Tele Therapy with Kathleen Adams PhD.

Video-conferencing Psychotherapy: Addendum to Informed Consent for Psychotherapy

This form is to educate my psychotherapy clients about video-conferencing psychotherapy sessions. When we cannot meet in person due to health or other concerns, video-conferencing is an option available to us.

Will Video-conferencing Psychotherapy Work for You?

We are both used to meeting in-person in my office. Now, for an undetermined time due to the current health crisis, we will need to meet in a video-conference. At the same time that we are being impacted by the serious health risks we all face, we must adjust to a very different way of working together. This may feel like a loss, frustrating, less connected, even anxiety-producing. Colleagues familiar with telehealth tell me that it becomes more natural with time. Some people feel more comfortable sharing of themselves while at home. We will see. I will want to know what it is like for you to work this way. I will openly share what it is like for me as well. It is very important that your therapy remains helpful and not harmful for you. We will keep looking at this and what we can do to make it work. Maybe we should each get a cup of tea before we start like we often do in my office!

Technology for Video-conferencing Sessions

Video-conferencing psychotherapy sessions are provided on my HIPAA-compliant Zoom platform. This platform allows for real-time video communication. You do not need your own Zoom account to join me in my "Zoom room." You will need a computer, Tablet, I-Pad, or smartphone with a video-camera. A day or so before the meeting, I will send you a Zoom link. At the time of the meeting, click on the link. A video screen will pop up. You may have to click on icons in the lower left corner of the video box to turn on your microphone and camera.

Limitations Due to Use of this Technology

A variety of technological problems can cause delays in starting meetings or can interrupt a meeting. If case we lose our connection, please call my home office desk at 858 271-8966. Please keep your telephone near you while we meet so that I may call you in case our internet connection fails. If we cannot successfully reconnect online, we can continue our meeting on the telephone and/or reschedule for another video-meeting.

Audibility in video-conferencing is usually not as good as in face-to-face meetings. Participants often need to ask each other to repeat what we each said. The video can also be choppy or become disrupted. We will also be less able to observe each others' body language. All of this can reduce the "felt" sense of each other. If you sense that I have missed your meaning or responded in an unhelpful way, please tell me as soon as possible so that we can work to repair the mis-communication or mis-step. This website offers advice on maximizing the confidentiality, technical set-up, and visual and sound quality of online therapy: https://personcenteredtech.com/tmh/clients/

Confidentiality Caveats

Communication via the internet cannot be guaranteed to be 100% secure. The following are steps that we can take to increase security and confidentiality.

1. The Zoom video-conferencing platform and its Epic software are HIPAA-compliant. Our meetings are encrypted with AES-256 bit encryption and are dynamic password protected. You can read more about Zoom security here:

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115002222603-Epic-Integration

2. We both agree not to record our meetings in the interest of preserving therapist-client confidentiality.

3. We both agree not to have any other people in the room when we hold a video-conference. Please tell people in your home that we are going to have a confidential meeting, close the door to the room where we will meet, lock it if possible, and place a "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door. I will do this as well.

4. In my experience, despite our best efforts, interruptions at home tend to occur during video-conferencing sessions. People may forget that we are holding a meeting and walk in, other phone lines and doorbells may ring, pets have a way of making their presence known, etc. We should anticipate these kinds of interruptions.

5. To prevent non-participants from joining our confidential meetings electronically, we must both secure the links to our Zoom meetings that I will send to you via email. Ensure your email account and mobile device have secure passwords and ensure that you close your email platforms when not in use. I will do the same.

Payment for Sessions

Clients paying out-of-pocket for therapy will pay the same fee as when we meet in person. If you use health insurance, I will seek authorization for insurance payment for video-conferencing therapy. Co-payments will still apply. If the insurance company will not authorize this service, we will make other arrangements.

Payment should be made by check by mail to my home address during the current health crisis:

I will also establish a Paypal account for this purpose and will notify you once it is ready.

Cancellations

Given the demands of the current health crisis, there may be a need for last-minute cancellations and we will need to be flexible with each other. Nonetheless, we must respect the time we each commit to our meetings. I will apply a $40 cancellation fee for non-urgent cancellations without 24 hours notice.

Safety Measures

If an emergency arises during a video-conference, I will need to be able to contact a support person to assist you and to be able to direct emergency services to the correct address to help you. Please provide these here:

Your phone number: _____ Address: _____

Emergency support person name: _____ Phone number:_____

Support person address: _____

Agreement

I have read the above information on video-conferencing psychotherapy, the limitations, how to maximize the audio-visual quality, and the confidentiality caveats. With this understanding, I wish to participate in video-conferencing psychotherapy sessions when health or other concerns prohibit our being able to meet in person.

_____ _____

Name Date