

Telehealth How-To's and FAQ's

Before the Session Starts

- You will need to schedule an appointment as usual through the patient portal located on the Watershed website or by calling the office at 601-362-7020. ***Please specify that you would like a virtual appointment.*** You can specify this over the phone or by sending an email to office@watershedcounselingms.com if you schedule online. You will receive text message or email reminders as usual prior to your appointment.
- Make sure you have electronically signed the “Informed Consent for Telehealth Services” document. You can access this document here: <https://intakeq.com/c/5e7120012604a93360532de3>
- Make sure you have a private space to be in where you won't be disturbed or heard. This may be in a bedroom, home office, or even, if needed, a large closet, basement, or in your car in your driveway. Please do NOT worry about clutter or messy surroundings as we will only be focusing on you and your emotional needs.
- If you live with others you will need to make sure family members don't disturb you, and you might consider putting a white noise machine or a small window fan on outside the door of the room you are in to mask the sound so you won't be heard outside the door. There are white noise apps available for your phone and also videos of white noise on YouTube.
- In most cases you will need a laptop or desktop computer with a video camera and microphone. These are built into most modern laptops. We may be able to use telehealth with a smartphone instead if needed.
- Using earphones plugged into the computer helps maintain privacy and improves sound.
- Make sure all unnecessary web-browsers are closed and that no one else in your home is using the Wi-Fi for streaming.
- Be comfortable! Create a healing, soothing environment for yourself in this time to care for yourself.

Beginning a Session

- Technology has made it easy to access telehealth. The platform we use is a HIPAA-secure website called doxy.me. To begin a session, simply copy and paste your therapist's virtual waiting list (listed in the next section) into your internet browser on your computer at your scheduled appointment time. This will take you to a virtual waiting room and you will just relax and wait until your therapist joins the session, much like an in-person session.
- Here are some tips from doxy.me for a good quality connection: <https://help.doxy.me/en/articles/95861-5-tips-for-a-great-experience>.
- Using Chrome or Firefox as your browser usually works better than Safari or Explorer.
- Using earphones/buds plugged into the computer helps maintain privacy and improves sound.

Find Your Therapist's Virtual Waiting Room

- Caty Coffey: <https://doxy.me/catycoffey>
- Holly Palmer: <https://doxy.me/hollypalmer>
- Jay Roberson: <https://doxy.me/JayRobersonLPCS>
- Jimmy Rogers: <https://doxy.me/rogerslpc>
- Marti Witherow: <https://doxy.me/martiwitherow>
- Michelle Buckner: <https://doxy.me/msbucknerlpc>
- Rachael Garner: <https://doxy.me/rgarner>
- Russ Schulte: doxy.me/RussSchulte

Troubleshooting

- Make sure your volume is up and that your video and microphone are on. This may happen automatically.
- There is a chat function on the bottom left of the screen so we can type a message to each other if we can't hear each other. If the signal is bad, simply restart your computer and copy and paste the link back into your browser and wait for your therapist to join again.
- If more than two minutes have gone by and you haven't been able to reconnect with your therapist on doxy.me, feel free to call the office at 601-362-7020.

FAQs

- **Will insurance cover telehealth?**
 - For patients with Aetna, yes. Aetna will cover telehealth for the next 90 days. Blue Cross Blue Shield does not currently cover any telemedicine, including teletherapy. However, that may change as the governor has enacted a state of emergency. ***Please look for updates in the next few days as Blue Cross updates their policies in response to the bulletin posted by the Commissioner of Insurance that you can see below.*** During this time, we recommend that you call your insurance to check your coverage regarding teletherapy.
 - On March 14, 2020, Governor Tate Reeves issued Bulletin 2020-1 in which "the Commissioner of Insurance hereby directs insurers to adopt procedures that will encourage their policyholders to use telemedicine in an effort to reduce the virus' spread." You can read the full bulletin here: <https://www.mid.ms.gov/legal/bulletins/20201bul.pdf>
- **What are the pros and cons to using telehealth?**
 - Although research has shown that for many mental health treatments, telehealth produces similar or identical outcomes as in-person treatments, the research is still being gathered, and there are some differences to be aware of. Since telehealth generally only shows faces rather than full body, some nuances of communication via body language can be missed. Likewise, if there is a poor video or sound connection, communication can be difficult or less clear. Much like with texting conversations, it's important to check in and make sure what you are communicating and what you are hearing is accurate and understood as intended. Overall, for people who are at least somewhat familiar with using computers or

smartphones, telehealth is thought to be safe, effective, convenient, and an important tool in maintaining continuity of care.

- **Are there risks to using telehealth?**

- Please see our “Informed Consent for Telehealth Services” document. Risks are minimal and similar to face-to-face therapy, though we will need to identify appropriate emergency plans and contacts. In some cases, your therapist may deem that telehealth is not appropriate or safe to use and will discuss alternatives if this is the case.

- **Anything else I need to know?**

- You must read and sign our “Informed Consent for Telehealth Services” prior to your first session. Your therapist will be happy to address any other questions or concerns you might have, and we are looking forward to being able to continue to support you in this way and help you navigate these unprecedented events with resilience and meaning.