**Informed Consent for Telepsychology**

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the phone or the Internet. Please read this carefully, and let me know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

**Benefits and Risks of Telepsychology**

Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telepsychology is that the client and clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the client or clinician moves to a different location, takes an extended vacation, or is otherwise unable to continue to meet in person. It is also more convenient and takes less time. Telepsychology, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits of telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telepsychology, as well as some risks. For example:

* Risks to confidentiality. Because telepsychology sessions take place outside of the therapist’s private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. On my end I will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy. But it is important for you to make sure you find a private place for our session where you will not be interrupted. It is also important for you to protect the privacy of our session on your cell phone or other device. You should participate in therapy only while in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation. It is recommended you place a sign on the door of any entrance requesting other individuals to respect your privacy and/or announcing their presence before entering the room. The psychologist may also request you to pan the camera around the room to ensure you are in the room alone and safe to participate in the therapy session. If there are other individuals in the room or someone enters the room during the session, you should immediately inform the psychologist of presence and identity of the individual. If there are safety issues preventing you from announcing the presence of another individual, a safe word should be created with the psychologist to serve notice to the psychologist of the situation.
* Issues related to technology. There are many ways that technology issues might impact telepsychology. For example, technology may stop working during a session, other people might be able to get access to our private conversation, or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized people or companies.
* Crisis management and intervention. Usually, I will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention, have a significant history or current problems managing impulsivity, violence, substance use, suicidal ideation, non-suicidal self-injurious behaviors, symptoms of psychosis, significant risk of decompensation, dementia, severe cognitive disorders, uncontrolled symptoms of mania, don’t have a contact person available during sessions, and any other reason(s) the psychologist may consider telepsychology contraindicated for treatment. Before engaging in telepsychology, your symptoms will be evaluated for appropriateness to utilize telepsychology and we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our telepsychology work.
* Efficacy. Most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy. However, some therapists believe that something is lost by not being in the same room. For example, there is debate about a therapist’s ability to fully understand non-verbal information when working remotely.

**Electronic Communications**

We will decide together which kind of telepsychology service to use. You may have to have certain computer or cell phone systems to use telepsychology services. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telepsychology. For additional information regarding electronic please refer to the Electronic Communication Policy in the Services Contract you received during the intake process. Copies of the Adult Outpatient Services Contract and Child Outpatient Services Contract are also available for review or download on the company’s website at www.lvftc.com.

**Confidentiality**

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telepsychology. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that I cannot guarantee that our communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. I will try to use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to help keep your information private, but there is a risk that our electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others. You should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications (for example, only using secure networks for telepsychology sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telepsychology).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in my Adult and Child Outpatient Services Contracts still apply in telepsychology. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

**Appropriateness of Telepsychology**

From time to time, we may schedule in-person sessions to “check-in” with one another. I will let you know if I decide that telepsychology is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you. We will discuss options of engaging in in-person counseling or referrals to another professional in your location who can provide appropriate services.

**Location of Patient During Telepsychology Sessions and Relocation of Patient Residences**

As a general guideline, the location of the patient determines the laws, regulations, and jurisdiction of licensing and regulatory boards. Thus, it is imperative the location of the patient be accurately confirmed each session. There are some locations where a LVFTC provider may not be able to legally provide services due to local laws and regulations. Thus, telepsychology services may not be available in every location (even when patients are on holidays, work trips, etc.). If you plan to relocate your residence, take an extended holiday, or will be out of the original state where you resided during the intake process, please notify the provider as soon as possible. In the event of you relocating to an area where services cannot be provided by LVFTC, it is important for your provider to develop an emergency plan, provide referrals for other possible providers, and/or begin termination of services. Please note, the more time you provide to the provider of relocation, the better plan the provider may be able to develop. Not providing notice of relocation to an area where services may not be possible may result in the provider only being able to provide local referrals or other basic care resources.

**Telepsychology with Minors (patients under the age of 18)**

Conducting telepsychology with minors requires additional safeguards to be in place prior to initiating services, as well during each session. The guardian of any minor may be required to prove guardianship and identity (via multiple methods of documentation) prior to the start of any services. For example, the guardian may be requested to provide verbal assent via the telephone or video conference (while providing proof of identification, such as a Driver’s License or State Identification Card) in addition to the signed written consent provided during the intake process. Additionally, guardians will be required to be available for emergency contact, to aid with technological issues on the patient’s end, aid in managing a crisis or emergency, or provide updates as requested during each session. The psychologist may request the guardian participate in the initial few minutes of each session to provide updates on treatment, address any treatment-related issues, etc.

**Emergencies and Technology**

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting telepsychology than in traditional in-person therapy. To address some of these difficulties, we will create an emergency plan before engaging in telepsychology services. I will ask you to identify an emergency contact person(s) who is near your location and who I will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation. This person(s) will need to be available to be contacted and provide necessary assistance during the time of any scheduled telepsychology session. I will ask that you sign a separate authorization form allowing me to contact your emergency contact person as needed during such a crisis or emergency, confirm they are available, able, and willing to serve as the emergency contact, and possibly provide instructions, guidance, etc. regarding how to help, behave, or manage potential crises. Crisis may include, but are not limited to potential/actual harm to you or someone around you, medical emergencies, decompensation (emotional, cognitive, physical, etc.), safety issues, etc.

If the session is interrupted for any emergency or safety related reason, such as you are having an emergency, do not call me back; instead, call 911 or any necessary local emergency service or go to the nearest emergency room. Call me back after you have called or obtained emergency services.

If the session is interrupted (i.e. technology disruptions, weather, etc.) and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session and I will re-contact you via the telepsychology platform on which we agreed to conduct therapy or via telephone if the telepsychology platform we are utilizing is not working. If you do not receive a call back within five (5) minutes, then call me on the phone number I provided you (702-444-1634).

If there is a technological failure and we are unable to resume the connection, you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time.

**Fees**

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology as apply for in-person psychotherapy. However, insurance or other managed care providers may not cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. If your insurance, HMO, third-party payor, or other managed care provider does not cover electronic psychotherapy sessions, you will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session. Please contact your insurance company prior to our engaging in telepsychology sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered. Additional information regarding fees for services, limits to confidentiality when using insurance as a payment method for services, the billing agency utilized by the company, etc. may be found in the Services Contract provided to you during the intake process and available for review or download on the company website www.lvftc.com.

**Records**

The telepsychology sessions shall not be recorded in any way unless agreed to in writing by mutual consent. I will maintain a record of our session in the same way I maintain records of in-person sessions in accordance with my policies. At no time without written consent from the psychologist is audio, visual, or any other type of recording allowed during the session.

**Informed Consent**

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the general informed consent that we agreed to at the outset of our clinical work together and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement.

Your signature below indicates agreement with its terms and conditions.

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Patient Name (Printed) Date

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Patient Signature

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Guardian Name (If patient under age 18) (Printed) Date

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Guardian Signature (If patient under age 18)

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Richard Humes III, PsyD. Date