



Acceptance & Healing LLC

## INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY

The Informed Consent for Telepsychology is a supplement to Informed Consent. This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the phone, computer, or the Internet. Please read this carefully, and let Dr Van Dermark know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

### **Benefits and Risks of Telepsychology**

Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telepsychology is that the client and clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the client or clinician moves to a different location, takes an extended vacation, or is otherwise unable to continue to meet in person. It is also more convenient and takes less time. Telepsychology, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits of telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telepsychology, as well as some risks. For example:

- **Risks to confidentiality.** Because telepsychology sessions take place outside of the typical office setting, there is potential for third parties to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. Dr Van Dermark will take reasonable steps to ensure the privacy and security of your information, and it is important for you to review your own security measures and ensure that they are adequate to protect information on your end. Acceptance and Healing is not responsible for confidentiality breaches due to client action. Therefore, it is important for you to make sure you find a private place for our session where you will not be interrupted in order to protect the privacy of our session on your cell phone or other device. You should participate in therapy only while in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation. It is recommended that you use only secure networks for telepsychology sessions and have passwords to protect the device you use for sessions.
- **Issues related to technology.** There are risks inherent in the use of technology for therapy that are important to understand including technology may stop working during a session, other people might be able to get access to our private conversation, transmission of confidential information is interrupted by unauthorized people, or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized people or companies.
- **Crisis management and intervention.** In general, telepsychology is not clinically indicated for clients who are currently in a crisis situation because of the high levels of support and intervention needed, and because evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more challenging in telepsychology than in person therapy. Before engaging in

telepsychology, we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our telepsychology work. At the bottom of this form, please identify an emergency contact person who is near your physical location; by signing this form, you are giving Dr Van Dermark permission to contact this person in the event of an emergency to assist in addressing the situation. If you are having an emergency while in session and the session is interrupted for any reason, please call 911, or go to your nearest emergency room (ER). Reconnect with Dr Van Dermark after you have called or obtained emergency services.

- **Efficacy.** Most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy. However, some therapists believe that something is lost by not being in the same room. For example, there is debate about a therapist's ability to fully understand non-verbal information when working remotely. If you ever have concerns about misunderstandings between you and Dr. Van Dermark related to the use of technology, please bring up such concerns immediately. If Dr. Van Dermark believes that teletherapy will not meet your specific therapeutic needs, she will refer you to another therapist in your location who can provide appropriate services.

### **Technology Logistics for Telepsychology**

Dr Van Dermark uses SimplePractice to conduct telepsychology sessions. You may have to have computer, tablet, or cell phone systems (downloading the app) and 3g/4g internet connection to use telepsychology services. Although the teletherapy platform utilized by Dr Van Dermark is free for you to use, you are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telepsychology.

Choose a space that is private and allows for the least amount of distractions and interruptions. If there is a chance someone could walk into the room where you are having your session, please let Dr. Van Dermark know so that you and her can establish a signal for her to know to stop talking if someone enters.

Tele-therapy tends to break down some of the boundaries in place when meeting with a healthcare professional in his or her office, so just as a reminder, please be dressed for your appointment in a way that is appropriate for public and although you may have to resort to your car for privacy if you live with many others, it is not appropriate to be driving during your session.

If you have never met Dr. Van Dermark in person, she will need you to authenticate your identity by holding up an ID (e.g. license) to the camera at the beginning of the session.

If the session is interrupted, disconnect from the session and Dr. Van Dermark will attempt to recontact you via the platform that you were using. Please have your phone nearby. If that platform is no longer effective, Dr. Van Dermark will call or text you with suggestions for switching to a different platform. If connection challenges persist, it will be your choice of whether you resort to phone (limiting my ability to read your body language) or end the session early (you would only be charged the prorated amount of the actual session time). Please consider carefully which of these options will be acceptable to you if you were to have to resort to them. Licensure standards and insurance companies typically prohibit only audio for tele-therapy, but the requirement for video

has been waived during the Covid-19 outbreak because of high internet demand. Phone can be an acceptable medium if you have been an ongoing client of Dr. Van Dermark but much less so for clients that she does not know well.

### **Electronic Communications**

Communication in-between sessions via email should be limited to matters such as setting and/or changing appointments, and other related, administrative issues. You should be aware that no provider can guarantee the confidentiality of any information communicated by email or text. Therefore, Dr. Van Dermark will not include any clinical material by email or texts and request that you do not as well. Treatment is most effective when clinical discussions occur in your regularly scheduled sessions. However if an urgent issue arises, you may request a phone call via email. Dr. Van Dermark will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make the request except on weekends and holidays. If you are unable to wait for Dr. Van Dermark to return your call, please contact 911 (emergency services), contact nearest emergency room, or 988 (suicide prevention services) in the case of an emergency.

### **Confidentiality**

Psychologists have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telepsychology. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that it cannot be guaranteed that communications will be kept confidential or that third party may not gain access to our communications. Even though state of the art encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems may be utilized to help secure communication, there is a risk that electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, and/or accessed by a third party. You should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications. The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that are outlined in my Informed Consent for Therapy Services still apply in telepsychology. Please let Dr Van Dermark know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

### **Appropriateness of Telepsychology**

I will let you know if I decide that telepsychology is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you. We will discuss options of engaging in in-person counseling or referrals to another professional in your location who can provide appropriate services.

### **Fees**

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology as apply for in-person psychotherapy. Payment for online therapy services is due at time of services and must be paid by credit card. Credit card will be stored in your secure electronic medical records. Your card will automatically be charged at the time of appointment for payments due. However, insurance or other managed care providers may not cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. If your insurance, HMO, third-party payor, or other managed care provider does not cover electronic psychotherapy sessions, you will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session. Please contact your insurance company prior to our engaging in telepsychology sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered.

### **Records**

Any and all images in tele-therapy are considered confidential and will not be stored or used in any way. No recordings of sessions will be made unless there is expressed reason and consent to do so via written consent from both parties.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & ACCEPTANCE

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have read and understand the information provided above regarding tele-therapy, have discussed it with Dr. Van Dermark, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I have the right to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting my right to future care or treatment nor risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which I would otherwise be entitled.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the laws that protect the confidentiality of my personal information also apply to online therapy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand that although Acceptance and Healing utilizes secure, encrypted audio/video transmission software to deliver tele-therapy services, there are risks associated with electronic forms of communication.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if Dr. Van Dermark believes I would be better served by another form of intervention (e.g., face-to-face services), I will be referred to a mental health professional that can provide such services in my area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the risks and benefits related to the use of tele-therapy and had my questions regarding the procedure answered.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand that there are alternatives to tele-psychotherapy (e.g. face-to-face therapy).

I hereby give my informed consent to participate in tele-therapy services for treatment under the terms described herein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Client or Personal Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Client or Personal Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Contact/ Relationship

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address for Sessions