

CTC COUNSELING SERVICES INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEMENTAL HEALTH

This Informed Consent for Telemental Health contains important information focusing on conducting counseling services using the phone or video. Please read this carefully and complete prior to your first session. When you sign this document electronically, it will represent an agreement with Counseling Services. Please note: Not all of our counselors are able to provide Telemental Health services.

Benefits and Risks of Telemental Health, also known as Distance Counseling

Telemental Health refers to providing counseling services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as secure video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of Telemental Health is that the client and clinician can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of mental health care. Telemental Health, however, requires technical awareness on both parties to be helpful. Although there are benefits, as well as some risks, of Telemental Health, there are some differences between in-person counseling and distance counseling. For example:

- **Risks to confidentiality:** Telemental Health sessions take place outside of the counselor's private office, so there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. CTC counselors will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy including conducting your session in a private place. It is important for you to make sure you find a private place for your 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 counseling 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 Telemental Health. 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. Please know that your information is contained in a private software component Titanium. In the instances where we keep notes from our sessions, those notes will be in a locked filing cabinet until such time they can be placed into Titanium.
- **Crisis management and intervention:** For immediate support outside of your scheduled Counseling Services appointment we encourage you to call a crisis line:
 - Call Behavioral Health Link/GCAL 1-800-715-4225
 - Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255
 - Crisis Call Center 775-784-8090 or Text 'answer' to 839863
 - Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 Press 1
 - Veterans Crisis Line Text to 838255
 - Georgia Crisis Line 1-800-715-4225
 - Call Ridgeview Institute at 770-434-4567
 - Call Peachford Hospital at 770-454-5589
 - Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room

Efficacy: Most research shows that Telemental Health is about as effective as in-person counseling. However, there is a risk of misunderstanding one another when communication

lacks visual or auditory cues. While some students may find an initial session awkward, most quickly adapt to the unique experience.

Electronic Communications

With your counselor, you will decide which kind of Telemental Health service to use, either phone or video platform, which will require internet access and a computer equipped with a microphone and video camera. If you are a new client, you will be asked to acknowledge the components of this form and submit an Intake form.

Currently, we use a HIPAA compliant video platform, Doxy-me, in which you are provided a link when you book an appointment. When the counselor finds you in the virtual waiting room, you will be connected at the time agreed upon. Please take a few minutes to log into the room prior to your first session. You are solely responsible for any cost to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in Telemental Health. You will not have to subscribe to a video platform to participate.

Confidentiality

Counseling Services has the legal and ethical responsibility to make our best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our Telemental Health. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that we cannot guarantee that our communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. Counseling Services use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to help keep your information private, but there is a risk that our electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others particularly with cell phone usage. You should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications (for example, only using secure networks for Telemental Health sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for Telemental Health).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that are outlined in the Counseling Services Informed Consent provided by each counselor still apply in Telemental Health. Please speak with your counselor about your concerns or exceptions to confidentiality.

Emergencies and Technology

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting Telemental Health than in traditional in-person counseling. To address some of these difficulties, your counselor may create an emergency plan before engaging in Telemental Health services. You will need to provide an emergency contact in case of a disruption or technological connection failure. Your counselor will try to reconnect with you. If you are in need of immediate and urgent assistance call one of the crisis lines or go to your nearest emergency room. You will also be asked to name a person and contact number in this agreement if the counselor feels you are in danger to self or others. If the session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session and your counselor will wait two (2) minutes and then re-contact you via the Telemental Health platform on which we agreed to conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two (2) minutes, then call your counselor on her office number and leave a message or reach out to Counseling@Chattahoocheetech.edu and leave your number and your counselor will call you back.

I agree to use of Telemental Health services either through phone or video platform. I understand that if we get disconnected, the counselor will call back. I also understand that I will provide an emergency contact number in case we are disconnected or if the counselor perceives that I am in any type of danger to myself or others. I understand that if I am under the age of 18, I will provide parent or guardian consent:

_____ **TYPE YOUR NAME HERE** _____

Client Name (Please Print)

_____ **ENTER TODAY'S DATE HERE** _____

Date

_____ **TYPE YOUR NAME AND STUDENT ID HERE** _____

Client Signature and Student ID

_____ **TYPE YOUR INITIALS HERE** _____

I acknowledge by typing my name and Student ID above, I am confirming receipt of this document.

ADDRESS (where you are currently residing in Georgia)

Street Address _____

City, State and Zip Code _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT (a person to contact if the counselor deems you in danger to self)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Relationship to You: _____

For Students Under 18:

Parent's or Legal Guardian's Name (Please Print)

Date

Parent's or Legal Guardian's Signature

Name _____ Phone _____