

Heather A. Hopper, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist
Telehealth & Videoconferencing Psychotherapy Consent

Please read this document in its entirety before signing it.

This document is an addendum to, and is not intended to substitute for, any other policies laid out in my regular informed consent or HIPAA forms. “Telehealth” in this document refers to all services provided by Heather Hopper, Ph.D. provided over the internet using a videoconferencing platform. It does not include services provided by telephone, even if provided on a VOIP service, nor does it include email, text, or any other electronic form of communication.

At this time, Dr. Hopper only will provide telehealth services under the following circumstances:

- To patients pre-screened by Dr. Hopper as able to safely and effectively participate in telehealth sessions;
- Under circumstances where the patient is unable to come into the office due to medical or other temporary physical limitations;
- For a limited period of time, to be agreed on by both Dr. Hopper and the patient; if regular in person sessions are unable to be resumed by the end of this agreed on time, Dr. Hopper will discuss referral to another appropriate provider;
- If the patient affirms that s/he is physically in the state of Georgia at the time of the Telehealth session, or if Dr. Hopper is legally able to practice telehealth in the U.S. state the patient is physically in and agreed on in advance;
- If the patient’s symptoms are such that it is very unlikely that an emergency mental health situation would arise during the course of Telehealth sessions;
- The patient agrees that if Dr. Hopper believes that in person sessions are recommended due to symptom acuity, s/he will make arrangements to come to an in-person session or accept a referral to a more appropriate provider;
- If an emergency should occur while on a telehealth session, Dr. Hopper may consider taking any actions she considers necessary to keep you safe, including calling 911 or your designated emergency contact.
- The patient and Dr. Hopper agree to not record the sessions.
- The patient and Dr. Hopper agree to meet the same privacy safeguards as during an in person session; i.e. both sides shall be in enclosed rooms, with reasonable sound barriers and with no one else present without the other’s written consent.

Pros and Cons of Telehealth

- Telehealth allows for both verbal and nonverbal communications to be utilized, similar to a regular therapy session.
- Telehealth can allow health services to be provided when travel is limited or impossible.
- Using telehealth can take increased set up time (several steps to sign in) and requires a reasonable comfort with the technologies involved.
- Telehealth sessions may be interrupted if technologies fail.
- Reviewing homework will require faxing or emailing pages; Emailed pages will only be accepted via the patient portal that I currently use.
- You must leave a credit card form on file so that I may charge applicable fees.

- Some people say that telehealth protocols do not have the same “feel” as in person sessions. This may impact the therapeutic relationship.

Technology

- Dr. Hopper will provide an invitation over a telehealth platform to the patient at a specified appointment time. She will have a Business Associate Agreement with the platform, and they will be compliant with HIPAA regulations. Data will be encrypted, the provider says they do not keep content of calls, history of the calls themselves may be maintained in their database - similar to any phone company -- and deleted at their own schedule.
- No system is considered 100% unhackable, and use of any telehealth platform indicates that you accept the risks inherent in this modality.
- Dr. Hopper is not responsible for the patient’s ability to participate in the session, including technology limitations. Internet connectivity and bandwidth availability at the patient’s side is the responsibility of the patient. Patient is responsible for providing his/her own camera, speakers, and whatever other computer equipment is necessary for the call, as well as for any fees assessed by his/her internet service provider.
- It is recommended that you have, at a minimum, a digital subscriber line (DSL) or cable modem connection that is capable of at least 1.5Mbps download speed and at least 768kbps upload speed. (You may use a website to estimate your connection speeds; www.speedtest.net, is one example of such a website.)
- Before the initial telehealth session, Dr. Hopper can provide a free ‘test call’ of up to 10 minutes, to ensure that technology is functioning. If a longer test call is needed, she may charge for her time, at a rate commensurate with her standard fees. Insurance is not billable for these charges.
- It is recommended that you check your computer for malware or cookies which may be keeping track of your own internet activities.

Financial policies

- Telehealth sessions are billable to insurance panels as per Georgia Code O.C.G.A. § 33-24-56.4.
- All Telehealth services are billed at the same rates as other services; all billing policies are identical to policies laid out in Dr. Hopper’s Informed Consent form.
- If a call is interrupted due to technological or internet connectivity issues:
 - If the Telehealth session was still within the scheduled appointment time, Dr. Hopper will follow up by phone to confirm ending, closure, and future scheduling.
 - If the session is interrupted and connection unable to be re-established within a few minutes, Dr. Hopper will offer times to reschedule as soon as practically possible. Fees will be prorated based on the amount of time the appointment took place.

Consent to Telehealth Policies

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms. You are welcome to request a copy for your records.

Printed Name

Signature

Date