



PsychologyWorx

Psychology Worx NZ Ltd

📞 021 173 8212

✉️ jan.prosser@psychologyworx.co.nz

🌐 www.psychologyworx.co.nz

✉️ PO Box 9261

Waikato Mail Centre

Hamilton 3240

INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY

This Informed Consent for Telepsychology contains important information focusing on doing psychotherapy using the phone or the Internet. Please read this carefully, and let me know if you have any questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Benefits and Risks of Telepsychology

Telepsychology refers to providing psychotherapy services remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone. One of the benefits of telepsychology is that we can engage in services without being in the same physical location. This can be helpful in ensuring continuity of care if either of us moves to a different location, takes an extended vacation, or is otherwise unable to continue to meet in person. It is also more convenient and takes less time. Telepsychology, however, requires technical competence on both our parts to be helpful. Although there are benefits of telepsychology, there are some differences between in-person psychotherapy and telepsychology, as well as some risks. For example:

Risks to confidentiality. Because telepsychology sessions take place outside of the therapist's private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. On my end I will take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy. But it is important for you to make sure you find a private place for our session where you will not be interrupted. It is also important for you to protect the privacy of our session on your cell phone or other device. You should participate in therapy only while in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation.

Issues related to technology. There are many ways that technology issues might impact telepsychology. For example, technology may stop working during a session, other people might be able to get access to our private conversation, or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized people or companies.

Crisis management and intervention. Usually, I will not engage in telepsychology with clients who are currently in a crisis situation requiring high levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in telepsychology, we will develop an emergency response plan to address potential crisis situations that may arise during the course of our telepsychology work.

Efficacy. Most research shows that telepsychology is about as effective as in-person psychotherapy. However, it is possible that by not being in the same room our communication may be impacted by a lessened ability to read body language or non-verbal cues, resulting in miscommunications when working remotely.

Electronic Communications

We will decide together which kind of telepsychology service to use. You may have to have certain computer or cell phone systems to use telepsychology services. You are solely responsible for any cost to you to obtain any necessary equipment, accessories, or software to take part in telepsychology. I prefer to use ZOOM due to its ability to encrypt our sessions and reduce the risk of breach of confidentiality.



Preferred Platform:

I prefer to use ZOOM as the online platform, and use the paid platform which provides more robust security with end to end encryption – there is no cost for you to access our scheduled sessions.

- You will need access to a computer/tablet/phone, a good secure internet connection (e.g., do not use free/public wifi), and a webcam or camera attached to, or on, the device.
- Either I will send an invite for your meeting via email linking to your calendar or when it is nearly time for your appointment I will email you with a link to connect with me via ZOOM. The first time you connect there will be a small delay while the program downloads to your device. Please ensure to activate audio on your device. A video on how to use ZOOM is here: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-Meeting> And once connected you will be able to see me. During our session we can also use the chat function if we need to share links etc, or I can also share resources that relate to our session. Please ensure you have your microphone and video turned on.
- Please position your computer/tablet/phone high enough to allow eye contact
- Ensure there is not a light source behind your head as this will darken your face
- Ensure your door is closed, you have tissues and a glass of water to hand and you won't be disturbed for the duration of our session.
- Please ensure you have not been drinking alcohol or using non-prescription drugs prior to any session where they may still be active in your body.
- In the case of web disconnection, please have your phone with you
- Headset or headphones are helpful in maintaining your privacy – check your microphone input and headphone output through the *Mic* icon on the bottom left of the ZOOM screen.
- Do not record the sessions. I will not be recording any of our sessions unless I have prior consent from you and this has been mutually discussed and agreed and a consent form has been signed by you.
- You will not let anyone else listen in to any part of the online session (via phone or any other technical device or in person) without prior agreement.
- You join the meeting at the agreed time.

As with face to face sessions, the confidentiality agreement we signed together still applies. In addition, my terms and conditions that you signed at the beginning of working with me are still applicable. I will normally require the usual seven working days notice if you wish to cancel or postpone an agreed session. You agree not to record sessions unless we have otherwise decided, together.

