

PPC – Professional Psychologists & Counsellors (Prof. Corp.)

1118 College Drive Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W2 Phone (306) 664-0000

Telepsychology Informed Consent

Telepsychology services involve the use of electronic communications (telephone, written, text, email, video conference, etc.) to connect with individuals remotely. Telepsychology is a relatively recent approach and there are some limitations compared with seeing a counsellor in person. It is important that both the client and the counsellor be located in a private location and that the security of the technology is up to date with appropriate security protection. For the use of this document counselling sessions will be referred to as tele-sessions.

This document is an addendum to the intake / informed consent form you must complete and sign before receiving counselling services through Professional Psychologist and Counsellors (PPC). By signing this document, you enter into an agreement to attend tele-sessions via Telepsychology.

You understand that...

- Counsellors at PPC practice in Saskatchewan and are governed by the laws of this province.
- You must be a resident of Saskatchewan and tele-sessions will occur in Saskatchewan. Receiving services outside of Saskatchewan can be discussed with your counsellor.
- You agree that you are at least 18 years old. Counsellors may determine that you are a mature minor and you will not need consent from a legal guardian(s) to receive counselling. If you are not a mature minor the counsellor will need a signature from a legal guardian(s).
- Counsellors reserve the right to decide whether to work with you via Telepsychology. If the counsellor determines that you are not someone who can benefit from Telepsychology, they will discuss this with you and suggest alternate services and/or supports.
- Telepsychology services are completely **voluntary**, and **you can choose** not to partake or answer questions at any time.
- **Confidentiality still applies for telepsychology services**, and nobody will record, screenshot or photograph any part of a tele-session, email or text without the permission from the others person(s).
- Telepsychology is performed over a secure communication system; however, there is still a **possibility of a breach** and you accept that this could affect confidentiality.
- You are required to provide a **safety plan** that is shared with the counsellor in case of an emergency. Complete the last page of this document.
- Your private information will be stored in a locked file at PPC and/or your counsellor's location.
- Because this is a technologically based method it may be necessary for a technician to assist with the equipment. Such technicians will keep any information confidential.
- There are **potential risks** to this technology, including interruptions, unauthorized access, and technical difficulties.
- You or the counsellor may discontinue the tele-session at any time if it is felt that the technology connections are not adequate for the tele-session.
- If the technology connection drops while in a tele-session, you will have an additional device available to contact your counsellor or have made plans with your counsellor for reconnection.

Emergencies and Confidentiality

To ensure your safety, your counsellor will need an emergency contact number at the start of each tele-session and will require the address of where you are connecting from. If the tele-session gets disconnected and you feel you are in crisis, you agree to call 911 or a local emergency service or go to your local emergency room immediately.

If your counsellor has significant concerns about your safety the counsellor will need to break confidentiality and call 911 and/or your emergency contact immediately.

The laws that protect privacy and the confidentiality, as stated in the PPC intake form, also apply to Telepsychology.

Limitations

There are limitations to Telepsychology that can affect the quality of tele-sessions and/or communication. These limitations include but are not limited to the following:

- **Miscommunication or misunderstanding:** If communication is done by phone/email/text both parties are not able to see each other, body language, or non-verbal reactions to the issues being discussed. This may lead to miscommunication or misunderstanding on the part of the counsellor and/or you. This may also impact assessment.
- **Boundaries:** Texting and email elicit less formal connection which may erode boundaries.
- **Time:** Unexpected or unforeseen time delays may occur.
- **Technological issues:** Equipment failure, messages may not be received, confidentiality may be breached, equipment expenses and restricted access, quality of microphone etc.
- **Management of crisis:** Verification of client and contact information provided. The capacity for crisis intervention may be limited.

To reduce the effect of these limitations your counsellor may ask for clarification by having you describe how you are feeling, thinking, and/or acting in more detail. You may also describe yourself in more detail. Your counsellor will discuss plans to address other limitations and a safety plan.

