



My Mindful Way of Life

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TELEPSYCHOLOGY INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO SERVICES

The Digital Age continues to facilitate new ways to assist people to meet their mental health needs. We are happy to move in step with technological advancements to provide telepsychology services. As part of our commitment to your well-being and safety, a few guidelines should be discussed. Please read this carefully.

Telepsychology

Variously dubbed telemedicine, teletherapy, distance therapy, e-therapy, internet therapy, or online therapy, "telepsychology" is defined as the use of electronic transmission to provide interactive real-time mental health services remotely, including consultation, assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, counseling, psychotherapy, coaching, guidance, education, and transfer of health care information with an experienced psychologist. This can include both video and audio forms of communication, via the internet or telephone. Telepsychology services do not include texting or email.

Office Agreement

Telepsychology is governed by all the same ethics and laws that cover in-office, in-person, face-to-face psychological services. All policies, consents, and office agreement forms for My Mindful Way of Life, LLC apply to telepsychology services. This document is an addendum to and does not substitute for our standard in-office services agreement.

Advantages and Disadvantages

There are potential benefits associated with telepsychology sessions. This includes but may not be limited to:

1. Telepsychology can flexibly provide continuity of health care when an in-person treatment session cannot be conducted in the office (e.g., risk reduction related to the spread of COVID-19, schedule conflicts, etc.).
2. Telepsychology services increase accessibility to health care services for individuals in rural areas who would otherwise have long distances to travel for sessions.
3. Telepsychology services increase accessibility to health care services for individuals with physical medical, and/or mobility disabilities.
4. Telepsychology can be convenient for individuals who have limited access to mental health services in areas with sparse resources.
5. Telepsychology services can increase accessibility of working with a provider who has specialized training and experience for specific mental health needs.
6. Telepsychology increases access to therapy for individuals who may have difficulty attending therapy on-site (e.g., individuals who may have a diagnosis of agoraphobia or posttraumatic stress disorder).
7. Telepsychology, similar to regular in-person therapy also creates opportunities for individuals to collect information about thoughts, feelings, and behaviors outside of the session.
8. Similar to regular in-person therapy sessions, telepsychology allows for both verbal and non-verbal communication.

There are potential disadvantages associated with telepsychology sessions. This includes but may not be limited to:

1. Telepsychology is not a universal substitute, nor the same as, in-person psychological services. Some individuals may not have the same level of comfort and feel that the therapeutic experience is not as complete, when talking about personal or private matters via telepsychology sessions.



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2. Due to the location, psychologists may not be able to provide, arrange, or there may be a delay for emergency health care treatment that an individual may require.
3. Information may not be fully available or readily provided/administered during a telepsychology session, versus during an in-person session which may result in errors of therapeutic judgment.
4. Misunderstandings can more easily occur. This may impact the professional therapeutic relationship.
5. Information transmitted via telepsychology sessions may not be sufficient (e.g., poor resolution of video) to allow for appropriate decision making by the psychologist.
6. There may be a delay in treatment due to deficiencies or failures of equipment or technology.
7. Security protocol can fail (although extremely unlikely), resulting in a breach of privacy or confidentiality regarding individual health care information.
8. Similar to in-person therapy, telepsychology services cannot guarantee personal outcomes.

Alternatives Available in Place of Telepsychology

Alternative options in lieu of using telepsychology sessions are available. Alternatives include meeting with a psychologist for a traditional in-person session when available or possible, or conducting a telephone session with a psychologist.

Prerequisites

Telepsychology is not suited for all circumstances. Telepsychology services are only provided when it is unlikely that a mental health emergency could arise during the session. In extreme circumstances where services reasonably should not be provided remotely, My Mindful Way of Life, LLC may recommend coming into the office, waiting until you can come into the office, or referring you to a mental health provider who can provide such services locally.

Telepsychology requires reasonable comfort with technology.

Please note, professional services are being provided under a license issued by Georgia and limited to practice within the states Georgia and states with a mutual agreement for practice of Teletherapy. Therefore, it must be affirmed that you reside in either the state of Georgia or a PSYPACT state at the time of your scheduled telepsychology services.

Emergencies

Please note during the first session, an emergency response plan will be collaboratively formulated with Dr. Urszula Klich, in the event of a future crisis occurring. This plan will include identifying a call-back telephone number (which will be verified at the start of each subsequent session), providing at least two emergency contacts (and a release to contact them during an emergency), identifying your local crisis walk-in services center, in addition to identifying the location of the closest emergency room to you.

