

Telehealth Mental Health Counseling Informed Consent

DigiPen Counseling Center: DigiPen Institute of Technology
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(425) 629-4859; Counseling@digipen.edu

<https://www.digipen.edu/student-portal/student-services/counseling-center>

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Overview

- You will need access to the certain technological services and tools to engage in telehealth mental health counseling services with your provider
- Telehealth mental health counseling has both benefits and risks, which you and your provider will be monitoring as you proceed with your work
- It is possible that receiving counseling services by telehealth will turn out to be inappropriate for you, and that you and your provider may have to cease work by telehealth mental health
- You can stop work by telehealth at any time without prejudice
- You will need to participate in creating an appropriate space for your telehealth mental health sessions
- You will need to participate in making a plan for managing technology failures, mental health crises, and medical emergencies
- Your provider follows security best practices and legal standards in order to protect your health care information, but you will also need to participate in maintaining your own security and privacy

What is Telehealth mental health counseling?

“Telehealth mental health counseling” means, in short, “(It is) when a health care practitioner uses HIPAA-compliant, interactive, real-time audio and video telecommunications (including web-based applications) or store and forward technology to deliver covered services that are within his or her scope of practice to a client at a site other than the site where the provider is located. If the service is provided through store and forward technology, there must be an associated office visit between the client and the referring health care provider.” Even though DigiPen Counseling Center is not a HIPAA covered entity, we use HIPAA as our privacy protection standards. Services delivered via telehealth mental health rely on a number of electronic, often Internet-based, technology tools. These tools can include videoconferencing software, email, text messaging, virtual environments, specialized mobile health (“mHealth”) apps, and others.

Your provider typically provides telehealth mental health services using the following tools:

- Doxy.me
- Office phone

You will need access to Internet service and technological tools needed to use the above-listed tools in order to engage in telehealth mental health work with your provider. If you have any questions or concerns about the above tools, please address them directly to your provider so you can discuss their risks, benefits, and specific application to your treatment.

Benefits and Risks of Telehealth mental health

Receiving services via telehealth mental health allows you to:

- Receive services at times or in places where the service may not otherwise be available as long as you are in the state of Washington.
- Receive services in a fashion that may be more convenient and less prone to delays than in-person meetings.

Receiving services via telehealth mental health has the following risks:

- Telehealth mental health services can be impacted by technical failures, may introduce risks to your privacy, and may reduce your service provider's ability to directly intervene in crises or emergencies. Here is a non-exhaustive list of examples:
- Internet connections and cloud services could cease working or become too unstable to use
- Cloud-based service personnel, IT assistants, and malicious actors ("hackers") may have the ability to access your private information that is transmitted or stored in the process of telehealth mental health-based service delivery.
- Computer or smartphone hardware can have sudden failures or run out of power, or local power services can go out.
- Interruptions may disrupt services at important moments, and your provider may be unable to reach you quickly or using the most effective tools. Your provider may also be unable to help you in-person.

There may be additional benefits and risks to telehealth mental health services that arise from the lack of in-person contact or presence, the distance between you and your provider at the time of service, and the technological tools used to deliver services. Your provider will assess these potential benefits and risks, sometimes in collaboration with you, as your relationship progresses.

Assessing Telehealth mental health's Fit for You

Although it is well validated by research, service delivery via telehealth mental health is not a good fit for every person. Your provider will continuously assess if working via telehealth mental health is appropriate for your case. If it is not appropriate, your provider will help you find in-person providers with whom to continue services.

Please talk to your provider if you find the telehealth mental health media so difficult to use that it distracts from the services being provided, if the medium causes trouble focusing on your services, or if there are any other reasons why the telehealth mental health medium seems to be causing problems in receiving services.

Raising your questions or concerns will not, by itself, result in termination of services. Bringing your concerns to your provider is often a part of the process.

You also have a right to stop receiving services by telehealth mental health at any time without prejudice. If your provider also provides services in-person and you are reasonably able to access the provider's in-person services, you will not be prevented from accessing those services if you choose to stop using telehealth mental health.

Your Telehealth Mental Health Environment

You will be responsible for creating a safe and confidential space during sessions. You should use a space that is free of other people. It should also be difficult or impossible for people outside the space to see or hear your interactions with your provider during the session. If you are unsure of how to do this, please ask your provider for assistance.

We are able to provide counseling services **only if you are in the state of Washington**. You are not able to connect from an alternative location for the provision of audio-/video-/computer based psychotherapy services.

Our Communication Plan

If we lose the connection during our session, we will immediately call you back. However, if we are unable to reconnect, as a backup form of communication, you can send us a message via DigiPen Counseling Center's email address: Counseling@DigiPen.edu.

Please note that all textual messages you exchange with your provider, e.g. emails and text messages, will become a part of your health record.

Your provider may coordinate care with one or more of your other providers. Your provider will use reasonable care to ensure that those communications are secure and that they safeguard your privacy.

Our Safety and Emergency Plan

As a recipient of telehealth mental health-based services, you will need to participate in ensuring your safety during mental health crises, medical emergencies, and sessions that you have with your provider.

Your provider will contact your designate emergency contact on the Student Record System if needed. You will need to provide permission for your provider to communicate with this person about your care during emergencies.

When necessary, your provider will also develop with you a plan for what to do during mental health crises and emergencies, and a plan for how to keep your space safe during sessions. It is important that you engage with your provider in the creation of these plans and that you follow them when you need to.

Your Security and Privacy

Except where otherwise noted, your provider employs software and hardware tools that adhere to security best practices and applicable legal standards for the purposes of protecting your privacy and ensuring that records of your health care services are not lost or damaged.

As with all things in telehealth mental health, however, you also have a role to play in maintaining your security. Please use reasonable security protocols to protect the privacy of your own health care information. For example: when communicating with your provider, use devices and service accounts that are protected by unique passwords that only you know. Also, use the secure tools that your provider has supplied for communications.

Recordings

Please do not record video or audio sessions. Making recordings can quickly and easily compromise your privacy, and should be done so with great care. Your provider will not record video or audio sessions.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the information provided above, and that I authorize DigiPen Counseling Center to provide telehealth mental health counseling sessions to me. I understand that mental health counselors at DigiPen Counseling Center follow the laws and professional regulations of the State of Washington (USA). I understand the psychotherapy treatment will be considered to take place in the state of Washington (USA). I understand that I may withdraw this consent and terminate telehealth mental health counseling sessions at any time by providing DigiPen Counseling Center an email from my DigiPen email address or by written notice. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent form.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Counselor Signature: _____ Date: _____