



TELEMENTAL HEALTH INFORMED CONSENT

I, _____, hereby consent to participate in telemental health with, Donna M. Gold, LCSW as part of my psychotherapy. I understand that telemental health is the practice of delivering clinical health care services via technology assisted media or other electronic means between a practitioner and a client who are located in two different locations.

I understand the following, with respect to telemental health:

- 1) I understand that I have the right to withdraw consent at any time without affecting my right to future care, services, or program benefits to which I would otherwise be entitled.
- 2) I understand that there are risks, benefits, and consequences associated with telemental health, including but not limited to, disruption of transmission by technology failures, interruption and/or breaches of confidentiality by unauthorized persons, and/or limited ability to respond to emergencies.
- 3) I understand that there will be no recording of any of the online sessions by either party. All information disclosed within sessions and written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be disclosed to anyone without written authorization, except where the disclosure is permitted and/or required by law.
- 4) I understand that the privacy laws that protect the confidentiality of my protected health information (PHI) also apply to telemental health unless an exception to confidentiality applies (i.e. mandatory reporting of child, elder, or vulnerable adult abuse; danger to self or others; I raise mental/emotional health as an issue in a legal proceeding).
- 5) I understand that if I am having suicidal or homicidal thoughts, actively experiencing psychotic symptoms or experiencing a mental health crisis that cannot be resolved remotely, it may be determined that telemental health services are not appropriate and a higher level of care is required.
- 6) I understand that during a telemental health session, we could encounter technical difficulties resulting in service interruptions. If this occurs, end and restart the session. If we are unable to reconnect within ten minutes, please call me at 858-227-9182 to discuss since we may have to re-schedule.
- 7) I understand that my therapist may need to contact my emergency contact and/or appropriate authorities in case of an emergency.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

I need to know your location in case of an emergency. You agree to inform me of the address where you are at the beginning of each session. I also need a contact person who I may contact on your behalf in a life- threatening emergency only. This person will only be contacted to go to your location or take you to the hospital in the event of an emergency.

In case of an emergency, my location is: _____

My emergency contact person’s name, address, phone: _____



EQUIPMENT TO PREPARE

1. **Fully charged Laptop, desktop, or tablet with webcam and audio connection.** If you can, have your device plugged in and charging during your session, or ensure the device is fully charged prior to your session.
2. **Earphones or headphones** are strongly recommended to prevent sound echoing and to allow you to fully focus on the conversation with your therapist.
3. **High speed internet:** Internet with a bandwidth of at least 10 mbps is recommended for highest quality and to prevent connection issues. To check your internet connection, Google search "internet speed test" and click on the blue button that says "Run Speed Test." If it shows your wifi is under 10 mbps, you may want to restart your router or discuss an alternative option with your provider, such as a phone call.
4. **Your phone as backup:** Have your fully-charged phone next to you as back up, in case of any technical difficulties which may require you to switch to a phone call or a different video call platform.
5. **Regarding EMDR:** Please note that EMDR using telemental health will not work on a device as small as a phone, because the distance from one end of the screen to the other is so short, it does not allow for enough eye movement to truly create bilateral stimulation and be effective. You may be able to use an ipad/tablet, but a laptop or desktop computer screen would work best.

Note: Phones are not recommended for teletherapy for the following reasons:

- There are more notifications you'll need to turn off to avoid disruption during session.
- Your phone might run out of battery if you are using the jack for earphones rather than charging.
- The screen is smaller, and therefore offers a less immersive therapy experience.

ENVIRONMENT TO PREPARE

1. **Good lighting:** Sit next to the window if possible, or if your appointment is after sunset or in a location without a window, bring in as much artificial light as possible. Moving a desk lamp or standing lamp in front of you can help, as can removing any lighting behind you.
2. **A quiet space:** Find a quiet space in your home: ideally in a private room, but in a studio apartment, available closets or the bathroom are also options. Shut windows, doors, and ask other household members to lower the sound of their music speakers. A quiet space is particularly important for an effective EMDR session.
3. **Privacy:** Sharing an apartment or house with other people? Let them know you are having a therapy session (or if you're not comfortable with that, consider saying a "doctor's appointment" or "important private conversation") and ask them to move to a different room, listen to music, and or use silicone ear plugs that block out noise. Alternatively, you can purchase a white noise machine to muffle what you're saying. Put a "Do not disturb" note up on your door and lock the door so you don't have to be worried about being distracted in the middle of your session.

If there is no private, quiet indoor space available to you, consider your outdoor options: If the weather forecast is clear, you might request a phone call from your therapist, which you could take walking around a park (or in your car, if you have one), or another safe, secluded outdoor area.



GETTING READY FOR THE APPOINTMENT

- 1. Set up your space.** Check your internet connection, and make sure your space is set up comfortably 15 minutes before your appointment. You might sit on a chair in front of a desk or table, or if you're seated on the ground, a meditation cushion can be a grounding option. As you're setting up, take this time to start quieting your mind and shift your attention from work, kids, or other commitments to therapy and healing.
- 2. Close applications on your desktop or use a separate new desktop.** Close out of any open applications, or, if you have a Mac, use Mission Control to open a new "Desktop space" that is totally clear of programs. If applications are still running, make sure notifications are muted; this can both help with internet speed and also prevent distractions in the middle of your appointment.
- 3. Engage the senses:** Take a few moments to think about what would feel good to you now. Consider brewing a cup of herbal to sip on during session, spritz some essential oils, or gather up a soft pillow or blanket.
- 4. Take a deep breath, close your eyes, and quiet your mind.** In the five minutes before session, give yourself a big, big breath. You're here, you're making time for self-investment, and now all you need to focus on is the therapy session.
- 5. Click on the link your provider sent you!** Click on the link your provider sent you in advance to launch into session!

DECOMPRESSING AFTER THE SESSION

Since the commute to therapy is removed for online sessions, it can be easy to jump right back into your home life around you—and harder to really process and register what you just covered with your therapist.

Consider starting a therapy journal and spending as much time as you need or are able to after the session to reflect on what you learned, and to prepare for your next session. This can also help you make the most of your time with your therapist and make your therapy journey overall more enjoyable.

CONSENT TO TREAT

I, _____, have read the information provided above and discussed it with my therapist. I understand the information contained in this form and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Signature of Client/Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Signature of Client/Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Signature of Therapist

Date