

PARKER COLLINS

FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH

1056 Centerville Circle | Vadnais Heights, MN 55127
Phone 651.604.7771 | Fax 651.426.8116

Parker Collins Telehealth Policy and Procedure for Extraordinary Events

Purpose:

In order to minimize risk of destabilization for clients during the Coronavirus outbreak, Parker Collins is offering Telehealth services to avoid disruption of services. Telehealth services may be utilized if client has an underlying health condition that requires them to take extra precautions, client or therapist is in quarantine, or the state or city goes into lock down and Therapists at Parker Collins are not able to provide in-office mental health services. The provision of Telehealth at this time is for extraordinary events at this time; it is not a regular provision of services. The position Parker Collins takes is that of respecting all of the following: social responsibility for social distancing during a viral outbreak, not abandoning client care, and health and well being of staff and client's alike. As such, all therapist have completed sufficient training specifically on providing Telehealth and use of Videoconferencing technology. Clients can be reassured that clinical research in psychology has demonstrated Telehealth provision of mental health therapy is as effective as face to face therapy.

Benefits of Telehealth:

1. Under times of crisis, Telehealth allows for the continuation of therapy services when travel or person to person contact is not possible.
2. Telehealth increases flexibility of scheduling and reduces travel times.
3. Convenience and scheduling efficiency is increased.

Policy:

1. Client and Therapist need to be using HIPAA compliant platform, such as RingCentral Meetings or Doxy.me, when engaging in Telehealth services.
2. Client and Therapist need to be in a private setting/environment such as their respective homes and a room that is private and uninterrupted. Public settings such as coffee shops should not be used for Telehealth in order to protect PHI for clients.
3. Therapist needs to create new meeting ID number for each session in order to decrease the risk of other clients entering a meeting when it is not their scheduled time.
4. Parker Collins requires all clinicians to complete appropriate Telehealth training, creating a basic competency for the provision of Telehealth services.
5. Telehealth will require time to collect payments during the session, resolve any technology issues, and
1. accommodate to the online format. Sessions will be billed according to the total time provided as long as over half the time is allotted to clinical therapy topics. If less than half the time is devoted to clinical issues, a lower billing unit code will be utilized.
6. Only Videoconferencing will be allowed, audio only format is not sufficient for Telehealth services at Parker Collins.
7. New clients that start via Telehealth will require verification of identity via government issued ID card with photo, the same diagnostic assessment procedures as a face to face client, and the creation of a password that will be utilized to verify client identity at the start of each session.

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Procedure:

1. Therapist must review informed consent for Telehealth services with client as demonstrated by signatures on informed consent documents. Client must authorize electronic communication via email/text. Electronic communication is required for Telehealth as the therapist must send a link via text or email for each meeting prior to a Telehealth session.
2. Therapist must review the software/app requirements with client. Client must download the RingCentral Meetings app on their phone and desktop/laptop in order to participate in Telehealth services.
3. Doxy.me may be used as backup platform for delivery of Telehealth if RingCentral platform malfunctions.
4. Therapist needs to document medical necessity for use of Telehealth services in progress note. Start time and end time needs to be documented with PM or AM clearly written in the progress note.

INFORMED CONSENT (including risks of utilizing Telehealth):

1. Unless approved by Parker Collins management, clients must have an existing diagnostic assessment (DA) completed in order to receive Telehealth services.
2. In order to engage in Telehealth services, both the clinician and the client must be in the state of Minnesota at the time the service is rendered.
3. The therapist will maintain a secure, HIPAA compliant space in which to render services, either in a Parker Collins office or other authorized site. Clinician will maintain HIPAA compliant and secure storage of client data, sending encrypted documentation as needed.
4. All meetings are scheduled the same as face to face meetings; they are to be scheduled during regular business hours, conducted by using HIPAA compliant video conferencing, and client financial responsibility is still due at or before the time of service. Collection of fees and technology issue resolution are considered part of the scheduled appointment as long as more than half the billed session is devoted to talk therapy.
5. Therapy sessions will be billed to insurance as allowed. If Telehealth is not allowed by client's insurance, client agrees to pay full allowed amount for an office visit session in order to engage in Telehealth services.
6. Therapist will assess whether client and therapist are cognitively, emotionally, physically, technologically, and otherwise capable of using and engaging with online video conferencing. Some existing clients may not be appropriate for utilizing Telehealth services.
7. Client verification is done by therapist identifying the client by seeing their face at initiation of session, and visa versa.
8. Parker Collins does not provide clinical therapy services via asynchronous online methods such as text messaging, email, or online forums. These forms of communication are allowed for non-clinical matters such as scheduling, request for crisis contact, and other requests. Parker Collins does not guarantee response to asynchronous communications prior to next scheduled appointment, unless a specific documented agreement has been made between client and therapist (non-licensed therapists require supervisor approval) for active clients. Asynchronous communications will otherwise be responded to withing 2 to 4 weeks for non-active clients and other individuals. Non-clinical communications are not stored in the client's clinical chart.
9. Cultural and language of client and therapist must be conducive for the provision of Telehealth services.
10. Telehealth delivered via video conferencing constitutes a professional therapist/ client relationship and all other PC informed consent, policies, and procedures still apply.

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Limits to Confidentiality when Conducting Telehealth:

1. Online media is hack-able, however unlikely. While the risks are mitigated by using secure technology, it is still possible.
2. Some individuals do not respond well to Telehealth. In these cases, therapist will provide recommendations for continued care.
3. Some levels/forms of non-verbal communication are lost or diminished using non face to face interactions. Therapists and clients should be aware of this, acknowledge possibility of miscommunication, and develop plans and agreements to remediate potential misunderstandings.
4. Clients should be aware and mindful not to use auto-stored internet IDs and passwords, not be in a public space, and not use employer computers if not secure or not allowed by employer policies.

Assessing and Minimizing Risk to Client's Safety

1. If communication during Telehealth session ends abruptly, Therapist will call client to ensure they are safe. They will then discuss returning to RingCentral Meeting or if the platform is having tech issues, therapist and client may choose to reschedule.
2. If there is concern for suicide risk during Telehealth session, Therapist will follow PC guidelines and policy regarding completing Suicide Risk Assessment. Clients and therapist will develop a safety plans, which allows for family, identified support members, or police officers to be contacted, which may include a wellness check by authorities.
3. If there are concerns for client's safety where Therapist deems it necessary for client to be taken to hospital to be assessed, client may choose to reach out to their trusted friend/family to take them to the hospital, Therapist may call the Emergency Contact, or client or Therapist may dial 911.
4. In order to decrease risk of abreactions in clients during Telehealth sessions, EMDR, Accelerated Resolution Therapy, or other similar models for trauma reprocessing should not be used, except where appropriate and approved by Parker Collins senior/lead supervisors.

How and When to Discontinue Telehealth Services:

1. If client is not able to log in at their scheduled time to participate in Telehealth sessions, they may be at risk of not being able to receive Telehealth services. Subsequently, they may be discharged if there are no other means of providing mental health services to that client.
2. If client is having abreaction during their Telehealth session that requires medical intervention or if their risk for suicide is eminent, Therapist may need to contact emergency contact person for client or dial 911 so client can be assessed in a hospital.
3. If there are technological issues causing poor connection or difficulty with communication, Therapist and client may choose to reschedule the Telehealth session.
4. Once the pandemic with Coronavirus subsides and Therapists can resume face to face in-office sessions, Telehealth services will be discontinued.

Accepting Payment for Services

1. Clinicians will accept payment by manually entering client's card information to intuit.
2. Clients may pay ahead for services by contacting our office staff via phone or parkercollins.com email.

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