

**Karen Drack, LMHC**  
**Beachside Counseling and Wellness, LLC**

122 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Suite 200  
Indialantic, FL 32903

(321) 327-3793, Ext. 309  
<http://www.bewellcounseling.net>

This Informed Consent for Telemental Health contains important information focusing on psychotherapy over 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.

Telemental health sessions will be provided through Sessions. Sessions is a HIPPA compliant web-based counseling service. You will be emailed a secure link for our individual session. Upon clicking on the link, you will enter the waiting room. I will then invite you into the session.

**Benefits and Risks of Telepsychology**

Telemental Health refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing. One of the benefits of telemental health 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. Telemental health, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits of telemental health, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telemental health, as well as some risks. For example:

- Risks to confidentiality. Because telemental health 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 computer 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. Before beginning telemental health sessions, you will be asked to provide a code word or phrase which will signal this intern that you are unable to speak openly. You are responsible for deleting the email containing the link to our session. You are responsible for fully exiting all online counseling sessions.
- Issues related to technology. There are many ways that technology issues might impact telemental health. 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. I will not engage in telemental health services with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention.
- Efficacy. Most research shows that telemental health 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**

You may have to have certain computer or cell phone systems to use telemental health services. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telemental health services.

For communication between sessions, please call the office at (321)327-3793 and I will return your call. Email exchanges and text messages with my office should be limited to administrative matters. This

includes things like setting and changing appointments, billing matters, and other related issues. You should be aware that I cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information communicated by email or text.

Treatment is most effective when clinical discussions occur at your regularly scheduled sessions. But if an urgent issue arises, you should feel free to attempt to reach me by phone. I will try to return your call within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact in my absence if necessary.

### **Confidentiality**

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telemental health sessions. 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. I ask that you assess who has access to your computer and electronic information from your location. This would include family members, co-workers, supervisors and friends. I encourage you to only communicate through a computer that you know is safe, i.e. wherein confidentiality can be ensured.

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in my Informed Consent still apply in telemental health. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

### **Emergencies and Technology**

If the session is interrupted for any reason, such as the technological connection fails, and you are having an emergency, do not call me back; instead, call 911, or go to your nearest emergency room. Call me back after you have called or obtained emergency services.

If the session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session and I will wait two (2) minutes and then re-contact you via the telepsychology platform on which we agreed to conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two (2) minutes, then call me on the phone number I provided you.

### **Fees**

The same fee rates will apply for telemental health as apply for in-person psychotherapy.

### **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.

### **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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Therapist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date