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Informed Consent for Telehealth

This Informed Consent for Telehealth contains important information focusing on using the phone or the internet for providing healthcare services. Please let us know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Please read this carefully as it outlines OUR responsibilities and YOUR responsibilities to reduce certain risks associated with telehealth services.

What is Telehealth?

Telehealth refers to providing mental or behavioral healthcare services remotely using telecommunications technologies. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requires that we protect your privacy and personal health information. At Weltitude Psychology, PLLC, we are responsible for ensuring that the telehealth services we provide are in compliance with HIPAA rules, as well as state laws.

You Must Be Located in Texas

Please note that as a client of Weltitude Psychology, PLLC you must be located in the state of Texas to be eligible for telehealth services with us. This means that at the time of the appointment you must be in the state of Texas and your provider will request a physical address from you to document your exact location for the appointment.

Benefits and Limitations of Telehealth

Convenience and Accessibility. Telehealth cuts down on commuting, travel in bad weather, time off from work, and need for childcare which all allow for increased convenience and accessibility to psychological care.

Personal Preference. Some people feel more at ease having a telehealth appointment because it may make them less anxious than going to an in-person visit. However, since you and your provider won't be in the same room, it might feel different from a regular office visit. Because of this, some individuals may find that telehealth isn't the best option for their therapy.

Appropriateness of Telehealth. Telehealth can be a helpful option for getting therapy, but it's not always the best choice for everyone. Some issues might be better addressed in face-to-face sessions. If your therapist thinks that in-person visits would work better for you, they'll let you know. If you feel that telehealth isn't the right fit for you, it's important to share that with your

therapist. We can help you find local providers or refer you to someone nearby who offers in-person sessions.

Using Technology and Associated Risks. While telehealth has benefits, it also requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. The nature of electronic communications technologies is such that we cannot guarantee with certainty that our communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications with you or that electronic information transmitted for the purpose of telehealth is not breached, stolen, or otherwise compromised.

Confidentiality & Privacy Risks

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that are outlined in the document entitled Informed Consent & Services Agreement still apply in telehealth. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

There is a risk that our electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others. As telehealth sessions take place outside of a private physical office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session.

Our responsibility. We have a legal and ethical responsibility to make our best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of telehealth services.

What we do to protect your confidentiality. We will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy when providing telehealth services, such as:

- Using sound machines and/or headsets when necessary to reduce background noise, prevent echo feedback, and ensure to our best abilities that conversations are kept confidential
- We will take necessary cybersecurity steps to help keep your information private, such as using updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems.
- Your provider may end the telehealth appointment if they determine you are not alone in a private space or if your identity cannot be determined.

Your responsibility. You should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications:

- Only use secure networks for telehealth sessions and have passwords to protect the device you use for telehealth.
- 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. This includes wearing headphones when necessary to ensure your privacy.
- 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 your responsibility to ensure you have the necessary personal computer, equipment, and access to internet for telehealth sessions.

Recording of Telehealth Services

- The telehealth sessions shall not be recorded by you or your provider without prior mutual consent.
- When necessary, please ensure your home camera devices or other recording devices are turned off prior to the start of sessions.

If your provider or you request and agree to record a telehealth appointment (e.g., for treatment, training, supervision, or consultative purposes) a written authorization will be required by you detailing that you understand the associated risks and to obtain your consent for the recording(s).

Health Records

A record of your session will be created, stored, and maintained in the same ways records of in-person sessions are in accordance with our policies. For more information see the document provided to you, entitled “Informed Consent & Services Agreement” and “Notice of Privacy Practices.”

Emergency Crisis Management and Intervention

Your provider will not engage in telehealth with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. We may not have an option of in-person services presently and you will be referred to receive a higher level of in-person treatment support when necessary. Before engaging in telehealth, an emergency response plan will be developed with you to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course our telehealth, which includes, but is not limited to:

- You will be asked to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and who can be contacted by your provider in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation.
- You will be asked to sign a separate authorization form allowing your provider to contact your emergency contact person as needed during such a crisis or emergency.

- If the telehealth session is interrupted for any reason, such as technological connection failure, and you are having an emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest emergency room for help.
- If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide or homicide you can contact the 988 National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by dialing “9-8-8” from your phone.

Issues Related to Technology

There are many ways that technology issues might impact telehealth. 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.

- You are responsible for ensuring your personal technology items are in proper working order and secure prior to the start of your telehealth appointment. In the event that you need technical assistance, it is your responsibility to use third-party technical support services at your discretion.
- If the telehealth session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session and your provider will wait two (2) minutes and then re-connect with you via the telehealth platform on which we agreed to conduct treatment. If reconnection through the telehealth platform is unsuccessful, your provider will contact you at the phone number you provided to use.

Fees, Cancellations, and Rescheduling

The same fee rates will apply for telehealth as apply for in-person therapy. You will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session. If there is a technological failure and we are unable to resume the connection or continue the session over the phone, you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time. Your provider will do their best to reschedule your appointment at a time that is most convenient for you. For more information on fees, such as cancellation and no-show policies, see the document provided to you that is entitled “Informed Consent & Services Agreement.”

Informed Consent

By signing this document, I am acknowledging that I have read and understand the information about Telehealth provided to me in this form. I have the right to discuss this form with my provider at Weltitude Psychology, PLLC and have any questions I may have answered.

I hereby give my consent for the use of telehealth services in my care and authorize my provider through Weltitude Psychology, PLLC to use telehealth services in the course of my treatment.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent to telehealth at any time by notifying my provider at Weltitude Psychology, PLLC. My signature on this form indicates that I have read and agree to the terms of this Agreement.

Only sign this document if you have fully read and understood the terms of this agreement for the use of telehealth.

Client signature

Today's Date