UCI Counseling Center

Consent to Telebehavioral Health Services

This document is an addendum to the UCI Counseling Center’s Consent for Counseling Services and does not replace it. All aspects of information in that document apply to telebehavioral health (TBH) treatment.

In California, “Telehealth” is defined as a method to deliver health care services using information and communication technologies to facilitate the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of a patient’s health care while the patient and provider are at two different sites. This form of service usually consists of live videoconferencing through a personal computer with a camera, but may also be conducted by computer audio communication or phone.

TBH is currently being offered to allow access to UCI Counseling Center services while the campus community is encouraged to practice social distancing in response to COVID19. You are not required to use TBH. You have the right to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without losing your right to future services or any benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. However, depending on the measures UCI implements in response to COVID19, there may be periods of altered university functioning in which TBH is the only service the Counseling Center is able to offer.

During normal operations, our individual therapy, group therapy and psychiatry services are only offered in-person. On occasion TBH may be used as an adjuct to our in-person services, e.g., when there is a one time need for a remote appointment. When normal Counseling Center operations resume, we do not plan to offer ongoing TBH for any services, except case management.

I understand the following potential risks, consequences, and limitations of telebehavioral health:

- TBH should not be viewed as a substitute for face-to-face counseling or psychiatry appointments. It is an alternative form of counseling with certain limitations.
- TBH may not be appropriate if you are having a crisis, acute psychosis, or suicidal or homicidal thoughts.
- TBH may lack visual and/or audio cues, leading to an increased potential for misunderstanding.
- TBH may have disruptions or delays due to the service and quality of the technology used.
- In rare cases, security protocols could fail and confidential information could be accessed by unauthorized persons.
- The most reliable backup for a technology failure is a phone. Therefore, it is recommended that you have a phone available for the entire duration of each appointment. Please indicate the best phone number for reaching you during appointments at the bottom of this page. If for some reason you cannot be reached at this number during a specific TBH appointment, please inform your provider of the appropriate phone number for reaching you during that appointment.
- During the period of altered UCI functioning in response to COVID19, the provider may be located in the UCI Counseling Center or at an alternate location when conducting your TBH sessions. If the provider is not in the Counseling Center, the provider will take available measures to ensure confidentiality. However, the standards may not be as high as those implemented in the Counseling Center (e.g., less soundproofing).

Emergency Contact

If you are ever experiencing a life-threatening emergency, including a mental health crisis, call 911 or UCI Campus Police at 949-824-5223 or go to your nearest Emergency Room. For other mental health crisis situations, please call 949-824-6457 to speak to a counselor by phone. If you reach a voicemail when you call this number, please select option 2 to connect directly to the phone crisis counselor. Alternately, text “Help” to 741741 or call the National Suicide Hotline at 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255) for other crisis support.

To ensure that your provider is able to get you appropriate help in the case of an emergency, the following are important and necessary:
• You must inform your provider of your location during each TBH appointment.
• At the bottom of this form, you must identify and provide contact information for a person who can provide in-person emergency assistance. Your provider will only contact this person, if your provider believes a serious threat to your safety exists.

**When receiving telebehavioral health, it is also required that you:**

• Only engage in sessions when you are physically in California. Your provider will confirm this each session.
• Engage in sessions only from a private location where you will not be overheard or interrupted.
• Ensure that the private computer or device you use has updated operating and anti-virus software.
• Do not record any sessions. UCI Counseling Center will not record your sessions without additional written consent.
• Wear the same attire that you would normally wear to an in-person appointment.

If you have questions or concerns about the information and conditions described above, please discuss them with your provider before signing this form.

(checkbox) I acknowledge that I have read and understand the information provided. I consent to participate in telebehavioral health services and to the conditions described above. I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to discuss this form with my provider and that all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Client Signature:

(textbox)

Date:

(textbox)