



INFORMED CONSENT for TELEHEALTH SESSIONS

Paradigm Hawaii Counseling, Inc.

This Informed Consent for Telehealth contains important information focusing on conducting psychotherapy sessions using the phone or internet. Please read over this consent carefully, sign and keep for your records, and confirm verbal consent with your counselor to conduct sessions via telehealth. Please direct any questions or concerns to Keri at 808-387-4355 or by emailing paradigmhawaii@gmail.com.

What is telehealth?

Telehealth refers to providing psychotherapy sessions remotely using telecommunications technologies, through secure platforms (our office is currently using Zoom for most insurances and Online Care (OLC) for HMSA members).

One benefit of telehealth is the client and clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location, which saves on travel time to and from the office. This service can allow continuity of care, and be especially useful to home-bound clients, those who have young children and are not able to secure childcare, those who have limited time to meet, those who may be on an extended vacation or time away, those who may be sick or caring for a loved one, or any other reason where client is unable to meet in person. Telehealth does however, require technological competence via updated equipment (i.e. phones or computers with the latest operating software) and up to date wifi connections. While there are benefits to utilizing telehealth, there are some risks involved. Some examples are:

- *Risks to confidentiality.* Because telehealth sessions take place outside of the Paradigm office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during sessions. Paradigm providers will take every precaution to ensure confidentiality and privacy are kept at all times from the provider's end. However it is important for clients to also make sure that a private place is available where not only confidentiality will be kept, but where there will be no interruptions.
- *Issues related to technology.* There are many ways that technology issues might impact telehealth sessions. For example, technology may stop working during a session, other people might be able to hear or have access to the conversation, or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized people or companies.
- *Crisis management and intervention.* At any given time, clients can present with a crisis situation which will require additional levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in telehealth, we will address action plans that may be required should an emergency arise during a telehealth session where the provider is not physically available to help a client.
- *Efficacy.* Most research shows that telehealth is about as effective as in-person sessions. However, some may feel that something is lost by not being in face-to-face sessions. For example, there is debate about whether a counselor has the ability to fully understand non-verbal information when working remotely.

Electronic Communications

You can decide together with your counselor, which type of telehealth service to utilize. Clients will be responsible for any equipment or upgrades necessarily to utilize telehealth. With this in mind, the technology that Paradigm uses for sessions, is completely free for our clients, though any cost clients may have to keep their computers and phones compliant with the latest software upgrades will be the sole responsibility of the client.

For communication between sessions, we will utilize phone calls or text messaging, with your consent, and only for administrative or logistic purposes unless prior arrangements have been agreed upon. Please note that email and text messages are not secure forms of communication and so Paradigm will not be responsible for personal content that clients may disclose in this regard. Treatment will be most effective when clinical discussions occur at your regular scheduled sessions. If any emergency or crisis arises however, you may reach out to your provider at a non-scheduled time, allowing 24 hours for your provider to get back to you (most will respond quickly, if they are not in another session). If you are unable to reach your provider or unable to wait for a call back, please contact your family physician or, if needed, the local suicide hotline at 808-832-3100 or national suicide line at 800-273-8255.

Confidentiality

Paradigm has a legal and ethical responsibility to make every effort to protect all communication between our counselors and clients. However, the nature of electronic communication is such that we cannot guarantee that these communications will be kept confidential or that other people will not gain access to these communications. While we use every technology we are aware of to help keep your information private, there is a risk that electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured or accessed by a third party. Therefore you should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of these communication methods. For example, use only secure networks for telehealth sessions and use hard to decipher passwords for your devices.

Emergencies and Technology

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting telehealth sessions. To address some of these difficulties, your provider will create an emergency plan in the event that a crisis arises. Please identify to your provider a contact person who is near your location, who your counselor can contact in the event of a crisis or emergency, so that they can on your behalf, intervene during the session and offer physical assistance if necessary. In the event of a life threatening crisis, if the session is interrupted for any reason, please do not call your counselor back. Rather, please call 911 or the local suicide hotline at 808-832-3100 or the national suicide hotline at 800-273-8255. Crisis websites that you can utilize are:

- (State of Hawaii) <http://health.hawaii.gov/amhd/consumer/access/>
- (National) <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

If the session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, please disconnect from the session and your counselor will wait two (2) minutes and then reconnect with you via the same telehealth platform on which you were using to conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two (2) minutes, then please call your counselor.

If there is a technological failure, and we are unable to reconnect, it will be between you and your counselor whether the session continues via the phone (which is not HIPAA compliant). With your verbal consent, and if all other HIPAA-compliant platforms fail, we will utilize a phone call to complete the session, at the remaining time from when the telehealth platform disconnected.

Fees

The same fees will apply for telehealth as they do for regular in-office visits meaning copays and tax plus deductibles (if applicable) will be collected following each session. If your insurance provides a specific portal for telehealth services, all agreements such forth by said insurance will be honored here.

Records

The telehealth sessions will not be audibly or visually recorded in any way, unless there is another agreement in place between the client and counselor. We will maintain records the same way as an in-office session by keeping our notes in our secure database.

Informed Consent

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the general intake paperwork that was agreed upon at the outset of our clinical work together and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement. Your verbal consent indicates agreement with these terms and conditions. Please notify your provider with a verbal consent and keep this original document for your records. Your verbal consent will be noted by your counselor and will act as a binding agreement to these terms.

Date of verbal consent

Effective March 23, 2020