



COVID-19 Notice to All Clients

March 13th 2020

Given the recent headlines and recommendations from Federal, State, and Local governments, staff at the CFC are taking very seriously our responsibility as providers and as community members in how to best respond to the Coronavirus and COVID-19.

We are strongly recommending any and all clients to opt-in to teletherapy solutions whenever possible. In order to participate in teletherapy, you must request that we share the *Telemental Health Agreement* with you over the client portal in order to digitally sign it (a copy of the agreement is appended to this notice). The platform we use, VSee is HIPAA compliant. You can download the free software here - <https://download.vsee.com/>

Insurance Clients: At present, as far as we understand, members can rest assured that CareFirst BCBS will reimburse for teletherapy sessions and you should not expect any changes from a billing perspective. However, should things change in this arena, we will work with you so as to not disrupt delivery of services.

At present, the CFC's physical offices remain open. In the meantime, please know that we are taking the following actions:

- Cleaning and Hygiene: We are following the CDC guidelines on cleaning and hygiene protocols for our workplace.
- Cancellation Policy: In an effort to keep our office as safe as possible (e.g. cleaning, arrangement of furniture, etc.) we are also relaxing the cancellation policy in order to reduce exposures from ill or potentially ill clients.
- Teletherapy: Some clients (or providers) may prefer to provide services via teletherapy for a period of time.

We are encouraging all clients and providers to follow the guidance of the CDC for everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These guidelines include:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when sick.
- Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your provider directly.

Yours in health,

The Team at The Couple and Family Clinic

Informed Consent for Telemental Health Services

I hereby consent to engaging in video calls (telemental health therapy) with The Couple and Family Clinic as part of my therapy. I understand that telemental health therapy includes the practice of health care delivery, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, transfer of medical data, and education using interactive audio, video, or data communications.

I understand that I have the following rights with respect to video calls:

- I have the right to ask any questions about procedures used during telemental health therapy.
- I have the right to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting my right to future care or treatment.
- The laws that protect the confidentiality of my medical information also apply to video calls. As such, I understand that all information disclosed by me during video calls is subject to the same legal requirements outlined in the practice's Nature of Confidentiality form.

I understand that there are risks and consequences from video calls, including, but not limited to:

- the possibility, despite reasonable efforts on the part of my therapist, that the transmission of my medical information could be disrupted or distorted by technical failures;
- the transmission of my medical information could be interrupted by unauthorized persons;

These risks are offset by my therapist's use of a HIPPA-compliant service (VSee), which is encrypted for video telemental health communications. Further, the contents of my therapist's computer are encrypted.

I understand that video calls are not appropriate for all clients. Should video calls not be a good fit for me, my therapist will assist me in finding alternative options. If my therapist believes I would be better served by another form of therapeutic services (e.g. face-to-face services, group therapy, etc.), I will be referred to a therapist who can provide such services in my area.

I understand that video calls are billed at the same rate as my therapist's customary standard fee outlined in the practice's Financial Agreement form.

In order to protect my confidentiality and to facilitate the security of my information as much as possible, here is a list of precautions my therapist recommends:

- Engage in video calls in a private location where you cannot be heard by others.
- Use a personal desktop or mobile device.
- Do not record any sessions.
- Password protect any technology you will be interacting with your therapist on.
- Always log out or hang up once video call sessions are complete.

I understand that I may benefit from video calls, but that results cannot be guaranteed or assured. I have read and understand the information provided above. I have discussed this information with my therapist, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.