Telepsychology is not recommended for a psychological emergency. Overwhelming or potentially dangerous challenges are best addressed with in-person professional support. Just like in-person services, if an emergency should occur during a telepsychology session, My Mindful Way of Life, LLC may consider taking any steps necessary to ensure the safety of you or of others.

In the event that in-person sessions are recommended due to symptom severity, and telepsychology sessions are no longer appropriate, you will be asked to schedule an in-person session, or you will be referred and your care will be transferred to a to a mental health provider who can provide such services locally.

I understand that if I need emergency mental health services, I should contact my local crisis walk-in services center, call 911, or proceed to the nearest hospital emergency room for immediate assistance.

Confidentiality

HIPAA Privacy Rules and the Notice of Privacy Practices and Rights of My Mindful Way of Life, LLC that protect the confidentiality of your health care information for traditional in-person sessions also apply to telepsychology sessions, including mandatory and permissive exceptions to confidentiality. Please note that information disclosed by you during the course of your telepsychology session is generally confidential.



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However, there are both mandatory and permissive exceptions to confidentiality, including, but not limited to reporting abuse of child, abuse of an individual who is elderly, abuse of an individual who has a disability, or expressed threats of violence towards an ascertainable victim or self.

Both you and My Mindful Way of Life, LLC agree to keep the same privacy safeguards as during an in-person session. During the telepsychology session, locations for both parties will be considered a therapeutic office, regardless of the room's intended use. Locations for both parties will be appropriately chosen to provide audio and visual privacy. The chosen environments should be free from unexpected or unauthorized intrusions or disruptions to our communication. Both parties will take every precaution to ensure privacy of the session and confidentiality of the private health care information shared during telepsychology sessions. All persons present in both locations will be identified to all participants prior to the telepsychology session beginning. My Mindful Way of Life, LLC will be notified of any other person who can hear or see any part of the telepsychology session prior to the session beginning. If you have a visitor present, permission will be obtained from you for this individual to be present during your scheduled telepsychology session. Please note and understand there is a risk of being overheard by a third party if you do not conduct the session in an enclosed private room, with reasonable sound barriers, and with no one else present or observing.

Both you and My Mindful Way of Life, LLC agree to not record the telepsychology sessions without prior written consent of both parties.

Security

No electronic transmission system is considered completely safe from intrusion. Interception of communication by third parties remains technically possible.

Due to the complexities of electronic media and the internet, risks of telepsychology include the potential for release of private information, including audio and images. My Mindful Way of Life, LLC cannot fully guarantee the security of telepsychology sessions. You are responsible for information security on your computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone. As a policy, we ask for your agreement to not electronically record telepsychology sessions without prior written consent.

While a variety of software programs are available for video conferencing, such as Skype, Facetime, or GoToMeeting, not all are encrypted, or compliant with federal law to protect the privacy of your health communication. We use software with encryption to maximize your confidentiality.

Consent

You have the right to opt in or opt out of the methods of telepsychology sessions at any time, without affecting your right to future care or treatment.

If you are not an adult, My Mindful Way of Life, LLC needs the permission of your parent or legal guardian (and their contact information) for you to participate in telepsychology sessions.

Set-Up

My Mindful Way of Life, LLC provides a HIPAA compliant video-conferencing platform selected for virtual sessions. Prior to beginning your first session, you will receive instructions on how to use this platform. Please keep in mind, it is your responsibility to set up accessibility and become familiar with instructions regarding any set-up required prior to joining your telepsychology session. If you have any questions prior to your appointment, please contact My Mindful Way of Life, LLC in advance by phone or email for assistance.

Please note that you, and not My Mindful Way of Life, LLC, are responsible for the configuration of equipment on your computer which may be used for telepsychology sessions. You understand that it is your responsibility to ensure the proper functioning of all electronic equipment prior to your session beginning. You understand that you may need to contact a designated third party (secure telehealth) or technical support to determine your computer readiness for telepsychology prior to beginning telepsychology sessions with My Mindful Way of Life, LLC



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Please be advised you will need to use a webcam or smartphone during the session. It is important to use a secure internet connection rather than public/free Wi-Fi connection.

Responsibilities of the Patient

Please note, it is important to be in a quiet and private space that is free of distractions (including cell phones, other devices, TV, music, etc.), other individuals, or pets during your scheduled session. Do not join a session while driving or in a public area. Please limit moving from room to room while in your telepsychology session to maintain privacy. Try to limit eating during your session. Please dress in appropriate clothing as if you were attending an in-person session.

