



The following information is to be completed by the person being served or the person's authorized representative/parent.

The purpose of this document is to inform you, the client, about many aspects of online counseling services: the process, the counseling, the potential risks and benefits of services, safeguards against those risks, and alternatives to online services. Please read this entire document, sign, and return.

A. Process

1) Possible misunderstandings: The client should be aware that misunderstandings are possible with telephone and text-based modalities such as Store and Forward because nonverbal cues are relatively lacking. Even with video webcam software, misunderstandings may occur due to connection problems causing image delays or less than optimal image quality. Counselors are observers of human behavior and gather much information from body language, vocal inflection, eye contact, and other non-verbal cues. If you have never engaged in online counseling before, please have patience with the process and clarify information if you think your counselor has not understood you well. Also, please be patient if your counselor asks for periodic clarification. All sessions and messaging are in English.

2) Turnaround time: Using asynchronous (not in "real time") communication such as email entails a "lag" of response. This is considered Store and Forward. The counselor will make every effort to respond to email requests within a 48-hour period (business days). If the client is in a state of crisis or emergency, the counselor recommends the client contact a crisis line or an agency local to the client. Clients may also utilize 1-800-SUICIDE or 1- 800-273-TALK (For the deaf or hard-of hearing: 1-800-799-4TTY).

3) Privacy of the counselor: Although the internet provides the appearance of anonymity and privacy in counseling, privacy is more of an issue online than in person. Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C has chosen to use Spruce as the software provider for web conferencing between the counselor and clients. The client is responsible for securing his or her own computer hardware, internet access points, and password security. Spruce is HIPAA compliant and offers services specific to telehealth. Culpepper Counseling PLLC does offer messaging through Spruce. Culpepper Counseling PLLC email provider is Hushmail which always provides an encrypted service between both the therapist and the client. The counselor has a right to his privacy and may wish to restrict the use of any copies or recordings the client makes of their communications. Clients must seek the written permission of the counselor before recording any portion of the session and/or posting any portion of said session on internet websites such as Facebook or YouTube. Counselor can't become friends with clients on social media; such as Facebook, Twitter, etc...



B. Potential benefits: The potential benefits of receiving mental health services online include both the circumstances in which the counselor considers online mental health services appropriate and the possible advantages of providing those services online. For example, the potential benefits of video sessions include the convenience for clients to potentially receive counseling from anywhere once an internet signal and necessary hardware is secured. Email based Store and Forward has many of the same advantages of convenience, feeling reduced scrutiny from the counselor, having time to compose a response, and being able to refer to the email log for reference. The benefits of using asynchronous messages may include (1) being able to send and receive message at any time of day or night; (2) never having to leave messages or voicemails; (3) being able to take as long as one likes to compose a message, and having the opportunity to reflect upon it; (4) automatically having a record of communication to refer to later; and (5) feeling less inhibited than in person.

C. Potential risks: There are various risks related to electronic provision of counseling services related to the technology used, the distance between counselor and client, and issues related to timeliness. For example, the potential risks of message-based counseling may include (1) messages not being received and (2) confidentiality being breached, lack of password protection or leaving information on a public access computer in a library or internet café. Messages could fail to be received if they are sent to the wrong address (which might also breach confidentiality) or if they just are not noticed by the counselor. Confidentiality could be breached in transit by hackers or Internet service providers or at either end by others with access to the client's account or computer. People accessing the internet from public locations such as a library, computer lab, or café should consider the visibility of their screen to people around them. Position yourself to avoid others' ability to read your screen. Using cell phones can also be risky in that signals are scrambled but rarely encrypted.

D. Safeguards: Your counselor has selected an account with Spruce and Hushmail for email and video communications to allow for the highest possible security and confidentiality of the content of your sessions. In order to benefit from these safeguards, the client is required to download, register and utilize the video software Spruce. Your personal information is encrypted and stored on a secure server in compliance with HIPAA regulations. For ease of use, Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C can assist you in downloading Spruce software through the client portal. The client is responsible for creating and using additional safeguards when the computer used to access services may be accessed by others, such as creating passwords to use the computer, keeping their email and passwords secret, and maintaining security of their wireless internet access points. Please discuss any additional concerns with your counselor early in your first session to develop strategies to limit risk.

