

VALLEY HOPE COUNSELING CENTER
INFORMED CONSENT ADDENDUM FOR DISTANCE COUNSELING

This document is an addendum to the counseling services contract you signed at your intake appointment. By signing this document and/or verbally agreeing to its terms, you certify that you understand and agree to follow Valley Hope Counseling Center's policies regarding distance counseling.

Benefits and Limitations of Distance Counseling: Valley Hope Counseling Center counselors may offer clients distance counseling sessions via phone or teleconference. Distance counseling, also known as telemental health, allows counselors and clients to connect and continue therapeutic work together in a comfortable and easily accessible way when in-person meeting is not possible or optimal. It is important that you understand that:

- Distance counseling options are offered on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the center, counselor, and the client or client's guardian; distance counseling is not a good fit for every situation so may not be offered
- It is possible that receiving distance counseling services by will turn out to be inappropriate for you, and that your counselor may decide to discontinue distance counseling
- You can decide stop work by distance counseling any time without prejudice

Fees: Clients are responsible for paying or arranging for payment of the same fee as an in-person session with their counselor at the end of the session. Counselors may offer half sessions for a prorated fee, at their discretion.

Technology and Security Considerations: Valley Hope Counseling Center counselors currently provide distance counseling sessions via cell phone and/or Clocktree™ a healthcare videoconferencing platform.

For appointment scheduling and phone sessions:

- Your counselor will call you at the contact number you provided at intake unless you specify a different number
- Be advised that mobile phones are not HIPAA protected and counselors cannot guarantee confidentiality of intercepted calls

For Clocktree™ teleconference sessions:

- You will need to provide your counselor with an email address where Clocktree™ will send an appointment link and instructions
- You will need access to a secure Internet connection with audio and visual capabilities (speakers, web camera, etc.) and access to the emailed Clocktree™ link

Risks and Limitations: Agreeing to distance counseling means that you and your counselor to assume certain responsibilities and risks:

- Your counselor agrees to take all required and reasonable steps and precautions to protect your privacy, including contacting you from a secure, private location at the number or email address you specify
- You agree to receive calls or do teleconferencing in a quiet, private location where you will not be overheard or interrupted (laundry room, closets, and parked vehicles are all options!);
- Both you and your counselor agree neither to record nor allow recording of sessions without prior written consent
- In the event of a technology failure during a distance counseling session, your counselor will take immediate steps to attempt to call you back on the number you provided or reconnect through Clocktree™.

Emergencies and Confidentiality: At the start of each distance counseling session, your counselor may ask you to confirm your location and emergency contact number. If, during the course of a distance counseling session there is concern for your safety, your counselor may call 911 and/or your emergency contact. In the event of a mental health or other personal emergency during or between sessions, you agree to immediately contact crisis services, dial 911, or go to the nearest emergency room.

Communication Plan: Unless your counselor notifies you otherwise, the best way to contact your counselor between sessions is at 540-941-8933. Your provider will respond to your messages within 48 hours. Please note that your counselor may not respond at all on weekends or holidays. Your counselor may also respond sooner than stated in this policy but that does not mean they will always respond that quickly.

I have read and agree to the terms of this document.

Client name (print): _____

Client/guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Client email: _____ Client phone number: _____