



Informed Consent for Telehealth Services

The following information outlines and explains the process of using telehealth services for psychotherapy. This document covers your rights, risks and benefits, and my policies associated with using telehealth platforms.

What is Telehealth

Telehealth means the remote delivering of health care services via technology-assisted media. This includes a wide array of clinical services and various forms of technology. The technology includes but is not limited to, a telephone, video, internet, a smartphone, tablet, PC desktop system or other electronic means.

I use a few options, and we can choose the one that works best for us, and alternate if needed.

Doxy.me- a secure telehealth platform found at www.doxy.me. The link to my online office and waiting room is <https://doxy.me/drrobbins>

Google Hangouts- I have a HIPAA compliant Google Business platform

Telephone

Update: I formerly used VSee and have switched to using on Doxy.me.

Security and Privacy

When using telehealth, our technology and our environments are best when they are secure and confidential. Our platform should be secure, and HIPAA compliant. While the platforms I use comply with standard protocols for protecting health information, we can't entirely control and monitor 3rd party applications. While the risk is low, it is possible that telehealth platform usage leads to demographic or other information being accessed.

Telehealth sessions are best conducted in situations where you have relative privacy and confidentiality and cannot easily be overheard by others, and in situations where you have minimal distractions that limit you from participating in the session.

Recording of online sessions should not occur unless explicitly discussed and agreed on by all involved. All telehealth session information is and will remain confidential, as in any other session, and will not be revealed without written permission, except where disclosure is required by law.

At times, security and privacy may not be completely accessible, and this is not a barrier to continuing to meet. It is your right to use tools and situations that best meet our needs and goals, and we can discuss individual limitations as they arise.

Limitations of Telehealth Therapy Services

Telehealth offers several advantages such as convenience, flexibility, and stability so that we can continue to meet if meeting in person is not an option. It may however involve disadvantages and limitations. For example, there may be a disruption to the service (e.g., phone gets cut off, video drops, initiating the session may take additional steps of checking technology). This can be frustrating and interrupt our usual flow. There is a risk of misunderstanding one another when communication lacks visual or auditory cues, or the timing for response feels different. Additionally, the therapy office decreases the likelihood of interruptions. However, there are ways to minimize interruptions and maximize privacy and effectiveness. We can treat the session as a planned-for session, and prepare by selecting environments conducive to participation when possible. We can also identify and address challenges if they arise, and communicate if we want to make adjustments.

In Case of Technology Failure

During a telehealth session we may encounter a technological failure. Difficulties with hardware, software, or 3rd party services may result in service interruptions. If something occurs to prevent or disrupt any scheduled appointment due to technical complications and the session cannot be completed via online video conferencing, we can switch to telephone to continue or decide on our next steps. If we encounter a telephone disconnection and can't continue, we may need to discontinue the session, or switch to an online platform if possible. If a session cannot continue, we can re-schedule if possible, or try again the following week after addressing the technical issue we encountered. If a session can't continue due to technology, it is still considered that the session was attempted and the fee will be charged.

Session Structure

I offer face-to-face psychotherapy by default, and aim to create a schedule that enables us to meet in person. There may be times where schedules, travel, health, community, or environmental concerns arise and using tools to meet remotely allows us to continue to meet. If appropriate, you may engage in either face-to-face sessions, telehealth, or both depending on the context as we schedule appointments. Telehealth isn't always a great fit for the work we might be doing, and we can decide if we feel the platform doesn't address our needs and goals. Additionally, some methods we use, like EMDR, might be adjusted while using telehealth. Otherwise, the structure, policies, and cost of telehealth sessions are the same as face-to-face sessions.

Payment

I have two options for payment when using telehealth, and you can choose whichever option works best for you.

Square invoice- I will create an invoice through square and you can pay it directly.

Ivypay- Ivypay is a secure, HIPAA compliant platform that keeps a credit card on file so that I can directly charge your card at the end of each session. If we use it, you will receive a text message with instructions for setting up the process, and will receive a text message whenever your credit card is charged.

An invoice will be sent or your credit card will be charged at the conclusion of each telehealth session.

If you have Beacon insurance through SFHP, there are no changes related to fee. Beacon includes telehealth sessions without pre-authorization, and we can choose to use telehealth at our discretion.

Cancellation Policy

In the event that you are unable to keep either a face-to-face appointment or a telehealth appointment, notify me at least 48 hours in advance. If such advance notice is not received, you will be financially responsible for the session you missed.

If you are using Beacon insurance through SFHP, the fee will not be assessed, and we will discuss cancellations and how they impact our sessions.

Emergency Management Plan

If we are meeting using telehealth platforms and you are experiencing a physical or emotional health emergency, I will work with you to identify and enact a plan. This may include reaching out to others for support, planning for helpful activities, creating a plan to help increase your comfort, or seeking medical/hospital assistance if necessary.

If you encounter any other urgent situations, we can pause our session as you address the matter, or you can choose to end the session if a matter requires your full attention.

Conclusion

If you have any questions, you are welcome to ask at any time, and we can devise a schedule and session plan that best meets our needs.