



Coral Counseling Center LLC  
Erica Boan, MS, LPC  
313 South Ave, Suite 401  
Springfield, MO 65806

### **Telehealth Informed Consent**

Thank you for choosing Coral Counseling Center for your current counseling needs. This document is intended to provide information regarding technology-assisted counseling services including the potential risks and benefits, safeguards against those risks, and alternatives to online services. We are happy to discuss these policies in more detail and answer any questions that remain.

### **Confidentiality Policy in Emergencies**

The same limitations to confidentiality within an in-person counseling setting apply to telehealth. Should you enter a medical or psychological emergency, we need to know your location so that in the event of an emergency we can get you help. Please share the physical location from which you will be conducting the telehealth sessions:

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\_\_\_\_\_ Please initial here to indicate that you will share your location at the beginning of our session should it be different from the one listed above. Your counselor will check-in regarding your location at the beginning of each session.

### **Emergency Contacts**

Should you need physical or emotional assistance (e.g. approaching a psychological emergency but not at the threshold of needing to be hospitalized or feeling dizzy but not in need of an ambulance), we would like to be able to contact someone to assist you. Please name two emergency contacts, their relationship to you, their phone numbers, and email



address. By signing this document, you agree that we may, but are not required to, contact either of these people if we are concerned for your safety. In the case that your counselor has a dire concern for your safety, we will do all that we can to protect you, including calling 911.

**Emergency Contact 1:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact 2:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Recording of Sessions:**

We will not record your sessions (video or audio) and expect that you will not engage in this use of technology in the therapeutic setting either, whether overtly or covertly. Engaging in recordings of sessions without permission from the counselor may result in the termination of services.

**Technology-Assisted Counseling | Risks and Benefits**

There are various risks associated with the electronic provision of counseling services related to the technology used and the distance between the counselor and the client. Confidentiality could be breached in transit by hackers or internet service providers or at either end by other with access to your account or computer. We discourage using public access computers (i.e. computer at a public library) or shared networks (i.e. wi-fi at Starbucks, McDonalds, etc.).

The potential benefits of receiving mental health services via telehealth video include:

- 1) The ability to work around work-related obligations that would interfere with face-to-face communication (no commute)
- 2) Avoiding inclement weather
- 3) The ability to work around child-care related needs to attend a counseling session

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- 4) Decreased risk of contracting/spreading illness during peak transmission periods (e.g. flu season)
- 5) Feeling less inhibited than in-person (more comfortable in your own space)

### **Technology-Assisted Counseling | Safeguards**

Although the internet may provide the appearance of anonymity and privacy in counseling, privacy can be more of an issue online than in-person. We will be using Face Time or phone calls for video-based communications to allow for the highest possible security and confidentiality of the content of your sessions. Please also ensure you are also doing your utmost to protect your privacy by considering who has access to your email, text messages, and so on. You are responsible for creating and using additional safeguards when the used to access services may be accessed by others, such as securing computer hardware, internet access points, email, and passwords. For example, we would like to discourage you from using auto-fill usernames and passwords and from using your work email for our communications. *Please consider the visibility of your screen to those around you when engaging in any form of technology-assisted counseling. A quiet and private location is best for video sessions. Some clients also prefer the use of earphones for better hearing.* Another way to protect your privacy is to be sure to fully exit all online counseling sessions and emails before leaving your computer.

### **Technology-Assisted Counseling | Alternatives**

Online counseling may not be appropriate for many types of clients, including those who have numerous concerns over the risks of internet counseling, clients with active suicidal / homicidal thoughts, and clients who are experiencing active manic / psychotic symptoms. If a client has a poor internet connection, a lack of privacy, or would otherwise be more comfortable meeting in-person. Please feel free to request a referral to see myself or another counselor at any time if you think a different counseling relationship would be more practical or beneficial to you.

### **Technology-Assisted Counseling | Procedures**

You should be aware that misunderstandings are possible with video chat software, since bandwidth is limited and images lack detail. Counselors are observers of human behavior and gather much information from body language, voice inflection, eye contact, and other nonverbal cues. If you have never engaged in online counseling before, have patience with the

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process and clarify information if you think your counselor has not understood you correctly. Please be patient if your counselor periodically asks for clarification as well.

Please be sure to exit out of any programs that may steal bandwidth prior to your session. Exit (don't just minimize) Skype, Google Drive, or any other cloud back up service. Please ensure that no one in your home is streaming video or playing graphic-heavy online video games, as this will decrease your internet connection during your session.

If bandwidth issues persistently interfere with video feed (causing the freezing of the live connection), alternative arrangements may need to be made such as upgrading internet speed with your local internet provider, positioning yourself closer to the wi-fi signal, or plugging into a hard-wired internet connection. Video feed stability is critical to the delivery and quality of service.

Please refrain from driving or otherwise multitasking during your session. If you are using a mobile device, such as a phone or tablet, for your video session, it is recommended that you use a tripod or other stabilizing setup to avoid disruption to video delivery.

### **Technology-Assisted Counseling | State Laws**

All technology-assisted counseling will comply with Missouri Law as stated by the Committee for Professional Counselors. No counseling will occur with individuals or groups outside the State of Missouri unless specifically authorized by the state of residence of the client. This policy is subject to change based on state, federal and regulations by your insurance company.

### **Technology-Assisted Counseling | Disconnection of Service**

If there is ever a disruption of services on the internet during session, the client or counselor will re-enter Face Time or the phone call.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the Agreement in its entirety and consent to its terms. We look forward to working together and answering any questions you may have about the counseling process and profession.

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**CORAL COUNSELING CENTER**

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Preferred Email:*** \_\_\_\_\_