

### **Phone counseling, informed consent**

**Due to the nationwide impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Denton County MHMR has temporarily received approval for therapists to continue serving current clients through phone check-ins or counseling sessions.**

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby consent to engage in phone check-ins or counseling sessions with my assigned CBT therapist. I understand that this method of service provision differs from in-person counseling sessions.

Beyond the standard guidelines reviewed in the professional disclosure statement, this document provides additional information that applies to services delivered by phone:

- Therapist will determine whether this is an effective level of care for services.
  - Therapist will attempt to provide alternate referrals if needs cannot be met in this modality; however, this is subject to the availability of those services.
  - If no appropriate alternative exists, sessions may need to be paused at the clinical discretion of the therapist. Client will continue to have access to crisis intervention services through the hotline or Psych Triage facility if outpatient services are interrupted.
- Phone “check-ins” will be brief, generally lasting 15 minutes or less.
- Phone sessions can range from 30-60 minutes.
  - Therapist and client will collaborate to develop treatment goals for this interim time.
  - Please be aware that the focus of treatment may be different than face-to-face sessions due to inherent limitations of this method of treatment.

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- These limitations include but are not limited to the following:
  - Because the sessions are via phone, I cannot see you, your body language, or your non-verbal reactions to the issues we are discussing.
  - Sometimes I may not hear all of what you are saying (due to cellular phone limitations) and may need to ask you to repeat things.
  - To reduce the effect of these limitations, sometimes I may ask you to describe how you are feeling, thinking, and/or acting in more detail than I would during a face-to-face session. You may also feel that you need to describe your feelings, thoughts, and/or actions in more detail that you would during a face-to-face session.
- If the call is disconnected, I will attempt to call you back immediately.
- Safety and privacy precautions:
  - When possible, phone calls will be made through Ring Central, which is a hipaa compliant platform, but there is the possibility of interception by unauthorized persons, despite precautions from the therapist.
  - Therapist will verify your location and that no unauthorized persons are present. If someone walks into the room on either end of the call, the following code word can be used to pause the session: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Please be aware that you are partially responsible for preserving the privacy of these calls.
  - Check-ins and sessions may not be completed while driving.
  - Client will be encouraged to designate an emergency contact and will develop a safety plan with therapist. Therapist may initiate a welfare check

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and notify client's emergency contact if there are concerns of imminent risk of harm.

***I have read or have had the entire document read to me. During COVID-19 social distancing, verbal consent will suffice for the purposes of this form when technological barriers prevent a physical signature. I have discussed this with my counselor, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.***

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Client signature

Date

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Therapist signature

Date