

INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEHEALTH SERVICES

Telehealth refers to providing treatment, consultation, or assessment services remotely using telecommunications technologies (e.g., phone, video). One of the benefits of telehealth services is that the client and the clinician do not need to be in the same physical location. This is a particularly helpful service in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, when social distancing and closures are restricting in person contact.

Not every client presentation, issue, and/or personal situation is appropriate to this treatment medium. You are being offered use of telehealth treatment services because your clinician feels it is appropriate to your circumstance and may be helpful. If this recommendation changes at any time, your clinician has the right to discontinue services and will discuss the reasons for this as well as work with you to make a plan for alternative (e.g., referral) or future in-person services.

Although there are many benefits of telehealth services, there are some risks that must be discussed in advance:

Risks to confidentiality – Since telehealth services take place outside of your clinician’s private office, there is a higher potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place. Your clinician will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy on their end (e.g., encrypted platforms, secure technology, private room, etc.). However, you also are required to have access to a quiet, private room that is free of distractions during your appointment in order to maintain appropriate confidentiality. Entirely confidential communication cannot be guaranteed with telehealth services including those delivered by video, phone, email, or other telehealth communications.

Issues related to technology – Technology issues, such as the video freezing or ‘dropping’ due to internet connections, may impact telehealth delivery. Your information may be disrupted, delayed, or distorted by technology failures. Although only secure telehealth platforms will be used it is possible that technology failure could result in a confidentiality breach.

Crisis management and intervention – Telehealth supports may not be appropriate when a client is in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support. Should this circumstance arise, your clinician will work with you to make an alternative and appropriate plan. It may be required that your clinician have access to at least one emergency contact (which will be obtained by you in writing), as well as additional resources. If you or your child are in an emergency situation and/or your or someone’s safety is in jeopardy, you should *immediately* call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. If you or your child are in crisis, but not in immediate danger you may also consider calling one of the following crisis lines at:

- o For children/youth:
 - Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868; or SMS/Text: 686868; website: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
 - Youth in BC 24/7 crisis support: Phone: 1-866-661-3311; or online chat at <https://youthinbc.com/> 12pm – 1am daily

- 24 Hour Crisis Line BC: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433), or SMS/Text: Text 45645

o For adults:

- 24 Hour Crisis Line BC: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433), or SMS/Text: Text 45645
- 24 Hour BC Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789 (do not add 604, 778 or 250 before the number)
- Crisis support chat at <https://crisiscentrechat.ca/>

Efficacy – There is research that shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person therapy. However, less research has been done on this with children and more investigation is needed to determine long-term effects of in-person versus telehealth-based therapy.

There are also some important guidelines that must be followed:

Location - Telehealth services are required by law to occur within the province of British Columbia, where your clinician is licenced. Therefore, it is required for you to inform your clinician if you are traveling outside of BC, as this may impact service delivery decisions.

Recording – Confidentiality applies to telehealth services, and *neither party* (client or clinician) are permitted to record the session without the express, written permission in advance from the other person(s).

Orientation – If videoconferencing is used your clinician will provide a link to their video conference platform and relevant support to help you learn how to use the platform.

Supplies – You will need a computer with a webcam or smartphone with a webcam, along with a secure (i.e., not public/free) high-speed internet connection. You are responsible for any costs associated with equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telehealth.

Schedule – It is important to be on time for sessions. If you need to cancel or change your appointment, please notify your clinician 48 hours in advance by phone, email, or cancelling online to avoid being billed for the session as per regular clinic policies.

Back-up contact – Your clinician requires a working phone number to reach you should video based services be intermittent or not reliable.

Insurance – As the client, it is your responsibility to confirm with your insurance company that the telehealth sessions will be reimbursed; if they are not reimbursed you are still responsible for full payment.

Contact between sessions – Your clinician will only be available to you by video/phone during scheduled appointment times. Should you require additional appointments or follow-up time, this can be arranged in session directly with your clinician, or by admin staff who can schedule a follow-up session or phone call with you.

Fees – The same fee rates and policies will apply for telehealth services as for

in-person sessions.

Feedback – If telehealth services are not meeting your needs appropriately, you should discuss your concerns directly with your clinician as soon as possible so that changes and alternatives may be arranged.

Right to decline – You may decline telehealth services at any time without jeopardizing your access to future care and services. However, due to concerns around COVID-19, your clinician may not be able to see you for in-person services for an undetermined length of time. You may also ask for alternative referral information at any time.

Please note that these policies and guidelines are supplemental to the regular Brentwood Counselling Centre consent forms (including limits of confidentiality) and clinic policies provided to you at your first intake appointment, which still apply.

Client A's Signature (including Minors)

By typing in your name and emailing back this form or using an electronic signature, you have electronically acknowledged and indicated that you understand the risks and benefits of engaging in telehealth services and agree to adhere to the guidelines and policies outlined above.

Date

Client B's Signature (including Minors)

By typing in your name and emailing back this form or using an electronic signature, you have electronically acknowledged and indicated that you understand the risks and benefits of engaging in telehealth services and agree to adhere to the guidelines and policies outlined above.

Date

Parent/Guardian's Signature (for Minors only)

By typing in your name and emailing back this form or using an electronic signature, you have electronically acknowledged and indicated that you understand the risks and benefits of engaging in telehealth services and agree to adhere to the guidelines and policies outlined above.

Date