

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

This document contains important information about the decision to resume in-person, in-home services in light of the COVID-19 public health crisis. Please read this carefully and let your therapist know if you have any questions. By initialing where indicated and by signing this document, you are entering a contractual agreement. This commitment is in regards to managing health and safety while receiving counseling services at Pastoral Counseling Services of the South Shore (PCSSS).

Risks of Opting for In-Person Services

You understand that, by your counselor coming to your home, there may be an increased risk of being exposed to the coronavirus (or other public health risk) for you and your counselor.

_____ Please initial here to indicate that you have read and understood the above information.

Your Responsibility to Minimize Your Exposure

To obtain in-person, in-home services, you agree to follow the below precautions which will help keep everyone safe – you, your therapist, your respective families, as well as other staff and clients – reducing the risk of exposure, sickness and possible death.

- Visit www.cdc.gov to stay up-to-date regarding knowing COVID-19 safety measures and symptoms, as well as the state of the pandemic. ***Please know that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Psychological Association (APA) are continuing to require in-home providers to use masks and social distancing precautions when providing such services even when therapist and client are both vaccinated.***
- In-person in-home appointments should only occur if you are symptom free. The CDC recommends that individuals assess their well-being before any appointment.
- Please wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% ethanol before session as a general means of practicing universal precautions.
- Please adhere to the social distancing precautions while receiving in-home therapy, including sitting with an appropriate distance between you and your counselor as well as refraining from making physical contact with each other.
- While a client's requirement to wear a mask during in-home therapy is at her/his individual discretion, as noted above, therapists are still required to wear masks when providing behavioral health psychotherapy in clients' homes.
- Please refrain from touching your face or eyes with your hands. If you do, please immediately wash or sanitize your hands.
- Parents are responsible for helping their children maintain these safety measures when one's child is participating in an in-home, in-person therapy appointment with a PCSSS counselor.

- Please ask that others in the home also maintain social distancing boundaries with your therapist.
- If you or someone with whom you have regular physical contact have a job or life responsibilities that expose you to other people who are infected or who are at high risk for infection, please inform your therapist.
- If you have tested positive for the virus and/or have been in known contact with someone who has tested positive for the infection within the last 14 days, inform your therapist immediately. When appropriate, therapy will resume by telehealth.
- Disregard for these safety measures may prevent meeting in-person, limiting psychotherapy sessions to a telehealth arrangement.
- The above precautions may change as local, state or federal orders or guidelines are published. Any changes made to the above procedures will be discussed in therapy as needed.

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PCSSS Commitment to Minimizing Exposure

- PCSSS has taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus within the office and supports clinicians providing in-home therapy to maintain required precautions. ***Despite all remaining COVID-19 restrictions having been lifted on May 29, 2021 with an anticipated end date of the Massachusetts State of Emergency projected as June 15, 2021, the CDC and APA are continuing to require in-home providers to wear masks and practice social distancing precautions when providing in-home services even when both therapist and client are vaccinated. The CDC and APA also continue to recommend that non-vaccinated individuals continue receiving Telepsychology Services until either a few days after receiving their full vaccination and/or herd immunity is reached. PCSSS is committed to maintaining these safety precautions until further notice.***

Here is a list of safety measures PCSSS staff providing in-home therapy are committed to upholding while in your home:

- Masks will be worn by each therapist entering a client’s home and throughout the session.
- Therapists will provide their own alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% ethanol).
- Social distancing practices will remain in effect, including refraining from social conventions, such as handshakes, when arriving and departing, as well as maintaining a safe sitting distance during session.
- Therapists can help you process concerns regarding attending in-person events while not necessarily knowing as to whether or not others present are vaccinated.

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Decision to Meet Face-to-Face

If there is a resurgence of the pandemic or if other health concerns arise, Telepsychology Sessions may be required to resume. If you have concerns about receiving such telehealth services, please attend to those issues with your therapist beforehand.

If you decide at any time that you would feel safer receiving telehealth psychotherapy, PCSSS will respect your decision. Reimbursement for telehealth services, however, is determined by health insurance companies and applicable law. As such, payment for telehealth would need to be discussed ahead of time with your therapist.

If another public health crisis arises, circumstances may require a return to telehealth psychotherapy.

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In Case of Infection

PCSSS is committed to adhering to safety guidelines during this public health crisis, minimizing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

If you attend an appointment and PCSSS staff believe that you may be exhibiting symptoms, or that you may have been exposed, an in-person, in-home session may end immediately. Follow-up services by telehealth will be discussed as appropriate between you and your therapist.

If PCSSS staff test positive for the coronavirus, your therapist will notify you so that you can take appropriate precautions.

Clients cancelling in-person appointments due to COVID-19 illness (for oneself or anyone else in the home) with less than a 24-hour notice will not be charged a Late Cancellation/No Show fee. In such cases, please discuss with your therapist the option of reverting to Telehealth.

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Your Confidentiality in the Case of Infection

If you have tested positive for the coronavirus, your therapist may be legally required to notify local health authorities that they have been in your home. By this requirement, your therapist

may be required to break confidentiality without obtaining an additional signed release from you allowing them to do so. When making such a report, only the minimum information necessary for data collection will be provided. No details regarding the reason(s) for your visits to a PCSSS office will be provided.

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Informed Consent

This Informed Consent for In-Person In-Home Services During the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis supplements the general informed consent to treatment document you signed at the beginning of your psychotherapy at PCSSS. Should you wish to review that document, please ask your therapist.

The below signatures show that you and your therapist have read and understood these terms and conditions, and that you both understand you are entering a contractual agreement to uphold these responsibilities to the best of your respective abilities.

Patient/Client

Date

Therapist

Date