



## Distance (Remote) Therapy Notice

This notice is designed to inform you about the many aspects of distance therapy provided by Midwest Regional Health Services.

It is important to be aware that there is an increased risk for misunderstanding when using telephone, text, email, or video conferencing as many of the non-verbal cues are significantly reduced. When using video conferencing software, such as Zoom or FaceTime, misunderstandings may occur since bandwidth is limited and images may lack detail. If this is your first time using distance therapy, please be patient with the process and do not hesitate to provide clarification if you feel your therapist did not fully understand your concerns.

### **Risks and Benefits of Distance Therapy**

There are various risks related to electronic provision of therapy services related to the technology used, the distance between therapist and client, and issues related to timeliness. These risks may include: 1) Text or email messages not being received, 2) possible denial of insurance benefits, and 3) confidentiality being breached through unencrypted email, lack of password protection, or leaving information on a shared computer. Messages could fail to be received if they are sent to the wrong address or phone number. Confidentiality could be breached by hackers, internet service providers, or at either end by others with access to the client's phone or computer. Clients accessing the internet from public locations should consider the visibility of their screen to people around them. Position yourself to avoid peeping by those around you.

The potential benefits of receiving therapy services remotely include 1) the convenience of receiving counseling from any location, 2) increased flexibility in scheduling appointments, 3) increased client anonymity by removing common indicators that one is receiving therapy services, 4) lack of disruption to scheduled appointments due to inclement weather, and 5) increased availability of therapy services for clients who have difficulty ambulating or accessing a physical site.

### **Treatment Alternatives**

Distance (Remote) Therapy may not be appropriate for everyone. Clients who have concerns about the risks of distance therapy, clients with active suicidal or homicidal thoughts, and clients who are experiencing active manic or psychotic symptoms may be better suited to meet with his or her therapist in person. If your therapist determines that remote therapy may be ineffective for you, he or she will work with you in scheduling face-to-face sessions.

## **Confidentiality**

Maintaining client confidentiality is of utmost importance to our office. Your therapist will take every precaution to prevent unnecessary disclosure; however, given the unique aspects of telehealth services, client confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The client is responsible for maintaining confidentiality at his or her location, ensuring a private environment during remote sessions.

## **Records**

The therapist will maintain records of online therapy services that are consistent with face-to-face treatment standards. These records may include reference notes, session summaries, and chart notes within our Electronic Medical Record.

## **Emergency Care**

The therapist may not immediately receive an incoming text, email, or phone call. If the client is in a state of crisis or an emergency arises, the therapist recommends contacting a crisis help line:

- Nebraska Family Help Line 1-888-866-8660
- National Suicide Hotline 1-800-273-8255