



Informed Consent for Telephone, Electronic, and Mail Contact

Ordinary privacy precautions such as voice scramblers, pin codes, voice mail boxes, and locked fax, mail, and computer rooms are by no means foolproof, so that your confidentiality is always compromised when communicating by electronic devices or mail. Nor is deletion or shredding of private material a totally safe means of disposal, so that you are always at risk of breaches in confidentiality when electronic or mail communication of any type is used for private information. Your use of such means of communication with your therapist constitutes implied consent for reciprocal use of electronic and mail communication as well.

It is the consensus of mental health professionals that reliable and valid psychotherapy and supervision are always conducted in a face-to-face setting, so that nonverbal communications can be taken into consideration. Body language, voice tone, pacing, emotional overtones, eye contact, and other variables are an important part of counseling or psychotherapeutically oriented professional services. However, there may be times or circumstances under which telephone, text, electronic, video-conferencing, e-mail, postal or other kinds of communication may have a limited value, such as:

1. Brief, between-session contact calls, e-mail, or mail messages.
2. In some cases, using video-conferencing with specific HIPAA compliant software (Ex: ZOOM, etc.) may be an option when deemed appropriate by the clinical team. The best option for therapy is in-person contact in order to avoid misunderstandings in body language, voice tone, pacing, emotional overtones, and other variables that can be missed in video-conferencing. Confidentiality will be maintained to the best of the ability of the clinical staff. It is expected the client(s) is to have a quiet, private, and confidential meeting space, free from distractions during session time. It is **vital** to maintain the integrity of therapy that no one else be able to overhear the session, in order to maintain the confidentiality of this type of session. It is expected that no recordings will be taken of any kind by client(s) or others for the safety of the client(s). If ICA staff is to record session for training and supervision purposes, it will be discussed and consented to prior to recording session.
3. Long distances communication when either party is out of town or otherwise unavailable.
4. Long distance communication for a limited period when therapy seems near its natural termination and either party relocates, making regular standard sessions impossible. Electronic communication is always incomplete without agreed-upon and periodic face-to-face contact.
5. Limited long-distance consultation, supervision, tutoring, or assessment may be appropriate when specialty or expertise is an issue. However, considerations of reliability and validity without regular face-to-face contact necessarily limit the kinds of interventions the consultant or tutor can make to (1) general questions about the client's concerns, (2) general theoretical considerations or advice, and (3) recommendations as to what kinds of professional consultation to seek locally.

I am aware of the limited validity and reliability of telephone, text, electronic, video-conferencing, e-mail, postal or other kinds of communication as suggested above. I am further aware that I am not guaranteed confidentiality when I contact or receive such contacts from my therapist (E-mail or text messages for appointments, etc.). I understand that the purposes for engaging in telephone, electronic, or mail communication must be limited in scope and time and that the validity and reliability of information given and received is thus limited.

Client

Date

Professional

Date

A DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS

HEADQUARTERS: 41745 Rider Way, #2, Temecula, CA 92590 | T: 951.695.3336 | F: 951.308.1753 | www.4achild.org | info@4achild.org

BRANCH: 1800 Martin Luther King Parkway, Suite 201, Durham, NC 27707 | T: 919-797-9920

BRANCH: 6248 Birdcage St., Citrus Heights, CA 95610 | T: 916.248.8490 | 333 University Ave., Ste. 200, Sacramento, CA 95825