INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY

This document is an addendum to the WSU Vancouver Counseling Services Disclosure Statement and Informed Consent and does not replace it. This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information; please read this carefully.

Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. Telepsychology is offered to improve access to counseling services when significant barriers to in-person counseling services exist, which ensures continuity of care when a client or clinician is unable to meet in person. It is also more convenient and takes less time. A growing body of research indicates that telepsychology can be an effective mode of treatment with benefits similar to face-to-face-therapy. Like any other form of treatment, the results of telepsychology cannot be guaranteed. You may choose not to receive and/or may discontinue telepsychology services at any time.

Telepsychology services may not be appropriate, or the best choice of service for certain reasons including, but not limited to: heightened risk of harm to oneself or others; lack of access to, or difficulty with, communications technology; significant communications service disruptions; and/or need for more intensive services. In these cases, your counselor will help you establish referrals to the appropriate services.

Although there are benefits of telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person counseling and telepsychology, as well as some risks that are unique and specific to telepsychology including:

- Sessions could be disrupted, delayed, communications distorted, or poor transmission quality due to technical failures, and/or telecommunication services availability or outages.
- Telepsychology involves communication through information technology that may reduce visual and auditory cues and increase the likelihood of misunderstanding one another.
- Because sessions take place outside of the counselor’s private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. You should participate in therapy only while in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation.
- Your counselor may determine telepsychology is not an appropriate treatment option or stop telepsychology treatment at any time if your conditions changes or telepsychology presents barriers to effective treatment.
- As with any electronic technology including secure applications, there is a potential, although it is low risk, that security protocols or safeguards could fail and your confidential information could be accessed by unauthorized persons.

WSU Vancouver Counseling Services works to reduce these information security risks by, among other things, using videoconferencing software developed by health care providers to deliver telehealth services securely (Zoom for Healthcare). You can help safeguard your mental health information by doing the following:

- You and your counselor will engage in session only from a private location where you will not be overheard or interrupted. You will use your own computer or device, or one owned by WSU but that is not publicly accessible.
You will ensure that the computer or device you use has updated operating and anti-virus software.

It is important to use a secure internet connection rather than public free WiFi.

Consider using headphones as an extra layer of privacy.

You will not record any sessions, nor will WSU Vancouver Counseling Services record your sessions without your written consent. Washington State law requires parties in a private conversation to provide their expressed consent before a conversation can be records.

You may only engage in sessions when you are physically located in the state of Washington. Your counselor will confirm this each session. Please make sure that WSU Vancouver Counseling Services has a correct phone number at which you can be reached and have your phone with you at session times. If you are unable to connect, or get disconnected, please try to connect again and if problems continues contact WSU Vancouver Counseling Services at 360-546-9238. Telepsychology may also be provided by phone, depending on videoconferencing availability or client preference. Please be aware that phone communication has the same or similar limitations or risks as state above. If you have concerns about phone sessions, please discuss these with your counselor.

You may need certain computer or cell phone systems and services to use telepsychology services. You are solely responsible for any and all costs you incur to receive telepsychology services including obtaining necessary equipment, accessories, software and/or telecommunication or internet services.

WSU Vancouver Counseling Services cannot provide 24-hour emergency management, particularly to those using services at a distance. If you are ever experiencing an emergency, including a mental health crisis, you agree to use resources including:

- Clark County Crisis Line at 360-696-9560 (available 24-hours, 7-days week, including holidays).
- Southwest Washington Crisis Line 800-626-8137 (available 24-hours, 7-days week, including holidays).
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255 (available 24-hours, 7-days week, including holidays).
- 911, or the nearest emergency room

Patient/Client Acceptance: By signing this form, I acknowledge I have been informed of and understand the risks and procedures involved with using telepsychology services, including alternative forms of treatment such as in-person therapy to the extent such services are available. I agree to the terms listed above and I hereby voluntarily and freely consent to the use of telepsychology services in my care. I agree that WSU Vancouver Counseling Services should not be held liable in the event that any outside party passes technology security and discovers personal or confidential information. This consent will last for the duration of the relationship with WSU Vancouver Counseling Services unless I explicitly withdraw my consent for telepsychology sessions – which I am allowed to do at any time and for any reasons – and my counselor will provide information about available alternative or referrals.

____________________________________________
Printed Name

____________________________________________
Client’s Signature

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Date