

Informed Consent for Telemental Health

Client Name: _____ Location Client Will Be for Sessions: _____

This document is an addendum to the UWCC standard informed consent and does not replace it. All aspects of informed consent for treatment in that document apply to telemental health (TMH) treatment. TMH refers to counseling sessions that occur via phone or videoconference using a variety of technologies. TMH is offered to improve access to counseling services to UW students when significant barriers of travel to campus for counseling services exist. However, the results of TMH cannot be guaranteed or assured. You are not required to use TMH and have the right to request other service options or withdraw this consent at any time without affecting your right to future care or treatment at UWCC. TMH services may not be appropriate, or the best choice of service for reasons including, but not limited to: heightened risk of harm to oneself or others; lack of access to, or difficulty with, communications technology; significant communications service disruptions; or need for more intensive services. In these cases, your counselor will help you establish referrals to other appropriate services.

TMH services are conducted and documented in a confidential manner according to applicable laws in similar ways as in-person services. There are, however, additional risks including:

- Sessions could be disrupted, delayed, or communications distorted due to technical failures.
- TMH involves alternative forms of communication that may reduce visual and auditory cues and increase the likelihood of misunderstanding one another.
- Your counselor may determine TMH is not an appropriate treatment option or stop TMH treatment at any time if your condition changes or TMH presents barriers to treatment.
- In rare cases security protocols could fail and your confidential information could be accessed by unauthorized persons.

UWCC works to reduce these risks by using secure Zoom videoconferencing software and these policies and procedures:

- You may only engage in sessions when you are physically in Washington. Your counselor will confirm this each session.
- You and your counselor will engage in sessions only from a private location where you will not be overheard or interrupted.
- You will use your own computer or device, or one owned by UW but that is not publicly accessible.
- You will ensure that the computer or device you use has updated operating and anti-virus software.
- You will not record any sessions, nor will UWCC record your sessions without your written consent.
- You will provide contact information for at least one emergency contact in your location who UWCC may contact if you are in crisis and your counselor is unable to reach you:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

Should there be technical problems with video conferencing, the backup plan is contact by phone. Make sure that UWCC has a correct phone number at which you can be reached, and have your phone with you at session times. If you are unable to connect, or get disconnected, please try to connect again and if problems continue call UWCC. Email is not a confidential method of communication, and your counselor may not access or respond to emails quickly. If you choose to contact your counselor by email, do not include private information, and do not expect a prompt response. If you need to reach your clinician between sessions, you may call the front desk during business hours. Client communications may be viewed by other staff at the UWCC. E-mail communications will be stored electronically as treatment records. If we believe you are in crisis and we are unable to contact you, we may call your emergency contact or local emergency services providers.

In some limited circumstances, or to preserve continuity of care, sessions by phone may be arranged. Please be aware that phone communication may not be secure. If you have concerns about phone sessions, please discuss these with your clinician.

UWCC cannot provide 24-hour emergency management, particularly to those using services at a distance. If you are ever experiencing an emergency, including a mental health crisis, you agree to:

- Call Crisis Connections: 866-427-4747 to speak with a counselor (24 hours)
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255 (24 hours)
- Contact the crisis text line: <https://www.crisistextline.org/> text HOME to 741741 (24 hours)
- Call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room

I have read and understand the above information and all my questions have been answered. I hereby give informed consent to use Telemental Health in my care.

Signature of Client _____ Date _____