

PCAR's Informed Consent Talking Points

- Confidentiality & Mandated Reporting Requirements
 - “First, I want to explain the confidentiality that you have with me and also the limits to that confidentiality. Everything that you say to me is confidential. But, there are several limits to that confidentiality. The first is if you tell me about the abuse or neglect of a child, I am mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect. The second is if you threaten to harm yourself or someone else, and the third is if I receive a subpoena. For the most part I can keep what you share with me confidential, but it’s important for you to know these limits so that you can decide what you want to share with me.”

- Benefits and Risks
 - “Telecounseling will hopefully make it easier and more convenient for you and me to have consistent sessions. We hope that it saves you time and reduces travel costs, too. There are a few risks I need to inform you of. There might be some technical difficulties where our connection gets disrupted, or we can’t connect at all. Sometimes the image resolution might be poor, and our faces could look pixelated. We can chat about how you will want to continue if something like this happens (i.e. if the audio doesn’t work, we can talk on the phone while still using the video). Even though doxy.me, the platform we will use for our sessions, stores your information in a confidential and secure way, there is a very small chance that in the event of a privacy breach, your personal information could be exposed. We would inform you right away if this were to happen.”

- Other options
 - “If you find after trying telecounseling that it’s not a good fit, we can discuss the other options that are available to you.”

- Responsibility of the client
 - “There are a few things I will need you to do. It’s important that you have a private and comfortable space to us to talk. It’s up to you if that place will be at home or work and we can talk more about that if you’d like. Wherever you choose, we ask there to be sufficient lighting so I can see your face on the camera. We also want it to be free from distractions and somewhere that other people won’t be around. Each time we start a session, I might ask you something like, “Is anyone in earshot of our conversation or nearby?” It’s important for me to know if someone is in the room with you. I will also let you know if anyone else is in the room with me. In order for the session to continue, I will need verbal consent from you for this person to remain in the room. Also, if someone enters the room unexpectedly, I will pause the session in order to protect your confidentiality. We can resume again once they leave. If you are worried about a partner or family member sitting in the room off camera, even though you don’t want them to be there, we can come up with a phrase that discreetly lets me know they are

there, and I will make up an excuse to end the session early. I also want to ask you not to record the session either by videotaping it or recording the audio.”

- Emergencies
 - “I also want to explain that telecounseling will only be available for scheduled sessions. It is not to be used in the event of an emergency. If you do need to talk outside of our scheduled time, you can call our 24/7 hotline or call 911. If a life threatening medical emergency were to occur during our session, either in-person or while we’re on our telecounseling session, I might need to call 911. If you were unable to give permission to release your information, information about the medical emergency may be given to the emergency staff, like a 911 operator.”
- Leaving the state
 - “The last thing I need to explain is that if you will be out of state during our regularly scheduled session, you must inform me. I am licensed in Pennsylvania, and it is illegal for me to practice in any other area.”

“When you’re ready, by signing this document, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand the information outlined above. You are acknowledging that we have discussed it and that your questions have been answered. You are consenting to using telecounseling services and are agreeing to follow the steps listed above.

There are two other things we need to chat about.

The first is that when we make your doxy.me account, we want to provide you with the option of using an alias for your name – though we need to agree on this alias so I know that it’s you when scheduling our sessions online.

Secondly, if there were to be some technical difficulties, we should discuss a backup plan. If the audio isn’t working, but the video still works, I can call you on the number in your file and we can hear each other over the phone while still seeing each other on the screen. If the video doesn’t work, but the audio does, we can continue the session through doxy.me. If both the audio and video connection isn’t working, I can call you on the number in your file and we can finish out the session on the phone. Or, if you’d prefer, we can try and reschedule the session. If you have another idea you are more comfortable with we can discuss that.”