

Women's Mental Health Associates and Health Psychology Solutions

TELEHEALTH SERVICES INFORMED CONSENT

Telehealth is the practice of delivering health and mental health services via technology-assisted platforms such as interactive videoconferencing (i.e., virtual “face-to-face appointments) or other electronic means (i.e., telephone) between a clinical provider and a patient who are in two different places. The **Women's Mental Health Associates and Health Psychology Solutions Informed Consent for Telehealth Services** outlines important information on providing psychological services using the phone or the Internet. Please read this document carefully and reach out with any questions you may have about telehealth services. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Please review the separate **Women's Mental Health Associates and Health Psychology Solutions Electronic Communications Policy** for detailed information about communication between sessions. As a reminder, I only use email and text messaging with your permission and **only** for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. This means that email exchanges and text messages with my office should be limited to administrative matters. This includes things like setting and changing appointments, billing, and other related issues. You should be aware that I cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information communicated by email or text. Therefore, I will not discuss any clinical information by email or text and ask that you do not either. Also, I do not regularly check my email or texts, nor do I respond immediately, so these methods **should not** be used if there is an emergency. To discuss personal matters, please call me at 215-370-2342.

Telehealth Services by Psychologists the US

Videoconferencing may be used when the clinician and patient are in different locations. Licensing regulations in the US, however, may only allow for a consultation, evaluation, or treatment in the State in which the clinician is licensed and the patient is located. I understand that Dr. Coons is licensed to practice psychology in Colorado and Pennsylvania. In addition, Dr. Coons has met the ASPPB requirements for Authority to Practice Interjurisdictional Telepsychology (APIT). I will tell Dr. Coons which State I (as well as my spouse, partner, or family member) will be in or visiting when we are scheduled for a consultation, evaluation, therapy session and Dr. Coons will clarify whether her license or APIT extends to cover work done in another State. Dr. Coons is not able to see a patient who is living or visiting a country outside the United States by videoconferencing or telephone.

Confidentiality

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best effort to protect all communications that are part of services delivered through telehealth platforms. The videoconferencing system used by Women's Mental Health Associates and Health Psychology Solutions meets HIPPA standards for encryption and privacy protection, although we cannot completely guarantee privacy. 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. Women's Mental Health Associates and Health Psychology Solutions uses 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, insecure, or accessed by others. You should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications. For example, only use secure networks for telepsychology sessions and have passwords to protect the device you use for appointments by videoconferencing.

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in the **Women's Mental Health Associates and Health Psychology Solutions Informed Consent Document** still apply to services delivered by telephone or videoconferencing. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions

to confidentiality.

Appropriateness of Telepsychology

If most appointments are scheduled for telehealth, from time to time, we may arrange for in-person sessions to “check-in” with one another during a face-to-face visit. I will also let you know if I decide that telehealth sessions are no longer appropriate for your care needs. If that is the case, we will discuss options for in-person care or referrals to another professional near your location who can provide appropriate services.

Additional Telehealth Issues

- Patients have the right to withdraw consent at any time for psychological services via telehealth (i.e., videoconferencing and/or telephone). In-person services may or may not be available from Dr. Coons depending on where I live and other scheduling challenges, and that we will discuss alternative consultation and treatment options if in-person appointments are not available with Dr. Coons.
- There will be no recording of any of the online/virtual or telephone appointments by either myself or Dr. Coons. All information disclosed within consultations, evaluation or treatment sessions and workshops and written or electronic records pertaining to those appointments are confidential and may not be disclosed to anyone without written authorization, except where the disclosure is permitted and/or required by law.
- Privacy laws that protect the confidentiality of my protected health information (PHI) also apply to telehealth sessions unless an exception to confidentiality applies, (i.e., mandatory reporting of child abuse; danger to self or others; mental/emotional health issues I introduce in a legal proceeding). Documentation standards also remain the same for clinical services provided through videoconferencing, telephone or in-person appointments.
- The same professional fee rates apply for telehealth services and in-person consultation, evaluation, psychotherapy, or workshops.
- Dr. Coons will forward the log-on link for videoconferencing sessions before each appointment. It is recommended that patients log on to the session at least ten (10 minutes) before the start of the appointment to check the internet connection and make sure the video and sound are working. Dr. Coons will admit you to the session as soon as she logs onto the videoconferencing platform at the planned appointment time.
- There are benefits, risks, and consequences associated with telehealth, including but not limited to: changes in reimbursement by health insurance companies for telehealth services, disruption in telehealth transmission because of poor or no internet connection and other technology failures, interruption and/or breaches of confidentiality by unauthorized persons, discomfort with virtual face-to-face vs in-person sessions, difficulties interpreting non-verbal communication, and interruptions in privacy if the patient is at home or in a work or public setting.
- Try to find a private place for telehealth sessions where you will not be interrupted and can focus on your goals. Ideally, you should participate in a virtual appointment while in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation.
- If the session is interrupted for technology connections failures, disconnect from the session, wait two (2) minutes and then re-contact via the same videoconferencing platform. If we do not reconnect within two (2) minutes, then call Dr. Coons at 215-370-2342. 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.

Telehealth Services and Emergencies

Another challenge associated with psychological services delivered through videoconferencing or telephone is the limited ability to respond to emergencies in contrast to traditional in-person care. Before engaging in telepsychology consultation or evaluation, we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during our telepsychology work when there is limited access to immediate resources if you are having a physical or mental health (i.e., risk of harm to self or others) emergency during the session.

- If the session is interrupted for any reason, such as the technological connection failure, and you are having a physical or mental health emergency, call 911 for medical emergencies and 911 or 988 for mental health emergencies or go to your nearest emergency room. Then please call me back after you have called for assistance or obtained emergency care.
- You are also asked to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and whom Dr. Coons will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist with the situation. By signing this document, you are stating that you are aware that Dr. Coons may contact the necessary authorities in case of an emergency. You are also acknowledging that if you believe there is imminent harm to yourself or another person, you will seek care immediately through your local health care provider, call 911 or at the nearest hospital emergency department.
- Below, please include the names and telephone numbers of your local emergency contacts such as a trusted family member, friend, confident or neighbor, and your local primary care provider.

Trusted family member, friend, or neighbor (circle one) _____
Best contact number

Primary care provider _____
Office number

I have read, fully understand, and agree with the **Women’s Mental Health Associates and Health Psychology Solutions Informed Consent for Telehealth Services** outlined above. I have received clarification about any aspect of this policy where necessary.

Patient Name (Print) _____
Date

Patient Name (Signature) _____
Date

Helen L. Coons, PhD, ABPP _____
Date