

Telehealth Guidelines

BEFORE THE SESSION STARTS

- 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, in 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 (though if young kids are at home, we can brainstorm options), 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.
- 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/buds 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 wifi for streaming (or at all, if possible)
- Be comfortable! Find a comfortable position, perhaps with pillows or a throw blanket, a cup of tea or essential oils (assuming you are not allergic), so you can 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, and I have chosen a platform called Doxy.me (<https://doxy.me/patients>).
- Please note that this platform is in compliance with my licensing board's requirement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Essentially, what this means is that your information will continue to be kept in confidentiality in these virtual sessions.
- To begin a session, I will send you an email invitation through my private practice email tingyi@newlightcs.com with a link prior to our appointment. You can simply click on the link at our appointment time, which will take you directly to the virtual waiting room.
- Doxy.me will notify me once you enter the virtual waiting room, then I will start the session. Then here we go!
- And no, you do not have to download any apps! Yes, you read it correctly! No need to download any apps 😊
- Use Chrome or Firefox as your browser can sometimes be better than Safari or Explorer.
- Make sure your volume is up and that your video and microphone and video camera are on (usually this happens automatically).

- There is a chat function on the bottom right of the screen, which we can use to type a message to each other if we can't hear each other.
- If the signal is bad, simply restart your computer and click on the email link again and wait for me to join again.
- If more than 5 minutes have gone by, and you haven't been able to re-connect with me on doxy.me, please feel free to call or text me at 650-676-0405 and we can discuss a plan accordingly.
- Please note that at the beginning of each session, **my licensing board requires that I obtain your full name and address of present location. I will ask you for this information when we start our telehealth session.**
([https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/I586A000922974EA6A84F0657D0FC3563?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/I586A000922974EA6A84F0657D0FC3563?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default))).

WILL INSURANCE OR MY EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) COVER TELEHEALTH?

- For most people, yes! In fact, many insurers were already covering telehealth, and according to California Department of Public Health, the use of phones, videos, or video conferencing to reduce the need for close interactions is recommended to make a small or essential gathering safer.
(https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Gathering_Guidance_03.11.20.pdf).
- As always, please feel free to contact your insurance to check, and ask me if you have any questions, especially related to out-of-network coverage (OON).
- **Please note that for private pay clients, I will email you with the monthly bill statement within 10 days of our last appointment of each month, instead of a hard copy of the monthly bill statement at the first appointment of each month for the month of March and April 2020.**

PROS AND CONS OF 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.

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, though, for people who are at least somewhat familiar with using computers or smartphones, telehealth is overall thought to be safe, effective, convenient, and an important tool in maintaining continuity of care.

ARE THERE RISKS TO USING TELEHEALTH?

Please see our consent form. Risks are minimal and similar to beginning therapy, though we will need to identify appropriate emergency plans and contacts if they were to be needed. In some cases, I may deem that telehealth is not appropriate or safe to use, and we will discuss alternatives if this is the case.

ASIDE FROM TALK THERAPY, WHAT OTHER KINDS OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENTS CAN BE OFFERED VIA TELEHEALTH?

There are many. Telehealth can be used for a range of helpful treatment including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness-based approaches, relaxation and stress management, guided imagery, brief solution-focused therapy.

ANYTHING ELSE I NEED TO KNOW?

You will be asked to complete a telehealth consent form before we begin our first session. You will also be asked to confirm your location at the start of each session and attest that others are not present and that the session is not being recorded (unless previously agreed to).

I will be happy to address any other questions or concerns you might have, and am looking forward to being able to continue to support you in this way and help you navigate these unprecedented events with resilience and meaning.