



## CA PSYCHOLOGY

### INFORMED CONSENT FOR ONLINE PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES

Tele-therapy refers to the remote provision of psychotherapy services using telecommunications technologies.

The Informed Consent for Online Psychotherapy Services is a supplement to CA Psychology's Client Services Agreement and Informed Consent. It contains important information concerning engaging in electronic psychotherapy or tele-therapy. Please read this consent carefully.

#### BENEFITS AND RISKS OF TELE-THERAPY

One of the benefits of tele-therapy is that the client and psychologist can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the client or psychologist are in a situation where they are unable to meet in person due to extenuating circumstances (such as lack of transportation or childcare, inclement weather, or physical limitations). It can also increase the convenience and time efficiency of both parties.

Some of the inherent risks of tele-therapy are as follows:

1. **Risks to confidentiality:** Because tele-therapy sessions take place outside of the typical office setting, there is potential for third parties to overhear sessions if they are not conducted in a secure environment. Dr. Gallahue 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. CA Psychology is not responsible for confidentiality breaches due to client actions. You should participate in therapy only while in a room or an area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation. It is recommended that you use only secure networks for tele-therapy sessions and have passwords to protect the device you use for tele-therapy.
2. **Issues related to technology:** There are risks inherent in the use of technology for therapy that are important to understand, such as: potential for technology to fail during a session, potential that transmission of confidential information is interrupted by unauthorized parties, or potential for electronically stored information to be accessed by unauthorized parties.
3. **Crisis management and intervention:** Generally, tele-therapy is not clinically indicated for clients in crisis situations because of the high levels of support and intervention needed, and because evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult in tele-therapy than in traditional in-person therapy. However, in case an emergency arises during your tele-therapy work, Dr. Gallahue will create a response plan before beginning. At the bottom of this form, please identify an emergency contact person who is near your location; by signing this form, you are giving Dr. Gallahue 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 (such as technological failure), call 911, or go to your nearest emergency room. Reconnect with Dr. Gallahue after you have called or obtained emergency services.
4. **Efficacy:** While most research has failed to demonstrate that tele-therapy is less effective than in person therapy, some experienced mental health professionals believe that

something is lost by not being in the same room. For example, there is debate about one's ability when doing remote work to fully process non-verbal information. If you ever have concerns about misunderstandings between you and Dr. Gallahue related to the use of technology, please bring up such concerns immediately. If Dr. Gallahue believes that tele-therapy 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 TELE-THERAPY

You will need a computer, tablet, or mobile phone and a 3g or 4g internet connection to use tele-therapy services reliably.

Although the tele-therapy platform utilized by Dr. Gallahue is free for you to use, you are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain the necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in tele-therapy.

A computer is preferred because of the larger screen and better connectivity. If you must use a phone or tablet, please plan to find a way to prop it up on a stable surface so the image doesn't bounce as you talk.

Chrome is the recommended internet browser, but others (e.g. Firefox, Safari) will do.

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. Gallahue know so that you and her can establish a signal for her to know to stop talking if someone enters.

Before you begin your session, leave yourself some extra time to make sure you are comfortable and to experiment with how the lighting in the room will impact the video image. Please avoid windows and lamps directly behind as that puts your face in shadow and causes eye strain for Dr. Gallahue.

Consider ways to minimize distractions, such as putting cell phone into Do Not Disturb function, turning off landline phone ringers, putting a sign on your door to remind family members not to interrupt.

Use headphones to increase privacy and decrease the chance of echoes.

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. Gallahue 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. Gallahue will attempt to re-contact you via the platform that you were using. Please have your phone nearby. If that platform is no longer effective, Dr. Gallahue 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. Gallahue, 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. Gallahue will not include any clinical material by email 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. Gallahue will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make the request. If you are unable to wait for Dr. Gallahue to return your call, please contact 911 (emergency services) or 988 (suicide prevention services) in the case of an emergency.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Psychologists have a legal and ethical responsibility to make every effort to protect all communications, electric and otherwise, that are a part of therapy. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that it cannot be guaranteed that communications will be kept confidential and/or that a third party may not gain access to 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. The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that are outlined in CA Psychology's Client Services Agreement and Informed Consent still apply in tele-therapy. Please let Dr. Gallahue know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

## FEES

The same fee rates shall apply for tele-therapy as apply for in-person psychotherapy. Payment for online therapy services is due at time of service and must be paid by credit card. Credit cards will be stored in your secure electronic medical record. Your card will automatically be charged at the time of appointment for payments due.

## RECORDINGS

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. Gallahue, 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 CA Psychology 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. Gallahue 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client Name *(Please Print)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client Signature

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

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

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