



A Multi-Specialty Behavioral Health Practice

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## INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHIATRY

This Informed Consent for Telepsychiatry contains important information focusing on doing medication management using teleconferencing or phone. Please read this carefully and let me know if you have any questions. We will review this information during our first telepsychiatry appointment. If you understand this information, please sign and email to our office at [crg@childrensresourcegroup.com](mailto:crg@childrensresourcegroup.com).

### Benefits and Risks of Telepsychiatry

Telepsychiatry refers to providing medication management services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telepsychiatry is that the patient and clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if the patient 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. Telepsychiatry, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits of telepsychiatry, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telepsychiatry, as well as some risks. For example:

- Risks to confidentiality. Because telepsychiatry sessions take place outside of the provider's private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. CRG 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 cell phone or other device. You should participate in a session only while in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation.
- Issues related to technology. There are many ways that technology issues might impact telepsychiatry. 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. CRG uses technology that is HIPPA compliant and we have a secure connection. Please try to ensure that your connection is secure, as well.
- Crisis management and intervention. If you are currently in a crisis situation and/or require a high level of support and intervention, telepsychiatry may not be appropriate at this time. If there is a crisis during a session, a safety plan will be developed with you to address the specific needs. If you hang up or if we are disconnected, we will first attempt to use the preferred number and emergency contact number, you provided during the initial intake. If we believe you are in imminent danger and cannot reach you or the emergency contact, we



will contact 911 to request a safety check. In the event of a medical emergency or life-threatening event you agree to call 911 and utilize the closest ER to your location.

- Efficacy. Most research shows that telepsychiatry is about as effective as in-person medication management. 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**

The clinicians at CRG have adopted teleconferencing as our primary means of providing telepsychiatry. Telephone communication will be kept to a minimum as we do not feel that it provides the same level of care for our patients. Treatment is most effective when clinical discussions occur at your regularly scheduled sessions. But if an urgent issue arises, you should call our emergency phone at 317-840-2741 and you should hear back from one of our clinicians within 30 minutes. If you do not receive a response, please call again. **If you require immediate care, please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.**

For communication between sessions, please call our office at 317-575-9111 or email our office at [crg@childrensresourcegroup.com](mailto:crg@childrensresourcegroup.com). Email exchanges with our office should be limited to administrative matters. This includes things like setting and changing appointments, billing matters, and other related issues. Email **should not** be used if there is an emergency.

### **Confidentiality**

CRG has a legal and ethical responsibility to make every effort to protect all communications that are a part of our telepsychiatry. We use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to help keep your information private, but there is always 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, including the use of secure networks for telepsychiatry sessions and having passwords to protect the device(s) you use for telepsychiatry.

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a medical provider is protected by law, and CRG can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment. In some legal proceedings, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it, and I must comply with that court order.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a patient's treatment. For example, if one



of our clinicians believe that a child, elderly person, or person with a disability is being abused or has been abused, we must make a report to the appropriate state agency.

If we believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, we are required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If the patient threatens to harm himself/herself, we may be obligated to seek hospitalization for that patient or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. If a similar situation occurs in the course of our work together, we will attempt to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

A clinician at CRG may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, we make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

Although this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality is intended to inform you about potential issues that could arise, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at your next meeting. We will be happy to discuss these issues with you and provide clarification when possible.

### **Telepsychiatry Session**

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. Please call CRG at 317-575-9111 or 317-840-2741 (emergency line) 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 we will wait two (2) minutes and then re-contact you via the telepsychiatry platform on which we agreed to conduct therapy. If we are still not able to connect via teleconferencing, your clinician will attempt to call you on the primary phone that you have provided to CRG. We will likely be calling from a blocked number so be sure to have your phone settings selected to accept calls from blocked numbers.

If there is a technological failure and we are unable to resume the connection, you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time.

### **Fees**

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychiatry as apply for in-person medication management. However, insurance or other managed care providers may not cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. If your insurance carrier does not cover telepsychiatry sessions, you will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session. Please contact your insurance company prior to our engaging in telepsychiatry sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered.



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### **Records**

The telepsychiatry sessions shall not be recorded in any way unless agreed to in writing by mutual consent. CRG will maintain a record of our session in the same way we 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.

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Parent/ Legal Representative [please print]: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient / Parent Phone Number (contact # for these sessions): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Patient / Patient's Legal Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_