



TeleTherapy How-To's and FAQ's

In times of uncertainty, where the need for flexibility in accessing behavioral healthcare is important, we are honored to be able to continue to provide support for you in this format. Here is a quick-start guide to get your sessions going.

● Before the Session Starts

- Make sure you have a private space where you won't be disturbed or heard. This may be in a bedroom, home office, or even in your car in your driveway (please do NOT worry about clutter or messy surroundings as we will only be focusing on you and your emotional needs).
- If you live with others you will need to make sure family members don't disturb you, and you might consider putting a small fan outside the door of the room you are in to mask the sound.
- You can use a laptop, desktop computer, or even a smartphone, if needed.
- Using earphones/buds plugged in to the computer helps maintain privacy and improves sound.
- Make sure all unnecessary web-browsers are closed and that no one else in your home is using wifi for streaming.
- Be comfortable! Find a comfortable position, perhaps with pillows or a throw blanket, a cup of tea or essential oils, so you can create a healing, soothing environment for yourself.

● Beginning a Session

- Technology has made it easy to access TeleTherapy. Our platform is a HIPAA-secure website called Doxy.me (<https://doxy.me/patients>). To begin a session, simply click the link that we will email to you at our scheduled appointment time. This will take you to our virtual waiting room and you can relax and wait until your clinician joins the session, much like an in-person session.
- Here are some tips from Doxy.me for a good quality connection:
<https://help.doxy.me/en/articles/95861-5-tips-for-a-great-experience>.
- Using Chrome or Firefox as your browser can sometimes be better than Safari or Explorer.

● Troubleshooting

- Make sure your volume is up and that your video camera and microphone are on (usually this happens automatically).
- There is a chat function on the bottom left of the screen so we can type a message to each other if we can't hear each other. If the signal is bad, simply restart your computer and click your email link and wait for your clinician to rejoin again.
- If more than two minutes have gone by and you haven't been able to reconnect with your clinician on doxy.me, feel free to call our office at 816-500-1355 and press "1" and your clinician's extension to speak to him/her by phone.

● FAQs

• **Will insurance cover TeleTherapy?**

For many clients, yes! The Department of Mental Health recently recognized the vital need and value of TeleTherapy in the midst of the National and State emergencies. As of 03/17/2020, all clients of Tri-County Mental Health Services qualify to receive Teletherapy and phone therapy. For clients with private health insurance, please be sure we are checking daily with your carrier, and will notify you immediately should your carrier approve the service. You are welcome to participate in TeleTherapy without approval from your private carrier, but you will be required to pay for the service out-of-pocket. We are happy to provide you with a Superbill to submit to your private carrier, to potentially be reimbursed for your cost.

• **What are the pros and cons to using TeleTherapy?**

Although research has shown that for many mental health treatments, TeleTherapy produces similar or identical outcomes as in-person treatments, the research is still being gathered, and there are some differences to be aware of. Since TeleTherapy generally only shows faces rather than full body, some nuances of communication via body language can be missed. Likewise, if there is a poor video or sound connection, communication can be difficult and/or less clear. Much like texting conversations, it's important to check in and make sure what you are communicating and what you are hearing is accurate and understood as intended. Overall, though, for people who are at least somewhat familiar using computers or smartphones, TeleTherapy is overall thought to be safe, effective, convenient and an important tool to maintaining continuity of care.

• **Are there risks to using TeleTherapy?**

Please see our consent form. Risks are minimal and similar to beginning therapy, though we may need to identify appropriate emergency plans and contacts if they were to be needed. In some cases, we may deem that TeleTherapy is not appropriate or safe to use and we will discuss alternatives if this is the case.

• **Anything else I need to know?**

You will be asked to complete a TeleTherapy Consent Form before we begin our first session. You will also be asked to confirm your location at the start of each session and attest that others are not present and that the session is not being recorded (unless previously agreed to). We'll be happy to address any other questions or concerns you might have, and look forward to being able to support you in this way and help you navigate these unprecedented events with resilience and meaning.