

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

This document contains important information about the decision to resume in-person 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) of the Institute for Spiritual Life and Psychotherapy.

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.

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

Your Responsibility to Minimize Your Exposure

To obtain services in person, 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 the use of masks and social distancing in outpatient psychotherapy settings even for vaccinated individuals.***
- Only attend in-person appointments if you are symptom free. The CDC recommends that individuals assess their well-being before coming to an appointment.
- Please wait in your car until your therapist calls (or texts) to let you know it is safe to enter the building for your appointment.
- Please wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% ethanol before entering the building.
- Masks are required in all areas related to the pastoral counseling center.
- Please adhere to the social distancing precautions already set up in the counseling area, refraining from moving chairs, sitting where signs have been placed prohibiting use, and making physical contact with others.
- 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 bringing one's child to an in-person therapy appointment at PCSSS.

- Use of the Waiting Area will be temporarily restricted to individuals attending psychotherapy sessions. All other persons accompanying you to an in-person psychotherapy session must remain outside the counseling center.
- 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 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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 _____ understood the above information.

PCSSS Commitment to Minimizing Exposure

PCSSS has taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus within the office. These efforts have also been posted on our website (www.islpma.org) and at each of our offices. Recommended safety measures can also be found at www.cdc.gov. Should you need help locating where this information is posted, please ask your therapist. Please also ask your therapist if you have any questions about these efforts.

Here is a list of safety measures PCSSS staff are committed to upholding:

- Disposable masks are available inside each counseling center entrance.
- Hand soap and water are readily available in each bathroom.
- Social distancing practices will remain in effect.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% ethanol is easily accessible in each counseling office as well as in common areas for each counseling center.
- An infrared air filtration system is used at our main office in Hanover.
- Seating in common areas and therapy rooms has been arranged for social distancing.
- Appointments will be scheduled at intervals limiting how many people will be in the building at any one time.
- Commonly touched items (e.g., pens, clipboards, etc.) are sanitized after each use.
- Hand-free trash receptacles are accessible in each office and in common areas, including the Waiting Area and entry ways, and will be disposed of at the end of each day.
- Common areas are thoroughly disinfected at the end of each day.
- Therapists can help you process concerns regarding attending in-person sessions while not knowing as to whether or not others present in the building are vaccinated. ***The CDC and APA 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.

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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, we may be required to meet via telehealth. 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 that 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 us to 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, you will be required to leave the office 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 you have been in the office. 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 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