

WOFFORD COUNSELING SERVICES INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEHEALTH

This Informed Consent for Telehealth contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the phone or the Internet. Please read this carefully. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement with Wofford Counseling Services.

Benefits and Risks of telehealth

Telehealth refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telehealth 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 care. Telehealth, however, requires technical awareness on both parties to be helpful. Although there are benefits of telehealth, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telehealth, as well as some risks. For example:

- **Risks to confidentiality:** Telehealth sessions take place outside of the therapist's private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. Wofford clinicians will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy. 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 telehealth. 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. To mitigate privacy breaches when doing video sessions we use platforms, such as Zoom, that are HIPAA compliant.
- **Crisis management and intervention:** For immediate support outside of your scheduled Wofford Counseling appointment. We encourage you to call the Terrier Care Line at (864) 597-4393 to speak with a trained clinician immediately.
- **Efficacy:** Most research shows that telehealth is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy. However, there is a risk of misunderstanding one another when communication lacks visual or auditory cues.

Electronic Communications

You will decide with your Wofford provider which kind of telehealth service to use - either phone or a HIPAA Compliant video platform. You may have to have certain computer or cell phone systems to use telehealth services. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telehealth.

Confidentiality

Wofford Counseling Services has the legal and ethical responsibility to make our best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telehealth. 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. Wofford Counseling Services uses 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. You should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications (for example, only using secure networks for telehealth sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telehealth).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that are outlined in the Wofford Counseling Services Informed Consent still apply in telehealth. Please speak with your provider about exceptions to confidentiality.

Emergencies and Technology

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting telehealth than in traditional in-person therapy. To address some of these difficulties, your Wofford provider may create an emergency plan before engaging in telehealth services. You will need to provide an emergency contact in case of a disruption or technological connection failure. Your Wofford therapist will try to reconnect with you, do not contact them. If you are in need of immediate and urgent assistance call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

If the session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session and your Wofford provider will wait two (2) minutes and then re-contact you via the telehealth platform on which we agreed to conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two (2) minutes, then email or call your provider's office line and leave a message, your provider will call you back.