E. Alternatives: Online counseling is a non-acute service and may not be appropriate for many types of clients including those who have numerous concerns over the risks of internet counseling, clients with active suicidal or homicidal thoughts, and clients who are experiencing active manic/psychotic symptoms. An alternative to receiving mental health services online would be receiving mental health services in person. Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C can and will assist clients who would like



to explore face-to-face options in their area. Please feel free to request a referral at any time you think a different counseling relationship would be more practical or beneficial for you.

Proxies: The counselor requires this consent form to be signed by the legal guardian of any client seeking services who is under the age of 18. The name and contact information of the legal guardian will be kept as part of the client's record.

G. Confidentiality of the client: Maintaining client confidentiality is extremely important to the counselor and the counselor will take ordinary care and consideration to prevent unnecessary disclosure. Information about the client will only be released with his or her express and written permission with the exceptions of the following cases: 1) If the counselor believes that someone is seriously considering and likely to attempt suicide; 2) if the counselor believes that someone intends to assault another person; 3) if the counselor believes someone is engaging or intends to engage in behavior which will expose another person to a potentially life-threatening communicable disease; 4) if a counselor suspects abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a minor or of an incapacitated adult; 5) if a counselor believes that someone's mental condition leaves the person gravely disabled.

H. Records: The counselor will maintain records of online counseling and/ or consultation services. These records can include reference notes, copies of transcripts of chat and internet communication and session summaries. These records are confidential and will be maintained as required by applicable legal and ethical standards according to the American Counseling Association, National Board of Certified Counselors, and the North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors. The client will be asked in advance for permission before any audio or video recording would occur on the counselor's end.

I. Procedures: The counselor might not immediately receive an online communication or might experience a local backup affecting internet connectivity. If the client is in a state of crisis or emergency, the counselor recommends contacting a crisis line or an agency local to the client. Clients may utilize the following crisis hotlines: **1-800-SUICIDE** or **1- 800-273-TALK** (For the deaf or hard-of hearing: 1-800-799-4TTY).

Local Hospital name and phone number: _____

Local Mobile Crisis phone number: _____

J. Payments: All payments will be processed through Theranest. Please understand that payment offees is expected at the time of service. Online clients must have a credit card on file. Client agrees to pay for each service at the time it is rendered. Client understands they are responsible for all charges incurred, regardless of insurance status. Client will notify Culpepper Counseling PLLC at least 24 hours in advance if they unable to keep their appointment.

K. Disconnection of Services: If there is ever a disruption of services on the internet then the client will need to call Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C to discuss how to proceed with the session. Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C can be reached at 757-373-4155.



4) APPOINTMENTS:

COUNSELING: My practice is based on an hourly system and I function on a tight schedule. I begin the hour at the scheduled time. Even when you are late, I will still end on schedule. Individuals are expected to be available by phone during the session in case of an interruption in the teletherapy service.

APPOINTMENTS NOT CANCELLED 24 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING TIME ARE CHARGED \$70.

If I make the cancellation, you will not be charged. PAYMENT IS DUE WHEN SERVICES ARE RENDERED. It is the responsibility of the client to maintain the account up-to-date to assure continuation of services.

MESSAGES: If I do not answer, please record your message and I will try and return your call as soon as possible. Since the voicemail is on 24 hours a day, seven days a week, I ask that you at least leave your name and phone number so I can return your call. Please stress the urgency of the call.

I am seeking services from Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C. The type and extent of services I receive will be determined following a consultation with Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C and me. I will work with Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C to develop a plan designed to assist me in attaining my goals. I understand that this is a collaborative effort between Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C and me.

I understand that I have the freedom to choose to have counseling online by distance-counseling or teletherapy. I understand that there are risks to teletherapy, such as failure in technology or breaches of confidentiality. I understand teletherapy is a non-acute service.

By signing this consent, I, _____ agree to abide by its content for the counseling purposes for my child, _____. I am aware that I have the freedom of choice of providers and I choose Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C to provide me with services. By signing this form, I _____ recognize that I have also read my rights according to HIPAA and the professional disclosure of Janice F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C.

- I give permission for my child to have their own account on Spruce. I understand that this means that they will have access to video calls and messaging the therapist and office manager.
- I DO NOT give permission for my child to have their own account on Spruce.

_____ Client _____ Date
 _____ Guardian (if client is a minor) _____ Date
 _____ Therapist _____ Date

Thank you,

Jan F Culpepper MA, LCMHC, CCTP, CTP-C
Culpepper Counseling
757-373-4155
<https://culpeppercounseling1.wixsite.com/welcome>