

# Sioux Falls Psychological Services and River Counseling Services

## COVID-19 Informed Consent (June 1, 2021)

### INFORMED CONSENT FOR IN-PERSON SERVICES DURING COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

This document contains important information about our decision (yours and mine) to resume in-person services considering the COVID-19 public health crisis. This document is based on best practices during COVID-19 as determined by professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association. Please read this carefully and let me know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will be an official agreement between us.

#### Decision to Meet Face-to-Face

We have agreed to meet in person for some or all future sessions. If there is a resurgence of the pandemic or if other health concerns arise, however, I may require that we meet via telehealth. If you have concerns about meeting through telehealth, we will talk about it first and try to address any issues. You understand that, if I believe it is necessary, I may determine that we return to telehealth for everyone's well-being.

If you decide at any time that you would feel safer staying with, or returning to, telehealth services, I will respect that decision if it is feasible and clinically appropriate. Reimbursement for telehealth services, however, is also determined by the insurance companies and applicable law, so that is an issue we may also need to discuss. It is important for you to know that telehealth services may be covered at a different rate than in-person services. For example, during the COVID pandemic some insurance providers may cover the full cost of therapy including any copayment or deductible, while in-person therapy requires you to cover your cost share.

On rare occasions you may ask your therapist if they would meet with you outdoors. This may be a reasonable option in certain situations, but it would be unusual, you would have to agree to be seen in public with your therapist (thus losing a bit of confidentiality), and your therapist always has the option of not working this way. If it is agreed to, all other requirements in this informed consent still apply.

#### Risks of Opting for In-Person Services

You understand that by coming to the office, you are assuming the risk of exposure to the coronavirus (or other public health risk). This risk may increase if you travel by public transportation, cab, or ridesharing service.

#### Your Responsibility to Minimize Your Exposure

***If you have not received a full dose of COVID-19 vaccine*** you agree to take certain precautions if you wish to be seen in person, to minimize the risk of exposure for everyone (you, me, our families, my colleagues, and other clients). If you do not adhere to these safeguards, it may result in our starting/returning to a telehealth arrangement. Please initial each statement below to indicate that you understand and agree to these actions:

- You will only keep your in-person appointment if you are symptom free. \_\_\_\_\_
- You will take your temperature before coming to each appointment. If it is elevated (100 Fahrenheit or more), or if you have other symptoms of the coronavirus, you agree to cancel the appointment or proceed using telehealth. If you wish to cancel for this reason, I won't charge you our normal cancellation fee. \_\_\_\_\_
- You will enter the building no more than five minutes prior to your scheduled session to minimize time spent in the waiting room. \_\_\_\_\_
- You will use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when you enter the building. \_\_\_\_\_
- You will wear a mask in all public areas, from the time you enter the building until you are inside your therapist's office, and again from the time you leave your therapist's office until you are outside the building. You and your therapist will discuss any concerns you each have about mask usage during the therapy session and decide together whether to wear them. \_\_\_\_\_
- You will keep a distance of 6 feet and there will be no physical contact (e.g. no shaking hands) with SFPS or RCS staff. \_\_\_\_\_
- You will try not to touch your face or eyes with your hands. But if you do (and we all know it is hard not to do so), you will immediately wash or sanitize your hands. \_\_\_\_\_

- If you are bringing your minor child for an appointment, you will make sure that your child follows all sanitation and distancing protocols. \_\_\_\_\_
- If you have a job that exposes you to other people who are infected, you will immediately let our staff know. \_\_\_\_\_
- If a resident of your home or someone with whom you have had close contact tests positive for the infection, you will immediately let our staff know and we will then continue treatment via telehealth. \_\_\_\_\_
- If you are the person who has a scheduled appointment, then only you will come into the building. If you are a parent or caregiver transporting a minor client to their session, you and your child's therapist will mutually determine what procedures best fit your child's needs, and both therapist and parent/caregiver will accommodate to the needs of your child under the direction of the therapist. \_\_\_\_\_

**My Commitment to Minimize Exposure**

My practice has taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading the illness within the office and we have posted our efforts on our website and in the office. Please let me know if you have questions about these efforts.

**If You or I Are Sick**

We are committed to keeping you, our SFPS and RCS staff, and all our families safe from the spread of illness. If you show up for an appointment and we believe you have a fever or other symptoms, you will need to leave the building. We can follow up with services by telehealth as appropriate.

If you interact with anyone on our staff that tests positive for the coronavirus, we will attempt to notify you so that you can take appropriate precautions.

**Informed Consent**

This agreement supplements the general informed consent/business agreement that we agreed to at the start of our work together.

Your signature below shows that you agree to these terms and conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Client

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client signature/Primary Caregiver signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Office Safety Precautions in Effect During the Pandemic**

The SFPS and RCS offices are taking the following precautions to protect our clients and help slow the spread of the coronavirus. We are committed to serving you in as safe an environment as possible.

- Office seating in therapy rooms has been arranged for appropriate physical distancing. The expanded waiting room seating also allows for appropriate physical distancing.
- Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is available throughout our offices and open areas, although you are also strongly encouraged to always carry some with you for your personal use.
- We schedule appointments at specific intervals to minimize the number of people entering or leaving the building at or near the same time.
- We ask all clients to arrive for their sessions no more than five minutes early. If you prefer to wait in your car you are encouraged to speak with your therapist about contacting you when they are ready for your session.
- Areas that are commonly touched are thoroughly sanitized throughout the day.
- You are encouraged to take advantage of "no contact" payments for services by utilizing our automatic payment procedures. Your therapist or the Central Office staff can initiate this for you.
- Physical contact will be limited.