

# PA COUNSELING






## Informed Consent for Online Therapy

### ONLINE THERAPY (Telehealth)

Thank you for considering use of PA Counseling online/video therapy services. Studies have shown that online therapy can be an effective form of psychotherapy. Many people benefit from online therapy as all or part of therapy. Please read and sign this informed consent and ask questions before we get started.



### SET UP

-  To start online sessions for the first time, you can schedule an appointment
  - Call 814-714-0001 or Email [gayle@mypacounseling.com](mailto:gayle@mypacounseling.com)
-  PA Counseling will email a link or invitation to start videoconferencing on your phone or computer. Videoconference platform used depends upon your specific equipment
-  If copay, coinsurance or deductibles are due, cash payments must be made prior to the session beginning. You can use Paypal ([paypal.me/Pacounseling](https://paypal.me/Pacounseling)) or Zelle
-  During your online session, you will want to
  - Limit distractions
    - turn off cell phones, Hang a ‘Do Not Disturb’ sign on the door
    - Explain to others that you are unavailable for the next hour
  - Have your computer on a firm surface, sit on a sofa/chair or at a desk if possible
  - Check the audio/visual in the ‘preferences’ each time before a session
-  Online-video sessions may be interrupted/disrupted/cancelled due to unforeseen technical issues. If there is an emergency or a crisis at the time of our session, and we are interrupted, please contact your emergency services. (See also below under procedures for technical difficulties.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Information disclosed during therapy is confidential, however there are legal exceptions both mandatory, and permissible, including child, elder, and dependent adult abuse; threats of harm to self or others, or if court ordered. Please refer to the general therapy informed consent for greater detail.

It is important to know that participating in online therapy can create an increased risk for breaches in confidentiality. Extra precautions are made to ensure online therapy is confidential, but transmission could possibly be disturbed or distorted by technical failures, or interrupted or accessed by unauthorized persons. Platforms used will be HIPAA secured. Confidentiality cannot, however, be guaranteed in any exchanges of information and documents by email, phone, voicemail, or text messaging.

There are precautions that you, as client, can take to increase security, including:

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1. Ensuring that you are online in a private room/area with the door closed, and if possible, using some type of sound blocking device.
2. Connect to the Internet directly using private password protected connection, as opposed to using public WiFi. This also helps with transmission, confidentiality and may create a better video/audio quality.

### LIMITATIONS

Online therapy is intended to provide quality information, practical answers to psychological or relational issues, and online therapy for present challenges. This service is not intended to provide in-depth psychotherapy or support for severe and persistent mental illnesses. If face to face counseling is more appropriate, your PA Counseling therapist will offer an appointment if possible, or provide referral

### When should I seek traditional mental health treatment rather than internet therapy?

1. If you are having thoughts of harming yourself (e.g. suicidal thoughts) or harming someone else (e.g. violent thoughts toward others) or psychotic symptoms (visual or auditory hallucinations, paranoia, etc). Please call 911 or 1-800-SUICIDE, which is the National Suicide Hotline.
2. If you are in an abusive or violent relationship.
3. If you have been seriously depressed.
4. If you have serious substance abuse dependence.
5. If you are a minor (under 18 years old).

### IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS



Although convenient and beneficial, online therapy loses some of the aspects of office visits. **Non-verbals** are easier to miss, **eye contact** is skewed because we are looking at the screen rather than into the camera (which would create the sense of making eye contact), and the energy of physical presence is lost

### TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES or DISRUPTIONS

Technical difficulties or disruptions can occur while in therapy. If technical difficulties should occur:

**NON CRISIS INTERRUPTIONS:** If disruption occurs during a time of non-crisis, we will work to resume our therapy session as best as possible, usually by phone contact.

**CRISIS INTERRUPTIONS:** Should a disruption occur at a time of crisis, your signature says that you agree to immediately phone your online therapist at 814-714-0001

**REFUNDS:** Disruption of services may not change the amount of time available for your session. If a significant amount of time is lost due to unforeseen technical issues, it may be possible to receive a partial refund for the session. This will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

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**By signing this Informed Consent form:**

**PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENT**

I agree that I reside in the state of Pennsylvania and the location of therapy is taking place in Pennsylvania, and is thereby subject to all applicable laws, policies, and ethics of Pennsylvania

**PRIVACY NOTICE**

I am aware that a "HIPPA Notice of Privacy" is available for me to read on [www.mypacounseling.com](http://www.mypacounseling.com)

**GENERAL INFORMED CONSENT**

I understand and agree to all other policies and expectations, as outlined in this informed consent document.

**ONLINE THERAPY AGREEMENT:**

**I agree to participate in online psychotherapy. I have read, understood and comply with the agreed upon policies, and have had an opportunity to have answered any questions I may have. I understand that if fees are due by client fees are to be paid before our session. If fee is not paid in advance the session can be cancelled.**

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Client signature

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign this consent form and MAIL to Gayle Hinebaugh, LCSW, PO Box 31, 710 Oden Street, Confluence PA 15424