Telephone

Telepsychology can include telephone sessions. When using a telephone, please remember to be in a place you feel comfortable speaking about personal and private matters. If you are using a cellular telephone, remember that not all calls or telephones are absolutely secure and may be compromised by various detection devices. A landline is preferable because it is more secure, more reliable, and often offers clearer audio quality.

Video Conferencing

Please note you are responsible for your own hardware and software, audio and video peripherals, and connectivity and bandwidth considerations for your telepsychology sessions.

At the time of the telepsychology session, it is your responsibility to have your electronic device on, video conferencing software launched, and be ready to start the session at the time of your scheduled telepsychology session.

It is essential to identify a phone number where you can be reached in the event of technical problems occurring during a video telepsychology session. Several reasonable attempts will be made to reestablish video conferencing connection. However, if video conferencing connection cannot be reestablished, My Mindful Way of Life, LLC will call you to restart the session via phone or reschedule the session for another video telepsychology session.

Scheduling

Just like an in-person session, telepsychology sessions are scheduled in advance by prior arrangement. Scheduling a telepsychology session involves reserving time specifically for you. Just like in-person sessions, you are responsible for keeping all telepsychology sessions. If you need to cancel or change your telepsychology session, you must notify My Mindful Way of Life, LLC in advance by phone or email.

It is important to be on time for your session. Telepsychology sessions, like in-person sessions, will generally start and end on time.

In all telepsychology sessions, My Mindful Way of Life, LLC will initiate the telepsychology session, unless other arrangements have been made. A window will remain open around the starting time of your session. Just like an in-person session, if My Mindful Way of Life, LLC doesn't hear from you, they will attempt to reach you, but will discontinue after several attempts.

Cancellations and unkept sessions are treated just like in-person cancellations and unkept sessions. My Mindful Way of Life, LLC is not responsible for your inability to participate in the session, including technological limitations.

Payment

Just like in-person services, telepsychology services are a professional service, and a fee is charged at the same rate as in-person services.

Even when health insurance covers in-person services, health insurance may limit or deny coverage of telepsychology services. You are responsible to confirm and know in advance what your insurance may or



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may not cover. If your insurance does not cover telepsychology services, you will personally be responsible for full payment.

Rights of the Patient

1. I understand that the laws that protect privacy and confidentiality of therapeutic information also apply to telepsychology sessions.
2. I understand that the video conferencing technology used is encrypted to prevent unauthorized access to my personal health care information.
3. I have the right to withhold or withdraw my consent to the use of telepsychology sessions during the course of my care or treatment.
4. I understand that the My Mindful Way of Life, LLC has the right to withhold or withdraw consent for the use of telepsychology sessions during the course of my care or treatment at any time.
5. I understand that all the rights and regulations which apply to the practice of mental health services in the State of Georgia also apply to telepsychology.
6. I understand that the dissemination of any personally identifiable images or information from telepsychology sessions to other entities shall not occur without my specific written consent.
7. I agree that there will be no recording of the session by either party without consent of both parties.
8. I understand that both I and My Mindful Way of Life, LLC will not record any of our telepsychology sessions without prior written consent of both parties.
9. I understand that I may benefit from telepsychology services, but that results cannot be guaranteed or assured. I understand that there are potential risks associated with any form of therapy services, and that despite my efforts and the efforts of My Mindful Way of Life, LLC my condition may not improve.
10. I accept that telepsychology does not provide emergency services. If I am experiencing an emergency situation, I understand that I should contact my local crisis walk-in services center, call 911, or proceed to the nearest hospital emergency room for immediate assistance.
11. I understand that I have a right to access my health care information and copies of health care records in accordance with HIPAA privacy rules and applicable state law.

My signature below attests that I have read and understand the information provided above by My Mindful Way of Life, LLC I have discussed it with Dr. Urszula Klich. All and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby request and consent to telepsychology sessions as part of my treatment. I agree to abide by the terms of this agreement. I understand that no promises have been made as to the results of telepsychology therapy sessions provided. I am aware that I may stop my therapy at any time.

_____	_____
Patient name (please print)	Date
_____	_____
Patient signature	Date
_____	_____
Parent/legal guardian name, if patient is a minor (please print)	Date
_____	_____
Parent/legal guardian signature, if patient is a minor	Date
_____	_____
Urszula Klich, PhD, BCB	Date