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CONSENT FOR TELEMENTAL HEALTH

Please carefully read the following information and sign at the bottom of this document if in agreement.

In order to participate in telemental health for psychotherapy:

- You will need access to certain technological services and tools to engage in telemental health-based services with me, as your provider;
- Telemental health has both benefits and risks, which together you and I will be monitoring as we proceed with our work together;
- It is possible that receiving services by telemental health will turn out to be inappropriate for you, and that you and I may have to cease our work by telemental health;
- You can stop work by telemental health at any time without prejudice;
- You will need to participate in creating an appropriate space for your telemental health sessions;
- You will need to participate in making a plan for managing technology failures, mental health crises, and medical emergencies;
- I follow security best practices and legal standards in order to protect your health care information, but you will also need to participate in maintaining your own security and privacy.

What is Telemental Health?

“Telemental health” means, in short, “provision of mental health services with the provider and recipient of services being in separate locations, and the services being delivered over electronic media.” I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and the Texas Administrative Code Part 34, Chapter 781 §781.102 defines it for social workers as, “(25) Electronic practice--Interactive social work practice that is aided by or achieved through technological methods, such as the web, the Internet, social media, electronic chat groups, interactive TV, list serves, cell phones, telephones, faxes, and other emerging technology.” Therefore, services delivered via telemental health rely on a number of electronic, often Internet-based, technology tools. These tools can include video conferencing software, email, text messaging, virtual environments, specialized mobile health (“mHealth”) apps, and others.

I typically provide telemental health services using Telehealth by Simple Practice via a computer or cell phone, or by standard voice phone service, if video service is not achievable.

You will need access to Internet service and/or phone service to use the above-listed tools in order to engage in telemental health work with me.

If you have any questions or concerns about the above tools, please address them directly with me so we can discuss their risks, benefits, and specific application to your treatment.

Benefits and Risks of Telehealth

Receiving services through telemental health allows you to:

- Receive counseling services at times or in places where the service may not otherwise be available;
- Receive counseling services in a fashion that may be more convenient and less prone to delays than in-person meetings; and
- Receive counseling services when you are unable to travel to my office.

The unique characteristics of telemental health media may also help some people make improved progress on health goals that may not have been otherwise achievable without telemental health.

Receiving services via telemental health has the following risks:

- Telemental health services can be impacted by technical failures, may introduce risks to your privacy, and may reduce my ability to directly intervene in crises or emergencies. Here is a non-exhaustive list of examples:
 - Internet connections and cloud services could cease working or become too unstable to use;
 - Cloud-based service personnel, IT assistants, and malicious actors (“hackers”) may have the ability to access your private information that is transmitted or stored in the process of telemental health-based service delivery;
 - Computer or smartphone hardware can have sudden failures or run out of power, or local power services can go out.
 - Interruptions may disrupt services at important moments, and I may be unable to reach you quickly or using the most effective tools;
 - I may also be unable to help you in-person.

There may be additional benefits and risks to telemental health services that arise from the lack of in-person contact or presence, the distance between you and I at the time of our counseling session, and the technological tools used to deliver services. I will assess these potential benefits and risks, sometimes in collaboration with you, as our relationship progresses.

Assessing Telemental Health’s Fit for You

Although it is well validated by research, service delivery via telemental health is not a good fit for every person. I will continuously assess if working via telemental health is appropriate for your case. If it is not appropriate, we will work in person, if possible, and if not, I will help you find in-person providers with whom to continue services. Please talk to me if you find the telemental health media so difficult to use that it distracts from the services being provided, if the medium causes trouble focusing on your services, or if there are any other reasons why the telemental health medium seems to be causing problems in receiving services.

Raising your questions or concerns will not, by itself, result in termination of services. Bringing your concerns to me is often a part of the process. You also have a right to stop receiving services by telemental health at any time without prejudice.

Your Telemental Health Environment

You will be responsible for creating a safe and confidential space during sessions. You should use a space that is free of other people. It should also be difficult or impossible for people outside the space to see or hear your interactions with me during the session. If you are unsure of how to do this, please ask your me for assistance.

Our Communication Plan

At our first telemental health session, we will develop a plan for backup communications in case of technology failures and a plan for responding to emergencies and mental health crises. In addition to those plans, I have the following policies regarding communications:

The best way to contact me between sessions is text or call me at 512-426-6889. I will respond to your messages within one business day. You are also free to contact me via email at annette@annettedelcanto.com, however my response time may be slower.

Please note that I may not respond at all on weekends or holidays. If you are experiencing a crisis, please call me and leave me a voice message letting me know, and I will do my best to quickly return your call. If you cannot wait for my response, please call the hotline to help at 512-472-4357.

Please note that all textual messages you exchange with me, e.g. emails and text messages, may become a part of your health record.

Recordings

Please do not record video or audio sessions without my consent. Making recordings can quickly and easily compromise your privacy, and should be done so only with great care. I will not record video or audio sessions.

I have read and understand the above language, and agree to the same:

Printed Client Name

Client Signature

Date