Fees, Payment and Cancellations

- The same fee rates will apply for tele-sessions as for in-person sessions at PPC; however, insurance or other managed care providers **may not** cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. Please **contact your insurance company** prior to engaging in tele-sessions to confirm if telecommunication will be reimbursed; **if sessions are not reimbursed, you are responsible for full payment.**

Payment options:

- Credit card: Your counsellor will ask for your credit card number and expiry date, which **will not** be kept on file. This will be provided to PPC reception to process payment.
- E-Transfer office@peopleproblems.ca, leaving your name, counsellors name, and the date of the tele-session in the Message section.
- Contact PPC directly at 306 664 0000.

The policy for cancellations is the same for tele-sessions as for in-person sessions at PPC.

Technology - telephone, video, email, text.

For all tele-sessions the counsellor will describe the privacy of their location. You will provide information on where you are calling from. It is best if you are in a private location during tele-sessions, where you can speak without being overheard or interrupted. You and the counsellor will discuss how the tele-session will proceed if there are interruptions.

Telephone:

Your counsellor will call you from a cellular/mobile phone or a landline. The number and name may or may not appear on your phone. Telephone is not 100% confidential.

If phone connection is lost the counsellor will call you back immediately using the phone numbers provided. The counsellor will continue to call back every 5 minutes until the end of your tele-session. If reconnection cannot be made the counsellor will connect with you via phone or email to reschedule the remainder of your tele-session.

Video:

Your counsellor will use their preferred video conferencing platform and explain the procedure to you. The platform should comply with HIPAA, GDPR, PHIPA/PIPEDA, & HITECH requirements.

Email - Text:

Communication may occur via email and/or text for the purpose of rescheduling or sharing resources/referrals. Email and/or text is not 100% confidential.

- **Any significant email and/or text sent or received by your counsellor will be added to your file, so discretion is advised.**
- **Email is not a recommended method for indicating emergent, immediate or crisis concerns.**

Disconnection from technology:

If disconnection occurs the counsellor will follow the telephone plan above for reconnection. If you have not heard from your counsellor by the end of your tele-session check your emails to see if the counsellor has made contact. If there is no contact from your counsellor call reception at PPC (306) 664-0000 or the alternate number your counsellor may have provided you. You may also inform PPC of the difficulties via email: office@peopleproblems.ca.

- **If connection is lost and cannot be re-established and the counsellor believes you are in crisis the emergency plan will be followed.**

Print and complete this page. Scan to email, fax or mail to PPC office@peopleproblems.ca
 Fax: (306) 664-0037. Address: 1118 College Drive Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W2
 or to an alternate address provided by your counsellor.

Consent to Participate in Telepsychology:

By signing below you agree that you have read (or have had read to you) all of the above sections of the Telepsychology informed consent addendum and that you understand the limitations associated with participating in Telepsychology and consent to attend tele-sessions under the terms described in this document. You also understand that the counsellor is an independent contractor, not an employee or an agent of PPC, and providing services to you directly and personally.

Telepsychology Safety Plan

Client/s Name (first and last): _____

Physical address of client is required at the start of each tele-session.

Street: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Client's Phone Number: _____ Alternative Phone Number: _____

Emergency Contact (1): _____ Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____ Address: _____

Emergency Contact (2): _____ Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____ Address: _____

Hospital local to location of client: _____ Phone Number: _____

- I have provided two emergency contact numbers and the number to the local hospital or other facility as deemed appropriate.
- If there is an emergency during a tele-session, my counsellor has permission to contact my emergency contacts and/or emergency services.
- I have provided contact information to be reached at if the Telepsychology connection fails.
- If connections fail and my counsellor does not connect with me by the end of my tele-session, I will call PPC (306) 664-0000. If I am not able to speak to someone directly, I will leave a message or email @ office@peopleproblems.ca
- If I am unable to be re-connect with my counsellor or PPC and I am in crisis, I will contact 911, the local emergency room or local emergency services.

Client/s printed name/s: _____

Signature/s: _____ **Date:** _____

Counsellor printed name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____