

Telemental Health Options and Informed Consent

Traditionally, students expect face-to-face counseling within an office setting. Yet, students who are taking the majority of their classes on-line or find travel within conventional business hours difficult, distance counseling may provide a valuable option. We offer counseling through secure technology-assisted means known as Telemental Health. This allows counseling to be provided through Doxy-me, secure email, or telephone. Although we prefer to see students face to face to facilitate trust and rapport building, distance counseling can be quite effective for those who are homebound, taking online courses only, or who live a considerable distance from campus. For students who struggle with disclosure concerns, distance counseling may help students talk about difficult issues with a degree of anonymity.

Telemental Health is defined as follows:

“Telemental Health means the mode of delivering services via technology-assisted media, such as but not limited to, a telephone, video, internet, a smartphone, tablet, PC desktop system or other electronic means using appropriate encryption technology for electronic health information. Telemental Health facilitates client self-management and support for clients and includes synchronous interactions and asynchronous store and forward transfers.” (Georgia Code 135-11-.01)

Telemental Health is a relatively new concept despite the fact that many counselors have been using technology-assisted media for years. Additionally, there are several other factors that need to be considered regarding the delivery of Telemental Health services in order to provide you with the highest level of care. Therefore, our counselors have completed specialized training in Telemental Health. We have also developed several policies and protective measures to assure your information remains confidential.

The Different Forms of Technology-Assisted Media Explained

Landline and Cell Phones:

It is important for you to know that telephones may not be completely secure and confidential. There is a possibility that someone could overhear or even intercept your conversations with special technology. Be aware that individuals who have access to your phone or your phone bill may be able to see who you have talked to, who initiated that call, how long the conversation was, and where each party was located when that call occurred. If this is a problem, please let your counselor know, and you she will be glad to discuss options.

Email:

Email is not a secure means of communication and may compromise your confidentiality. However, we realize that many people prefer to email because it is a quick way to convey information. Nonetheless, please know that it is our policy to utilize this means of communication strictly for appointment confirmations and/or rescheduling. Please do not bring up any counseling content via email to prevent compromising your confidentiality. You also