

# Teletherapy at Centers for Family Change

This document details the **Centers for Family Change's** policies for the provision of Teletherapy. Please remember that it is important that you read this document carefully because by signing the **Centers for Family Change Teletherapy Consent Form** you are agreeing to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this agreement.

## **Teletherapy: provisions and conditions**

**Definition of Teletherapy:** Teletherapy at the Centers for Family Change consists of ongoing therapy with a Centers for Family Change clinician through interactive audio, video, telephone and/or other audio/video communications. Teletherapy does not include email or text messaging.

## **Confidentiality and Teletherapy**

- 1) The laws that protect the confidentiality of personal information also apply to teletherapy. These provisions are contained in the Centers for Family Change Privacy Notice which is available on our website: [www.centersforfamilychange.com](http://www.centersforfamilychange.com).
- 2) There are technological risks associated with teletherapy that may impinge on confidentiality. These risks include but are not limited to the following:
  - a. That no method of technological communication can completely guarantee confidentiality, and that with any technology there is always a small risk of hacking and loss of confidentiality.
  - b. That with the use of technology there is a risk of a disruption of teletherapy sessions, both video based and telephone. In the event of disruption your Centers for Family Change will call you to attempt to re-establish services.
  - c. That information transmitted as part of Teletherapy sessions may not be sufficient (e.g., poor resolution of video, poor audio quality) to allow for appropriate decision making by your therapist, or may impede your therapist in responding in the most effective way. Poor quality audio and/or video may result in your therapist not being able to discern changes in facial expression, changes in voice tone, or non-verbal cues. As a result, the possible lack of access to all the information that might be available in a face to face session may impede your therapist's effectiveness.
  - d. That teletherapy may seem more impersonal and your therapist may not seem as engaged due to the limitations of technology.

## **Appropriateness of Teletherapy**

- 3) I understand that teletherapy may not be appropriate for all problems, situations, and persons and that, as with in-person therapy, your Centers for Family Change therapist may decline to offer or continue teletherapy services:

- a. If your therapist determines that the potential risks associated with the provision of teletherapy to you/your family make teletherapy a poor fit for you/your family, your therapist will terminate teletherapy services. However, in these instances your therapist will terminate in a clinically appropriate manner and endeavor to provide alternative referrals. Reasons for the termination of teletherapy include, but are not limited to, the Centers for Family Change determining that the nature of your/your family's problems/situation, or technological issues with the provision of teletherapy to you/your family, make teletherapy a poor choice of service.
- b. In a crisis or emergency situation your therapist may determine that a teletherapy session is not an appropriate service and may call 911, direct you/your family to call 911, or direct you/your family to the nearest hospital or crisis facility.

### **Client Responsibilities associated with Teletherapy**

- 4) Just as with in-person services, there are responsibilities for you, as our client. In order to receive teletherapy from Centers for Family Change it is our policy to require that our clients:
  - a. Have access to and familiarity with, the appropriate technology in order to participate in the services provided.
  - b. Turn off Siri, Google Now, Alexa or any other digital assistant app on your phone and/or any device such as Amazon Echo or Google Assistant. These devices record conversations and thus pose a significant risk to your confidentiality.
  - c. Not record therapy sessions or any conversations with your Centers for Family Change therapist or any Centers for Family Change staff. In turn, Centers for Family Change will not record your sessions.
  - d. Strive to maintain confidentiality on your end of the session by using secure Wi-Fi (not public) and having updated virus protection on any device that you use for teletherapy communication with your Centers for Family Change therapist, including but not limited to computer, iPad, smart phone or any other device.
  - e. Are in a private and a quiet place where you will not be distracted or interrupted, and our session will not be overheard.
  - f. Inform your therapists of location, e.g., home, office, etc. and agree to participate in teletherapy sessions in a confidential and appropriate setting.
  - g. Only have present persons who you have informed your therapist are part of the therapy process and to show your therapist the room you are in, if requested to do so.
  - h. Only use equipment for teletherapy that you own or control. Please do not use equipment owned by another (excepting parents or spouse, or significant other), and specifically do not use an employer's computer or network. Any information entered into an employer's computer can be considered by the courts to belong to the employer and your privacy may thus be compromised.

- 5) Access to your email address (or addresses). If you are requesting video based teletherapy services Centers for Family Change requires your email, and your permission to send emails that include your therapist's name and our practice name. By entering your email below, you are agreeing to give Centers for Family Change permission to email you for the purposes of teletherapy:
- a. Email address:

**Insurance benefits and teletherapy services.** Please keep in mind that your insurance carrier will determine what types of teletherapy services are and are not covered, and that you will be responsible for charges associated with services you or your family members receive from the Centers for Family Change.

**Covid-19 and Teletherapy:** During the current Pandemic many insurance carriers have and are becoming more open to covering teletherapy services. As of April 2020, this is an evolving situation. While Centers for Family Change staff will assist you in trying to understand your insurance coverage please understand that you are responsible for payments and for understanding your insurance coverage for teletherapy services.

I understand I have the following rights with respect to telehealth:

- 6) You have the right to withhold or remove consent for teletherapy at any time. However, the withdrawal of consent may result in Centers for Family Change not being able to offer you/your family therapy services if in office therapy appointments are not available at the time you withdraw consent. In these instances, your Centers for Family Change therapist will endeavor to provide appropriate referrals.
- 7) You may revoke your consent, in writing at any time. That revocation will be binding on your therapist and the **Centers for Family Change** unless: actions have been taken in reliance on it; if there are obligations imposed on Centers for Family Change by your health insurer in order to process or substantiate claims made under your policy; and/or you have not satisfied any financial obligations you have incurred. Revocation will result in your therapist ending your teletherapy with the **Centers for Family Change** as we cannot provide you with services if you do not consent to our policies and procedures.

### **Agreement to Receive Teletherapy Services**

By signing the Centers for Family Change Service Teletherapy Consent form you are acknowledging that you have read, understood and accepted all the terms and information contained in the Centers for Family Change Teletherapy Policy, are making an informed choice to consent to receive teletherapy (with its attendant risks and rewards) and have had ample opportunity offered to you ask questions and seek clarification of anything unclear to you.