

Questions clients may have about Telehealth

What is Telemedicine?

Telemedicine goes by many names including Telehealth, Technology Assisted Professional Services, Online Therapy and more. These all basically mean that a person receives professional medical and/or mental health services through an internet platform that allows audio and video connection between you and the professional.

What are the benefits of Telemedicine?

Benefits of this type of service include accessibility to a professional without having to physically go to an office. This can be a particular benefit for those who may be physically limited or who have to travel (within California) and cannot always be available for an office appointment. For some having services physically away from a professional can feel more comfortable. Some professionals also offer highly unique specialties that are not available locally so using such a platform now makes such services available to more than ever before.

What is necessary to schedule and start a Telemedicine session with Linda?

Adult individuals, couples, and families must be located in California at the time of the Telemedicine appointment. As the licensed clinician I must also evaluate, with you, if this is the best method for you to receive services in this manner. An assessment to decide if this is right can be conducted live/in-person or over the phone. There are also forms to read and sign that explain details of Telemedicine. If this is deemed not an appropriate method for therapy every effort will be made to provide you with alternatives that better suit your needs.

Is it confidential/private?

Technology is ever changing and cyber security is also extremely important to maintain. The Telemedicine platform I have contracted to use here is updated regularly. Regular evaluation of the adequacy, security, and reliability of the available bandwidth, and keeping updated to current standards is done. Hardware systems are password-protected. HIPAA laws as well as California State law applies

Are Telemedicine sessions recorded?

No. Just as any live psychotherapy session the client's privacy is of utmost importance and no video, audio or other recordings are ever made without written authorization and complete consent and the platform used here does not have the capacity for recordings.

Do I have to be a computer expert to do this?

Only basic working skills on a computer are required. Prior to the first appointment the process and what is needed will be explained by Linda as well as in writing. Sometimes talking by phone during the initial set-up can help walk you through each simple step.

What if I decide I don't like this way of doing therapy?

Since good therapy is always about good communication and having a good professional relationship with the therapist is always important to feel like you can discuss anything. It is especially important to let your therapist know if there is anything about either a live/in-person session, Telemedicine session, or phone session that doesn't feel right or working for you. Not all therapeutic methods work for everyone so finding what works for you is very important.

How are payments for sessions handled?

Payment is expected prior to the scheduled Telehealth session. Payments can be made through my website: <https://www.lindamrio.com/contact-me--make-payment.html>

If you wish to participate in Telemedicine/telehealth counseling with Linda please complete the form below, sign, and return to Linda prior to the first session.

Telemedicine/telehealth Informed Consent and Understanding

Linda M. Rio, MA, MFT CAL#23156
805-619-0950 www.lindamrio.com

I _____ (name of all those participating as client(s)) hereby consent to engage in telemedicine/telehealth with Linda M. Rio, as part of my psychotherapy. I understand that "telemedicine" includes the practice of health care delivery, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, transfer of medical data, and education using interactive audio, video, or data communications. I/we state that I am using my own equipment to communicate, and specifically not that owned by another person.

I understand that I have the following rights with respect to telemedicine:

- (1) I have the right to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting my right to future care or treatment nor risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which I would otherwise be entitled.
- (2) The laws that protect the confidentiality of my medical information also apply to telemedicine/telehealth. As such, I understand that the information disclosed by me during the course of my therapy is generally confidential. However, there are both mandatory and permissive exceptions to confidentiality, including, but not limited to reporting child, elder, and dependent adult abuse; expressed threats of violence towards an ascertainable victim; and where I make my mental or emotional state an issue in a legal proceeding.
I also understand that the dissemination of any personally identifiable images or information from the telemedicine interaction to anyone shall not occur without my written consent.
- (3) I understand that there are risks and consequences from telemedicine/telehealth, including, but not limited to, the possibility, despite reasonable efforts on the part of my psychotherapist, that: the transmission of my medical information could be disrupted or distorted by technical failures; the transmission of my medical information could be interrupted by unauthorized persons; and/or the electronic storage of my medical information could be accessed by unauthorized persons.

In addition, I understand that telemedicine-based services and care may not be as complete as face-to-face services. I also understand that if my psychotherapist believes I would be better served by another form of psychotherapeutic services (e.g. face-to-face services) I will be referred to a psychotherapist who can provide such services in my area (or schedule an appointment with Linda M. Rio face-to-face). I understand that I may benefit from telemedicine, but that results cannot be guaranteed or assured.

- (4) I understand that I have a right to access my medical information and copies of medical records in accordance with California law.
- (5) I understand that telemedicine/telehealth requires that the provider keep and maintain patient records and is bound to abide by state laws regarding any psychotherapy record.
- (6) *I understand that I may decline any telehealth services at any time without jeopardizing my access to future care, services, and/or benefits.

In case of a medical or mental health emergency the following is the nearest services to my location: (Please list closest hospital, police department name, and any other emergency services).

I understand that my therapist may contact such emergency services if it is deemed medically and/or psychologically necessary.

Nearest (to me) medical/mental health emergency site:

Site name: _____

Site address: _____

Site phone number: _____

If a need for direct, face to face services arises, it is my responsibility to contact providers in my area such as _____, _____, or _____ or Linda M. Rio's office for a face to face appointment. I understand that an opening may not be immediately available.

Suggestions to prepare for your telemedicine session:

- Choose a private location that will be free of interruptions for the duration of the session.
- If an interruption occurs such as a family member comes into the room or your phone or computer delivers an important message plan how you will handle this.
- If you have to cancel/postpone your session how will you contact your therapist in a timely manner? Have you discussed any financial consequences for a cancellation?
- If you have children and they see or hear you talking via the computer what will you explain to them?
- If you live with a spouse or significant other have you discussed with them that you will be having sessions via computer?
- If a spouse or significant other is at home or nearby at the time of your session you might want to turn Bluetooth off so someone else cannot listen to the clinical exchange from another room.
- You and your therapist may want to develop a code word you both agree upon that indicates there may be an unwanted person nearby who may be able to overhear. The therapist in such a case may agree to feign an excuse to leave the session so as to preserve client confidentiality. **The CODE WORD agreed upon is _____.**
- Technology sometimes fails, bad connections happen, power outages occur. **What is the backup plan** should _____ this _____ occur?

- Plan and practice the lighting so that your face/body is well-lit prior to a videoconference.
- Discuss with my therapist the pros and cons of psychotherapy delivered via telehealth.

I have read and understand the information provided above. I also understand that I must be physically in the State of California at the time of a telehealth session.

Signature of patient/parent/guardian/conservator

Linda M. Rio, MA, MFT