

**Important Pandemic Information**  
**Informed Consent for Telehealth Services**  
**Lesli K. Johnson**

Thinking of your safety during the current health crisis, I am offering remote services via the phone or a virtual platform such as ZOOM. Because of recent advances in communication technology, the field of tele-therapy has evolved. It allows individuals during the current health crisis to access counseling services through electronic means. Because it is relatively new, there is not a lot of research indicating that it is an effective means of receiving therapy. An important part of therapy is sitting face to face with an individual, where non-verbal communication (body signals) are readily available to both therapist and client. Without this information, tele-therapy may be slower to progress or less effective. With the telephone, the client's tone of voice, pauses and choice of words become especially important and therefore an important focus of the sessions. What is important here is that you are aware that tele-therapy may or may not be as effective as in-person therapy and therefore we must pay close attention to your progress and periodically evaluate the effectiveness of this form of therapy.

One of the hazards of telemedicine is related to confidentiality. While I intend to do everything I can to insure confidentiality, be aware that some forms are not HIPAA compliant (email, texts, FaceTime, Google Hangout, some forms of ZOOM) while others are (Doxy-me) Given the challenges with connectivity in our area, we may have to experiment with the format that works best for you. I am always cautious about including clinical information in email and I encourage you to be so as well. Both the state of Ohio and the federal government have loosen some of the HIPAA requirements to allow for better access to electronic services during the current health crisis. I will use Doxy-me or Zoom depending on your connectivity. If I use Zoom, I'll schedule a meeting the day before or day of our appointment and email or text you the link. I will use unique links for each session that will have a password and a waiting room.

I also want to notify you that you can verify my current practice licenses on the following website. [https://elicense.ohio.gov/oh\\_verifylicense](https://elicense.ohio.gov/oh_verifylicense) I hold two licenses; Licensed Independent Social Worker Supervisor (LISW-S 0225) and Psychologist (Psy 5414) My social work license is granted through the Counselor, Social Worker and MFT Board and my Psychology license is granted through the Psychology Board. If you have concerns about my practice, you may contact either or both of these board. <https://cswmft.ohio.gov/> <https://www.psychology.ohio.gov/>

If you need local assistance in person at this time, your best option is the emergency room at your local hospital. I can be available in a crisis within two to three hours if you leave me a message, send me a text or email.

Consent:

I have read the statement above and understand the potential risks of telehealth and remote counseling. I understand that "telehealth" includes the practice of health care delivery, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, and education using interactive audio, video, or data communications. I understand that telehealth also involves the communication of my medical/mental information, both orally and visually, with my therapist, located in Ohio.

\_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

