

Informed Consent for Tele-Mental Health and Other Services

Sabrina S. Santa Clara, PLLC & The Center for Embodied Spirituality

I hereby consent to engage in distance counseling with Sabrina Santa Clara as part of my psychotherapy or in other non-psychotherapy sessions such as coaching, spiritual direction, and consultation. I understand that distance counseling includes the practice of health care delivery, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, transfer of medical data, and education using interactive audio, video, or data communications. I understand that nonpsychotherapy sessions such as coaching, spiritual direction, and consultation do not carry the same legal protections. While Sabrina S. Santa Clara, PLLC and The Center for Embodied Spirituality hold similar ethical values and practices related to privacy and confidentiality, nonpsychotherapy clients do not have the same *legal* rights to privacy. Note that coaching, spiritual direction, and consultation do not fall under the category of medical or mental health, as such, I do not diagnose.

I UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO DISTANCE COUNSELING:

I have the right to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting my right to future care or treatment nor risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which I would otherwise be entitled.

The laws that protect the confidentiality of my medical information also apply to distance counseling. As such, I understand that the information disclosed by me during the course of my therapy is generally confidential. However, there are both mandatory and permissive exceptions to confidentiality, including, but not limited to reporting child, elder, and dependent adult abuse; expressed threats of violence towards an ascertainable victim; and where I make my mental or emotional state an issue in a legal proceeding. The laws of confidentiality do not apply to nonpsychotherapeutic services; however, Sabrina holds the same ethical boundaries of confidentiality for both psychotherapy and nonpsychotherapy clients. As a practicing psychotherapist I am a mandated reporter. This means that my obligations as a mandatory report also apply to nonpsychotherapy clients.

I also understand that the dissemination of any personally identifiable images or information from the telemedicine interaction to researchers or other entities shall not occur without my written consent. The laws of privacy do not apply to nonpsychotherapeutic services; however, Sabrina holds the same ethical boundaries of privacy for both psychotherapy and nonpsychotherapy clients.

I understand that there are risks and consequences from distance counseling, including, but not limited to, the possibility, despite reasonable efforts on the part of my psychotherapist, that: the transmission of my medical information could be disrupted or distorted by technical failures; the transmission of my medical information could be interrupted by unauthorized persons; and/or the electronic storage of my medical information could be accessed by unauthorized persons. These risks are offset by my therapist's use of a HIPAA-compliant service that is encrypted for video telemental health communications.

Your professional is currently using <https://doxy.me> to provide HIPPA compliant telehealth sessions. The portal is <https://doxy.me/sabrinasantaclara>. There are times when technology fails. To provide consistency of service in spite of technology failures, other non-HIPPA compliant options are available. I authorize the use of the following platforms and understand that these platforms are not HIPPA compliant.

Please initial:

_____ Zoom _____ Skype _____ Facetime _____ Whatsapp



I understand that if my psychotherapist believes I would be better served by another form of psychotherapeutic services (e.g. face- to-face services, group therapy), and she does not provide these services, I will be referred to a psychotherapist who can provide such services in my area. I understand that I may benefit from distance counseling, but that results cannot be guaranteed or assured.

CONSIDERATIONS:

It is important to note that there are limitations of distance counseling that can affect the quality of the session(s). These limitations include but are not limited to the following:

- If we are on the phone, I cannot see you, your body language, or your non-verbal reactions to what we are discussing, which is why I do not provide phone sessions except in cases of technology failures or brief connections. If we are using video, these connections may be limited.
- Due to technology limitations, I may not hear all of what you are saying and may need to ask you to repeat things.
- Technology might fail before or during the counseling session.
- Although every effort is made to reduce confidentiality breaches, breaches may occur for various reasons.
- To reduce the effect of these limitations, I may ask you to describe how you are feeling, thinking, and/or acting in more detail than I would during a face-to-face session. You may also feel that you need to describe your feelings, thoughts, and/or actions in more detail than you would during a face-to-face session.

CLIENT REQUIREMENTS FOR TELEHEALTH SESSIONS:

Creating uninterrupted time is critical to any therapeutic process, distance or in-person. It is easy when one is in their own space to get distracted or to multitask when engaged in distance counseling. Distance counseling requires dedicated time and a space in which you will not be interrupted in order for us to do the deep work of therapy. Your provider cannot continue sessions when there is significant background noise (.e.g. barking dogs).

In order to provide the best environment, the following practices may be helpful

- yourself enough time before the session to set up (see points below). Also give yourself enough time, 5 minutes or so, to transition into a space where you can focus on yourself. Take a minute to close your eyes, breath, review what you remember from the last session and what is true for you in this moment.
- Check the download and upload speeds of your device. If the speeds are low try rebooting your router
- Use a desktop rather than your phone. If you must use your phone, turn on the “do not disturb function” so you are not interrupted with calls or texts and make sure you have a way to place your phone so that you do not have to hold it in session.
- Make sure you device shows your full face and preferably, at minimum, your upper body.

I have read and understood the information provided above. I have discussed it with my provider, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Client Name

Signature

Date

