University of New Hampshire
Psychological and Counseling Services
Consent for Telehealth

University of New Hampshire (UNH) Psychological and Counseling Services (PACS) primarily offers traditional in-office counseling. This document is an addendum to our standard informed consent and does not replace it. Students wishing to participate in telehealth will need to sign both consent forms prior to receiving services from PACS. All aspects of informed consent for counseling in PACS standard informed consent also apply to telehealth. Telehealth is a method of delivering counseling services using information and communication technologies when the student and counselor are at two different physical locations. This form of service usually consists of live videoconferencing through a personal computer with a webcam or by phone when live videoconferencing is not available. Telehealth is offered to improve access to our services. Telehealth at PACS is delivered via Zoom. Zoom is an encrypted, secure software-based video conferencing platform.

Telehealth eligibility is dependent on the state in which you are living and the laws of that state that govern mental health care. Therefore, it is important to inform your clinician if you move to a different state.

I understand the following potential risks, consequences, and limitations of telehealth and agree:

- Telehealth should not be routinely used as a substitute for face-to-face counseling or medication by a physician.
- Telehealth, when using a cell phone or over email, is not considered confidential. Thus, phone and email contacts by PACS to students will be limited and brief. Zoom sessions are recommended for all telehealth sessions since they are encrypted and confidential.
- UNH has enabled all available encryption and privacy protections to ensure to the best of their ability the confidentiality of the information shared via Zoom. However, the use of Zoom may introduce some privacy risk as it is possible that Zoom’s security protocols could fail and a student’s confidential information could be accessed by unauthorized persons.
- Telehealth is relatively new and research is still underway on its effectiveness as compared to in person counseling.
- Telehealth may not be appropriate under normal circumstances if a student is having a crisis, acute psychosis, or suicidal or homicidal thoughts. However, during large scale emergencies (e.g., COVID 19 pandemic) telehealth may be the most effective short-term method of counseling that also allows for adequate social distancing.
- Telehealth may increase the likelihood of the PACS counselor and the student misunderstanding each other.
- Telehealth may have disruptions or delays based on the technology used. Use of Zoom requires that students have access to a high-speed internet connection to participate in telehealth with PACS.

I understand the following backup plan in case of technology failure and agree:

- The most reliable backup is a phone. Therefore, it is recommended that students participating with PACS in telehealth always have a phone available. Students will make their PACS counselor aware of their phone number at the beginning of the telehealth session.
- If the telehealth session is disconnected, the student should end and restart the session. If the student is unable to reconnect within five minutes, their counselor will attempt to reach them by phone.
I understand the following and agree that PACS may call me and that I will provide an emergency contact:

- You must inform your PACS counselor of your physical location at the start of each session.
- You must identify a close personal contact such as a parent, sibling, or close friend who PACS may call in the event that your counselor believes your safety is at risk. It is recommended that this contact person be within a one hour radius of where you will be receiving telehealth counseling:

  Name: _______________________________ Phone: __________________ Relationship: ______________

- You must provide your PACS counselor a phone number of the closest hospital emergency room:

  Hospital: _________________________________ Phone: ______________________________

- If PACS is concerned about you, your counselor will try to reach you by phone to check on your wellbeing. If we are not able to reach you, we may call your personal contact person (listed above) or local emergency services providers.

I understand the following and agree that when receiving telehealth I will:

- Only engage in sessions when I am physically present in New Hampshire. I understand that my counselor will confirm this with me each session.
- Only engage in sessions from a private location where I will not be overheard or interrupted.
- Use my own computer or device that is not publicly accessible.
- Ensure that the computer or device I use has updated operating and anti-virus software.
- NOTE on recorded sessions. I understand that if my counselor normally records our sessions that they will continue doing so using Zoom’s encrypted storage platform.

Completing Forms Remotely

Telehealth clients may be required to complete forms prior to their telehealth session. The link to access these forms will be sent by email reminder. Once the documents have been completed, clients will be asked to upload them through a secure platform that the clinician will be able to access prior to the session. Please note that the PACS counselor will not have access to completed forms until the day of the appointment and these forms should not be used to convey urgent information. For students who need to convey urgent information to their PACS counselor, please call 603-862-2090 between the hours of 9 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday.

Electronic mail (email) is not a confidential means of communication. PACS staff will need to contact you by email to communicate scheduling specific information for telehealth appointments. Please initial your permission to receive emails from PACS, understanding that the below initial updates your email preferences within our system and may reflect a change from your initial informed consent signed at PACS.

_____ Yes, I give permission for PACS to contact me by email
Emergency and After-Hours Support
If a student needs immediate assistance, we are able to offer same day urgent and crisis consultation during 9:00-4:00-pm Monday through Friday, call PACS at 603-862-2090. Please know there are other resources available to you, you may access a trained counselor 24/7 through Crisis Text Line by texting “HOME” to 741741. You can also speak with a trained crisis counselor by calling 800-273-8255. In case of an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

By typing my name on the line below, I indicate my signature and consent. I acknowledge that I understand and agree to all of the above. If I have questions, I will consult with my PACS counselor until all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction prior to signing this form. Unless revoked earlier by me in writing to PACS, this consent will expire one year from the date of my signature below.

____________________________________________________
Signature of Client:
Date: ____________________________