, we will make other arrangements.

Payment should be made by check by mail to my office address during the current health crisis:

Cancellations

Given the demands of the current health crisis, there may be a need for last-minute cancellations and we will need to be flexible with each other. Nonetheless, we must respect the time we each commit to our meetings. I will apply a $50 cancellation fee for non-urgent cancellations without 24 hours notice.

Thank you.

Mark Karpel, PhD

Agreement

I have read the above information on videoconferencing psychotherapy, the limitations, and confidentiality caveats. With this understanding, I wish to participate in videoconferencing psychotherapy sessions when health or other concerns prohibit our being able to meet in person.

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Name Date