

TELETHERAPY PRACTICES



All patients of Renew Counseling LLC (Renew) receiving behavioral services through Teletherapy technologies must understand and acknowledge the information in this document. Teletherapy is the delivery of behavioral health services using interactive technologies (use of audio, video or other electronic communications) between a practitioner and a patient who are not in the same physical location.

The interactive technologies used in Teletherapy incorporate network and software security protocols to protect the confidentiality of patient information transmitted via any electronic channel. These protocols include measures to safeguard the data and to aid in protecting against intentional or unintentional corruption.

Recording of services in any manner without the consent of the therapist is NOT allowed. If Renew discovers that a patient is recording therapy sessions without the permission of the therapist, Renew will terminate services for that patient immediately.

Benefits & Limitations

Teletherapy is provided using technology (including but not limited to video, phone, text, apps and email) and may not involve direct face to face communication. There are benefits and limitations to this service.

Regardless of the sophistication of today's technology, some information practitioners would ordinarily receive during an in-person consultation may not be available in teleconsultation. Such missing information could in some situations make it more difficult for the practitioner to understand the patient's problems and to help the patient get better. During Teletherapy services, practitioners are unable to physically touch the patient or to render any emergency assistance if the patient experiences a crisis.

Technology Requirements

To receive Teletherapy services, the patient must have familiarity with and access to the appropriate technology. This technology typically includes a personal computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone, as well as broadband Internet access adequate for streaming video.

The exchange of information through Teletherapy is not direct, and any paperwork exchanged is likely provided through electronic means or through postal delivery.

During the patient's Teletherapy consultation, details of the patient's medical history and personal health information may be discussed with behavioral health care professionals through the use of interactive video, audio or other telecommunications technology. Ethernet connections are recommended, and using Wi-Fi connections may compromise the signal and/or the confidentiality of communication or what is communicated. If patients use Wi-Fi, Renew recommends that they use only private Wi-Fi networks and do not use a Wi-Fi connection that is shared or owned by a business or other entity as confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Local Practitioners

If a need for direct, in-person services arises, it is the patient's responsibility to contact practitioners in the patient's area or to contact the patient's behavioral practitioner's office for an in-person appointment or the patient's primary care physician if the patient's behavioral practitioner is unavailable. Availability of appointments with these professionals may vary, and if the patient is experiencing a crisis that requires immediate care, the patient should go to a hospital emergency room or call 911.

Self-Determination

A patient may decline any Teletherapy services at any time without jeopardizing the patient's access to future care, services, and benefits. Patients do not have to answer any question that they feel is inappropriate or the answer to which the patient does not wish any persons present at their physical location to hear. However, a useful diagnosis depends on information, and treatment depends on diagnosis, so if a patient withholds information the patient does so assuming the risk that a diagnosis might not be made or might be made incorrectly. Were that to happen, the patient's telehealth-based treatment might be less successful than it otherwise would be, or it could fail entirely.

Risks of Technology

Teletherapy services rely on technology, which allows for greater convenience in service delivery. However, transmitting information over technology creates risks in that include, but are not limited to, breaches of confidentiality, theft of personal information, inadequate communication of information between patient and practitioner, and disruption of service due to technical difficulties. Also, Teletherapy is a new delivery method for professional behavioral health services, in an area not yet fully validated by research. As such, it may have potential risks, possibly including some that are not yet recognized.

Modification Plan

The patient's practitioner and the patient will regularly reassess the appropriateness of continuing to deliver services through the use of the technologies agreed upon, and they will modify the plan to use the technologies as needed.

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Service Disruption and Emergency Protocol

Should service be disrupted every attempt will be made to re-connect the services. In emergencies, in the event of disruption of service, or for routine or administrative reasons, it may be necessary to communicate by other means. For other communication, text reminders, phone calls or a secure email communication will be used. Statements regarding client balances will be emailed securely as well. Clients can use the Therapy Portal for Renew Counseling to request and cancel appointments.

Limits of Confidentiality

Under the law, and regardless of what form of communication the patient uses in working with the patient's practitioner, the patient's practitioner may be required to report to the authorities information suggesting that the patient has engaged in or intends to engage in behaviors that endanger the patient or others. Insurance companies, those authorized by the client, and those permitted by law may also have access to patient records or communications.

Patient Responsibilities

It is the patient's responsibility to maintain privacy on the patient end of communication. Steps to maintain privacy include, but are not limited to, engaging in Teletherapy services in a private, non-public location, where others cannot hear what you are saying.

Also, patients should use their own equipment to participate in Teletherapy services and not equipment owned by another, and specifically not equipment or networks owned by the patient's employer. Any information entered into an employer's computer can be considered by the courts to belong to the patient's employer, and the patient's privacy may thus be compromised.

Storage and Records

The patient's communication exchanged with the patient's practitioner will be stored in written form in a Progress Note or Process Note stored in the patient's Electronic Health Record maintained by Renew. In no way will the content of Teletherapy services be video or audio recorded without the consent and signed permission of the client. Patient records may be used for telehealth program evaluation, education, and research, but if it is used in this manner, no patient will be personally identified

Laws & Standards

The laws and professional standards that apply to in-person behavioral services also apply to telehealth services. This document does not replace other agreements, contracts, or documentation of informed consent, including those defining the patient's responsibilities regarding fees incurred for professional services delivered by Renew, which includes Teletherapy services, and those defining the patient's responsibilities for late-cancellation fees for therapy appointments, which includes appointments for Teletherapy services.