

David Woodsfellow, PhD  
Licensed Psychologist  
The Woodsfellow Institute for Couples Therapy

## CONSENT TO TELEPSYCHOLOGY

This Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the Internet. Please read this carefully and let me know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

### Benefits and Risks of Telepsychology

Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing. One of the benefits of telepsychology 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 in case of a pandemic, if the client or clinician moves to a different location, takes an extended vacation, or is otherwise unable to continue to meet in person. It is also more convenient and takes less time. Telepsychology, however, requires technical competence on all our parts. Although there are benefits of telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telepsychology, as well as some risks. For example:

- Risks to confidentiality. 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 place during the session. On my end I will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy. But 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 computer 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 telepsychology. 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.
- Crisis management and intervention. Usually, I will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis that requires high levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in telepsychology, we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during our telepsychology work.
- Efficacy. Most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy. However, some therapists believe that something is lost by not being in the same room. For example, there is debate about a therapist's ability to fully understand non-verbal information when working remotely.

### Electronic Communications

We will decide together which kind of telepsychology service to use. You may need to have certain computer systems to use telepsychology services. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telepsychology.

For communication between sessions, I only use email communication with your permission, and only for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. Email exchanges with me should be limited to administrative matters like setting and changing appointments. You should be aware that I cannot guarantee the

confidentiality of any information communicated by email. Therefore, I do not discuss clinical information by email.

If you need to inform me of something urgent, please call me at **404-325-3401**. I will try to return your call within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays. If you are unable to reach me and cannot wait for my return call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychiatrist on call.

If you need to send me a confidential email, you can do so through my website, [marriagehelpatlanta.com](http://marriagehelpatlanta.com). You would hover over Our Therapy Practice, select Contact Us, and scroll down to Send Us a Message. Messages sent this way are encrypted and confidential and only I can read them.

### **Confidentiality**

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telepsychology. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that I cannot guarantee that our communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. I will try to use 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 on your end (for example, only using secure networks for telepsychology sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telepsychology).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that were outlined in your Consent to Treatment still apply in telepsychology. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

### **Appropriateness of Telepsychology**

I will let you know if I decide that telepsychology is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you. We will discuss options of engaging in in-person counseling or referrals to another professional in your location who can provide appropriate services.

### **Emergencies and Technology**

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting telepsychology than in traditional in-person therapy. To address some of these difficulties, we will create an emergency plan before engaging in telepsychology services. I will ask you to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and whom I might contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation. I will ask that you sign a separate authorization form allowing me to contact your emergency contact person as needed during such a crisis or emergency.

If you are having an emergency, and our session is interrupted for any reason, such as the technological connection fails, 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.

If you are not having an emergency, and our session is interrupted, please disconnect from the session and wait for me to call you on your agreed-upon phone number. If you do not receive a call back within five (5) minutes, then please call me at **404-788-4317**.

If there is a technological failure and we are unable to resume the connection, you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time.

**Fees**

The same fees apply for telepsychology as for in-person psychotherapy. You are responsible for my fee, not your insurance company. As with in-person therapy, payment is accepted at time-of-service. If you would like, I will send you a form that you could submit to your insurance company for partial reimbursement.

**Records**

The 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 of in-person sessions in accordance with my policies.

**Prior to Starting** videoconferencing services, we have discussed and agreed to the following:

- There are potential benefits and risks of videoconferencing (e.g. limits to confidentiality) that differ from in-person sessions.
- We agree to use the videoconferencing platform that Dr. Woodsfellow will suggest.
- We agree that we will both attend all videoconferences.
- We agree to use devices with webcams – desktops, laptops or tablets – not cell phones.
- We agree to be in a quiet, private space that is free of distractions.
- We agree to use a secure internet connection and not public/free Wi-Fi.
- We agree that nobody will record our sessions without the permission of the others.
- We agree to notify Dr. Woodsfellow by telephone or email, one week or more in advance, if we need to cancel or re-schedule any videoconference appointment.
- We have provided Dr. Woodsfellow with a phone number where we can be reached to re-start or re-schedule a videoconference, in the event of a technical problem.
- We agree to be one another's emergency contact, in the event of a crisis.
- We have also each provided Dr. Woodsfellow with the name and cell phone number of one additional person, to serve as a backup emergency contact, in the event of a crisis.
- We understand that we are responsible for Dr. Woodsfellow's fee, not our insurance company. We agree to pay at the time of service.
- We understand that if Dr. Woodsfellow determines that videoconferencing is no longer appropriate for us, he will make other recommendations for our treatment.

**Informed Consent**

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the other Consent to Treatment that I signed and does not change any of the terms of that agreement.

David Woodsfellow, PhD  
Licensed Psychologist  
The Woodsfellow Institute for Couples Therapy

**CONSENT TO TELEPSYCHOLOGY**

**Signature Page**

I consent to telepsychology with Dr. David Woodsfellow and the details listed on the previous three pages of this document entitled Consent to Telepsychology. I agree with these terms and conditions.

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Signature

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Date

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Print Your Name

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Signature

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Date

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Print Your Name

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