



COUNSELING SERVICES OF GREATER BOSTON, LLC INFORMED CONSENT | TELEMENTAL HEALTH - PAGE 1 OF 3

The following information is intended for clients who are seeking outpatient mental health services. This document covers your rights, risks and benefits associated with receiving services, our office policies, and your authorization for treatment. Please read this document carefully and note any questions you would like to discuss. Our fee and attendance policies are listed in the *Financial Agreement* included in your intake packet.

Mental health therapy is also known as “psychotherapy” or “counseling.” It is a collaborative process between you and your therapist. Our therapists have been trained in a variety of treatment methods and will determine which approaches and techniques would most benefit you. These results cannot be guaranteed. You may also terminate therapy at any time without penalty as participation in therapy is voluntary. Should a therapist at CSGB not be able to provide the care necessary to address a particular concern, behavior, or diagnosis, that therapist is ethically obligated to make a referral to an appropriate provider in order to best meet our patient’s needs.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Except under very specific circumstances, the information provided by and to a patient during therapy sessions is considered legally confidential. All CSGB staff are trained in and abide by the regulations regarding confidentiality as dictated by the most up-to-date version of The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). HIPAA is Federal legislation that created national standards to protect the privacy of patients’ medical records and other personal health information. As a patient at CSGB, all information regarding your participation in services is considered confidential. Your therapist cannot release information about you in any way without your written consent. There are specific exceptions when your confidentiality may not be protected. Such circumstances include situations in which it is believed that you pose a physical danger either to yourself or to others. Also, as mandated reporters, all clinicians are required by law to report to the appropriate state agency disclosures indicating that a child, elderly, or disabled person is suffering due to neglect or abuse by yourself or others. Disclosures that either you or another person has physically or sexually abused a child, elderly, or disabled person are also required by law to be reported immediately.

Requirements regarding confidentiality vary for our patients under 18 years of age. The parents or legal guardians of a patient under 18 years of age can ask about what is being discussed in the therapy, and legally have a right to know. Patients between age 16 and 18 can request that their therapist not share information with their parents or guardians. In all but situations in which the patient is a danger to either themselves or others, such requests for confidentiality will be respected. Patients under 18 and their parents or guardians are encouraged to discuss issues related to confidentiality with their therapist. Finally, it is important to know and understand that minimal information may be shared within CSGB for the purposes of case consultation, supervision, billing, or other administrative functions. If you have questions or concerns regarding confidentiality, please speak with your individual therapist.

RISKS & BENEFITS

It is important for you to know that therapy can be beneficial but there are also some risks. Often when processing difficult emotions, you may feel sad, angry, tired, and experience some emotional and even physical strain as a result of the intensity of the therapy process. You should let your therapist know how you are feeling and work with your therapist to contain feelings in between sessions.



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In addition, telemental counseling has the potential of added risks and benefits. Telemental health refers to psychotherapy services that occur via phone, email, or synchronous video conferencing. When using technology there is always the risk of security issues, as well as technical issues (phone not charged, computer or software not working, etc.). You will discuss and develop an individualized plan for how best to address technical issues that may arise and will take steps to facilitate the security of interactions with your therapist.

There are several potential benefits that come from using technology. For instance, it allows therapists to connect with people who may otherwise not be able to access services, there is an opportunity for more flexibility in scheduling, and convenience in being able to connect from a space of your choosing. In order to protect your confidentiality and to facilitate the security of your information as much as possible, here is a list of recommendations:

- Engage in sessions in a private location where you cannot be heard by others
- Use a private phone
- Do not record any sessions
- Password protect any technology you will be interacting with your therapist on
- Always log out or hang up once sessions are complete

Your therapist will take all necessary precautions to adhere to HIPAA standards and guidelines as well as recommendations provided by the American Psychological Association (APA) and licensing boards in Massachusetts in order to provide a private and confidential space on their end.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Your first appointment will be what is commonly called the “Initial Evaluation.” This is an individual session with your assigned therapist where you will work together to determine your initial goals in treatment. You will be asked a number of questions and fill out forms designed to assess your current and past physical and emotional health. Working together with your therapist, you will help to design an initial treatment plan. The treatment plan will address your concerns and assist you in working towards the goals that you feel are most important to your well-being.

Treatment sessions generally are 45 minutes. The frequency of appointments is determined between you and your therapist. How long you need to be in therapy depends upon your situation. This can be as short as a few weeks or up to a year or more depending upon severity and goals. Of course, unless you are under court commitment, other court order or a minor, you are free to self-discharge at any time of your choosing. However, if you are on medication it is strongly recommended you inform your medical care provider of such action.

TECHNOLOGY

Unless otherwise indicated, we will assume that you authorize CSGB to contact you by phone using the number you provide at intake. If this is not a safe number to leave messages, please inform your counselor. Your therapist may call you using a VOIP (internet based voice over IP phone), or a cell phone, both of which may not be completely confidential because of potential technology issues. While CSGB does employ an email platform that is encrypted and considered HIPAA-compliant, email is not considered without risks due to potential technology issues. If you choose to use email to send information to CSGB, or to your therapist, you do so knowing that this information is at risk, and that your counselor may respond via email. Because of the



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inherent risks with this mode of communication, you are encouraged to use it only for logistical purposes, such as for scheduling appointments or addressing other administrative concerns.

CSGB uses Doxy.me as the live video platform to conduct virtual sessions. Doxy.me provides end-to-end encryption and complies with HIPAA and HITECH requirements. It is free to use and requires no hardware or software to set-up. Your therapist will provide you with a link and instructions to set-up an account. Please be aware that even though both Doxy and CSGB will do everything possible to protect your privacy and confidentiality, the same risks associated with communicating via any internet-based platform apply here as well.

COURT INVOLVEMENT

More often than not, therapy is not useful in court proceedings. It innately compromises your confidentiality and progress in treatment. Testifying also compromises the underlying principle of therapy that this is a safe place to explore thoughts and feelings. CSGB therapists do not conduct custody evaluations, nor will any therapist provide custody recommendations/reports, or testify in court unless subpoenaed. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require a therapist's participation by subpoena, you will be expected to pay for the therapist's professional time even if called to testify by another party. Please see the CSGB *Financial Agreement* for information regarding court appearances.

CONSENT

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information and agree to participate in therapy. In the case of a minor, I hereby affirm that I am the custodial parent or legal guardian of the child and that I authorize services for the child under the terms of this agreement.

Signature of Client / Legal Representative

Print Full Name & Date



COUNSELING SERVICES OF GREATER BOSTON, LLC
TELEMENTAL HEALTH
EMERGENCY HEALTH PLAN

CSGB does not provide emergency services. In the event of an emergency, it is imperative you are aware of resources in your area. As a precaution, please identify two (2) nearby emergency hospitals below. In addition, you will need to provide information for an emergency contact person. These all need to be filled out to participate in telemental health services.

Hospital #1 Name:	
Hospital #1 Address:	
Hospital #1 Phone:	

Hospital #2 Name:	
Hospital #2 Address:	
Hospital #2 Phone:	

Emergency Contact Name:	
Emergency Contact Number:	

In the event of reporting or exhibiting symptoms and behaviors consistent with instability, crisis, and/or an emergency situation your therapist will direct you to your nearest ER as listed above. Your therapist may also contact your emergency contact in order to ensure that you are able to take the necessary steps to maintain your safety. If you have any questions please discuss them with your therapist during intake.