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Informed Consent for Telepsychology

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the Internet or the telephone. Please read this 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 Telepsychology

Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies such as HIPAA compliant video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telepsychology is that the client and clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location. Telepsychology, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits of telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telepsychology, as well as some risks. For example:

- **Risks to Confidentiality.** Because telepsychology sessions take place outside of my private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. On my end I will take appropriate steps to ensure your privacy. It is your responsibility to ensure that your physical location is appropriate, secure and confidential. 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 therapy 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 telepsychology. Despite all reasonable efforts, there is the possibility, as with all technology, that our sessions could be disrupted or distorted by technical failures, or the transmission of session information could be intercepted by unauthorized persons or companies.
- **Crisis Management and Intervention.** Usually, I will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. Before engaging telepsychology we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our telepsychology work.
- **Efficacy.** Most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy. 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

We will discuss options for telepsychology and decide together which kind of telepsychology to use. I will choose only telepsychology services which are compliant with federal privacy laws (HIPAA). You will need a computer or cell phone equipment to use telepsychology services. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain necessary equipment or accessories or software to take part in telepsychology.

Additional information on electronic communication policies of this office, such as policies on texting, email and social media, can be found in the Psychotherapist-Client Service Agreement which you previously signed

Confidentiality

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are part of our telepsychology. However, the nature of electronic communications technology is such that I cannot guarantee that our communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. I will use only secure HIPAA compliant videoconferencing platforms. I will try to use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to keep your information private, but there is 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 (for example, only using secure networks for telepsychology sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telepsychology).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I describe in my Psychotherapist-Client Service Agreement and HIPAA Notice still apply in telepsychology. Please let me know if you have any questions about confidentiality or exceptions to confidentiality.

Appropriateness of Telepsychology

Under normal circumstances psychotherapy sessions will be conducted in-person, in the office. However, conditions may arise which prevent us from meeting in the office. In those cases, in order to continue to provide psychotherapy services, we are fortunate to have available technology so that the important processes of psychotherapy can continue uninterrupted. Examples of such circumstances include illness, public safety emergencies, weather emergencies, family emergencies or unusual scheduling issues.

Telepsychology is voluntary and we must be in mutual agreement of the need for an alternative to in-person psychotherapy in the office in certain situations. If for any reason you choose not to participate in telepsychology, we will discuss options of engaging in in-person psychotherapy or referrals to another professional who can provide appropriate services.

Emergencies and Technology

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting telepsychology than in traditional in-person therapy. To address some of these difficulties we will discuss an emergency plan before engaging in telepsychology services. At each session you agree to inform me of your physical location and phone number. I will ask you to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and who I will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation. I will ask that you sign a separate authorization form allowing me to contact your emergency contact person as needed during such an emergency or crisis.

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 211 or go to your nearest emergency room. Call me 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 call me at the office number 860-918-0960.

Fees

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology as apply for in-person psychotherapy. If you are using insurance, it is your responsibility to understand whether your policy will pay for psychotherapy delivered through technology as well as any conditions or exclusions which apply. If your insurance, third-party payer, or other managed care provider does not cover telepsychology sessions, you will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session. Please contact your insurance company prior to our engaging in telepsychology sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered.

Records

Telepsychology sessions shall not be recorded in any way. I will maintain a record of our telepsychology session in the same way I maintain records of in-person sessions in accordance with my policies.

Informed Consent for Telepsychology

I agree to the provision of psychotherapy services with Dr. Giurelli through the use of technology as needed, and have read and understand the policies.

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the general Psychotherapist-Client Agreement and the HIPAA Notice which I signed 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.

Signature

Date

Name (Please Print)