

Margie Underwood, MA, LCPC
Underwood Counseling Services
Maryland Telehealth
(240) 712-4215
www.underwoodcounseling.com

INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELETHERAPY

This Informed Consent for Teletherapy contains important information regarding psychotherapy conducted using the Internet or the telephone. Please read this document 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 TELETHERAPY

Teletherapy refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone sessions. Please be aware that in order to prioritize your safety, we may not engage in a counseling session together if you are actively driving a motor vehicle. One of the benefits of teletherapy is that the client and clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location (*please be aware that my Professional Counseling license requires that my clients be physically located in the states of Maryland or Colorado during our teletherapy sessions.*) This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the client or clinician is practicing social distancing during a health crisis, for convenience in attending sessions, or for other reasons. Teletherapy, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be successful. Although there are benefits of teletherapy, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and teletherapy, as well as some risks. For example:

- Risks to confidentiality. Because teletherapy 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 space during the session. On my end I will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy. It is important for you to make sure you find a private space 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. (In some cases, clients have participated in teletherapy from their car, to ensure privacy. For safety reasons, I will not provide teletherapy to a client who is driving.)
- Issues related to technology. There are many ways that technology issues might impact teletherapy. 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. If we are meeting online and you are using a computer, it is advised to keep a cell phone nearby, so we can stay in contact if the computer video connection fails.

I will do everything I can on my end to ensure a good internet connection for our sessions, but I cannot always prevent connection interruptions.

- Crisis management and intervention. If you are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention, we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our teletherapy work.

