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River Valley Psychological Services

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Informed Consent for Telepsychology

This informed consent for telepsychology contains important information about doing psychotherapy using video sessions or telephone. Please read it carefully, and let me know if you have any questions. When you sign this agreement, it will represent an agreement between us.

Benefits and Risks of Telepsychology: Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunication devices, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telepsychology is that the client and clinician can still engage in services without being in the same physical location (e.g., when for health reasons meeting in person isn't recommended). Telecommunication, however, requires some accommodations and technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits with telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person therapy and telepsychology. For example, most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person therapy. However, I also feel there may be some non-verbal information that is lost when working remotely. There are some risks (and accommodations for those risks) as well.

Confidentiality: My telepsychology platform is a HIPAA-secure and compliant program called doxy.me, which was designed for telemedicine. My agreement with doxy.me includes a privacy policy that doxy.me will never use or collect your name or data for any purpose. Doxy.me is supported and updated with the latest security measures. If you consent to use my telepsychology video services, you will need to sign in to my doxy.me account (“waiting room”) on your computer using an address that I send you. Doxy.me is free to you and you will never be charged. I will ask you try a test call on your own prior to our session.

What you need to do: Because telepsychology 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 location during the session. On my side, I will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy (e.g., using a secure videoconferencing service). But it is important for you to make sure you find a private place where you will not be interrupted for 55 minutes. Also be aware of sound issues so that other people (including children/family members, co-workers) cannot overhear you from a different room. I encourage you to be in a space where other people won't be able to observe you through windows. It is also important for you to protect the privacy of our session on your cell phone, laptop or other device (e.g., password protect your device; use secure, private Wi-Fi

rather than public Wi-Fi at a library or coffee shop). If you are having difficulty with any of these, please discuss this with me and do not proceed with telepsychology sessions. Your confidentiality, privacy, and trust are of paramount importance!

Recording/Records: Telepsychology sessions shall not be recorded in any way unless agreed to in writing by mutual consent. I will maintain a record of our session in the same way I maintain records for in-person sessions in accordance with my usual policies.

Location: Given that I am only licensed in Washington State, my telepsychology services are available only for Washington State residents. If you are a resident but briefly traveling out of state, let me know and we can discuss if telepsychology is appropriate while you are traveling.

When not to use telepsychology: If you try telepsychology and discover you are not comfortable with it for any reason, please let me know and we can switch to in-person sessions. In addition, if you are experiencing a crisis, we may instead meet in-person for a period of time.

Crisis management and intervention. Usually I will not use telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis situation that requires high levels of support and intervention. When starting teletherapy we will develop or review an emergency safety plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise. If the session is interrupted for any reason (such as the technological connection fails) and you are having an emergency, do not call me back; instead call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. Call me back after you have called or obtained emergency services.

Issues related to technology: There are several ways that technology issues might impact telepsychology. For example, technology may stop working during a session, other people might be able to access/overhear a private conversation, or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized people or companies.

Technical difficulties: If we experience technical difficulties during the session, we will troubleshoot and try to solve the problem. If the session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session and try again in 1-2 minutes. If you cannot reconnect within 2 minutes I will call you by phone at your phone number. If we cannot solve the problem easily and have to end a video session, you will not be charged for a cancellation. If possible, I will bill your insurance for the time we were able to meet successfully. If this is less than 20 minutes, I will not bill insurance. Given that we may be in the middle of significant clinical work, we can follow up if needed with a 15-minute phone call, and you will not be charged for that time.

Billing information. Most insurance companies do not cover therapy by phone at this time. Insurance coverage for telepsychology by video may vary by plan: some insurance companies cover teletherapy via videoconferencing the same (or almost the same) as in-person therapy with the same deductibles, co-pays, co-insurance rates. Some may treat telepsychology as out-of-

network service, covering half of the claim, while a few may not cover telepsychology via videoconferencing. You are still responsible for knowing your insurance benefits and for paying the balance of what insurance does not cover. I strongly recommend you call your insurance company and ask about therapy by secure videoconferencing benefits. If you are paying out-of-pocket my fees are the same as in-person sessions. If you are paying out-of-pocket and our session is interrupted, I will only charge you for the prorated amount of actual session time.

Your signature affirms that you understand telepsychology services and agree to my telepsychology policies. Please sign and date below, then return to me.

Client name	Date	Date of birth
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