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**Informed Consent and Telemental Health**

**Elements of a Statement of Informed Consent**

- The length and cost of sessions

- The clinician’s policies concerning acceptance of insurance payments

- Costs for secondary services, such as copying records, phone calls, or document creation

- Payment policies

- Cancellation policy

- Rights to privacy and confidentiality

- Privacy and confidentiality rights and other rights covered under HIPAA

- Policies concerning the review of case records by the client

- The risks and benefits of therapy and client responsibilities within treatment

**Policy for Communication via Social Media**

It is the policy of Charles D. Safford not to initiate any connections with clients via social media and to decline any invitations to connect with clients via Facebook, LinkedIn or any other form of social media, or otherwise engage in internet based communication in ways that might reveal the existence of a therapeutic relationship. This policy is designed to protect the rights of each client to privacy and confidentiality. This policy will be followed both during the time a client is in treatment and after a client has discontinued treatment.

**Additional Items to Include to Address Informed Consent and TMH**

* Statement of purposes for using TMH
* Special section on limitations, benefits and risks of TMH, and guidelines for when TMH will not be employed as modality of treatment
* Voluntary nature of using TMH and understanding that no results can be guaranteed or assured.
* Agreement, process and education on establishing client and clinician identity to start each session
* No recording of TMH sessions without written permission
* Application of laws protecting privacy and confidentiality in TMH
* Use of Business Associate Agreement (BAA) for technology assistance
* Limitations on privacy due to impossibility to guarantee absolute security via TMH
* Clarification on differences between TMH and face to face sessions
* Risk of interruptions to signal and the need to have back-up plan for communication if signal is lost
* Use of demographic information for scheduling and billing purposes
* Agreement, process and education on the establishment of a safety plan for psychiatric emergencies that may require a higher level of care
* If there is an emergency during a TeleMental health session, then emergency contacts may be called.
* Additional contact information for client: physical location during counseling sessions and phone number at that physical location
* Contact person, phone number for contact person, and agreement allowing contact person to be utilized in the event of a medical or psychiatric emergency during a TMH session
* Agreement for client to be seen by local resource if indicated during course of treatment
* Right to decline to continue using TMH