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Communications Policy

Contacting Me

When you need to contact *[Therapist Name]* for any reason, these are the most effective ways to get in touch in a reasonable amount of time:

The following are examples. Choose, remove and add items appropriate for your practice

- By phone (555-867-5309.) You may leave messages on the voicemail, which is confidential.
- By secure text message (see below for details.)
- By secure email (see below for details.)
- By the secure contact page on the website (www.example.com/contact).
- If you wish to communicate with me by normal email or normal text message, please inquire about the potential confidentiality risks of doing so.

OR

- If you wish to communicate with me by normal email or normal text message, please read and complete the Consent For Non-Secure Communications form included with these office policies.

If you have secure communications tools available, include this optional paragraph.

I subscribe to the following service(s) that can allow us to communicate more privately through the use of encryption and other privacy technologies. None of them will cost you money, but each requires some setup before they can be used. Please ask if you would like to use any of these services:

The following are examples. Choose, remove and add items depending on what you have available.

- Encrypted email.
- Secure text messaging. This service can be used on a computer or smartphone.
- A secure contact page on my website. You can type and send encrypted messages through this page. (www.example.com/contact)
- A secure “client portal,” where we can exchange private messages via a secured website.
- Secure online video chat software.

If you need to send a file such as a PDF or other digital document, *[describe how the client should send digital files. E.g. “please send using the secure email service,” “please send via the secure contact form on the website”, “please print and FAX it to 555-867-5309,” etc.]*

Please refrain from making contact with me using social media messaging systems such as Facebook Messenger or Twitter. These methods have very poor security and I am not prepared to watch them closely for important messages from clients.

It is important that we be able to communicate and also keep the confidential space that is vital to therapy. Please speak with me about any concerns you have regarding my preferred communication methods.

Response Time

I may not be able to respond to your messages and calls immediately. For voicemails and other messages, you can expect a response within *[list your response time for messages]* (weekends are excepted from this timeframe.) I may occasionally reply more quickly than that or on weekends, but please be aware that this will not always be possible.

Be aware that there may be times when I am unable to receive or respond to messages, such as when out of cellular range or out of town.

Emergency Contact

If you are ever experiencing an emergency, including a mental health crisis, please call *[name and contact information for crisis services.]*

If you need to contact me about an emergency, the best method is:

The following are examples. Choose, remove and add items appropriate for your practice

- By phone (555-867-5309.)
- If you cannot reach me by phone, please leave a voicemail and then follow up with a secure text message.

Please note that SMS (normal phone text messages) are not designed for emergency contact. SMS text messages occasionally get delayed and on rare occasions may be lost. So, please refrain from using SMS as your sole method of communicating with me in emergencies.

Disclosure Regarding Third-Party Access to Communications

Please know that if we use electronic communications methods, such as email, texting, online video, and possibly others, there are various technicians and administrators who maintain these services and may have access to the content of those communications. In some cases, these accesses are more likely than in others.

Of special consideration are work email addresses. If you use your work email to communicate with me, your employer may access our email communications. There may be similar issues involved in school email or other email accounts associated with organizations that you are affiliated with. Additionally, people with access to your computer, mobile phone, and/or other devices may also have access to your email and/or text messages. Please take a moment to contemplate the risks involved if any of these persons were to access the messages we exchange with each other.