Online Sessions:

I would like to provide you with some practical information to help you understand what to expect with online sessions and also provide some tips to make sure the process runs smoothly. Although you may feel unsure about meeting online, it can be as effective as meeting face to face. My goal is to create a safe and contained space to work with you.

- Ensure you have a good internet connection. Have your mobile phone with you and if we lose connection I will phone you immediately.
- Please position your laptop/computer/phone high enough to allow for eye contact at more or less normal levels.
- If there are materials/documents that we need to use for the sessions, I will make sure that I have emailed this through to you before our session.
- Have a box of tissues and a glass of water with you.

Between Session Communications:

For communication between sessions, I only use email communication and text messaging with your permission and only for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. This means that email exchanges and text messages with my office should be limited to administrative matters. This includes things like setting and changing appointments, billing matters, and other related issues. You should be aware that I cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information communicated by email or text. Therefore, I will not discuss any clinical information by email or text and prefer that you do not either. Also, these methods **should not** be used if there is an emergency.

Treatment is most effective when clinical discussions occur at your regularly scheduled sessions. But if an urgent issue arises, you should feel free to attempt to reach me by phone. I will try to return your

call within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact in my absence if necessary.

Confidentiality

I have a legal and ethical responsibility to make my best efforts to protect all communications that are a part of our telepsychology. However, the nature of electronic communications technologies is such that I cannot guarantee that our communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to our communications. I will try to use updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to help keep your information private, but there is a risk that our electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others. You should also take reasonable steps to ensure the security of our communications (for example, only using secure networks for telepsychology sessions and having passwords to protect the device you use for telepsychology).

The extent of confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality that I outlined in my Informed Consent form still apply in telepsychology. Please let me know if you have any questions about exceptions to confidentiality.

Appropriateness of Telepsychology

From time to time, we may schedule in-person sessions to “check-in” with one another. I will let you know if I decide that telepsychology is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for you. We will discuss options of engaging in in-person counseling or referrals to another professional in your location who can provide appropriate services.

Emergencies and Technology

Assessing and evaluating threats and other emergencies can be more difficult when conducting telepsychology than in traditional in-person therapy. To address some of these difficulties, we will create an emergency plan before engaging in telepsychology services. I will ask you to identify an emergency contact person who is near your location and who I will contact in the event of a crisis or emergency to assist in addressing the situation. I will ask that you sign a separate authorization form allowing me to contact your emergency contact person as needed during such a crisis or emergency.

If the session is interrupted for any reason, such as the technological connection fails, and you are having an emergency, do not call me back; instead, call 111 for emergency services, 0800 505050 for the local Mental Health Crisis service, or go to your nearest emergency room. Call me back after you have called or obtained emergency services.

If the session is interrupted and you are not having an emergency, disconnect from the session and I will wait two minutes and then re-contact you via the telepsychology platform on which we agreed to conduct therapy. If you do not receive a call back within two minutes, then call me on the phone number I provided you (021 173 8212).

If there is a technological failure and we are unable to resume the connection, you will only be charged the prorated amount of actual session time.

Fees

The same fee rates will apply for telepsychology as apply for in-person psychotherapy. However some providers (e.g., ACC, PHO, EAP, Medical Insurance) may not cover sessions that are conducted via telecommunication. If we are meeting under a supplier and they do not cover electronic psychotherapy sessions, you will be solely responsible for the entire fee of the session. Please contact your insurance company prior to our engaging in telepsychology sessions in order to determine whether these sessions will be covered.

Records

The telepsychology sessions shall not be recorded in any way unless agreed to in writing by mutual consent. I will maintain a record of our session in the same way I maintain records of in-person sessions in accordance with my policies.

Informed Consent

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the general informed consent that we agreed to at the outset of our clinical work together and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement. Your signature below indicates agreement with its terms and conditions.

Client

Date

Dr. Jan Prosser

Date