

Aura Counseling and Wellness has been providing Telehealth Services since this option was approved by The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, in early 2019. This service helps individuals to obtain much needed mental health and substance use disorder services even if they are unable to or struggle with seeking in-person therapy services. We provide individual and group therapy from your location to ours. Our policies & procedures for Telehealth Services & the requirements to engage in this service delivery are outlined below.

What is Telehealth?

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) define it as “a two-way, real-time interactive communication between a patient and a physician or practitioner at a distant site through telecommunications equipment that includes, at a minimum, audio and visual equipment.”

This means that all Telehealth Sessions will include an audio and video component. Aura Counseling and Wellness has a video conferencing platform that is secure and covers all client confidentiality requirements under HIPAA laws. Even though Federal regulations have temporarily changed and minimized the requirements for medical providers and counselors to conduct services through less secure methods, our policies will not change during these difficult times. Our video conferencing platform can be downloaded to a smartphone or tablet and is easily accessible on a laptop or desktop computer through any web browser, without risking your right to confidentiality.

In order to receive services via Telehealth - all clients are **required** to have or establish the following:

- ◆ Must have access to a desktop or laptop computer **OR** a smartphone or tablet - capable of connecting to the internet **AND** that have a camera and microphone.
- ◆ Must have a good, consistent internet connection (A recommendation of a minimum of 384 Kbps, upload/ download speeds).
- ◆ Are required to have a private and quiet space with adequate lighting.
- ◆ Must inform the counselor at the beginning of the session of your current address and/or location. You must also remain in the location for the entire duration of the session.
- ◆ Must inform the counselor if there is anyone else at the location or in the room with you.
- ◆ Must not attempt to 'multi-task' or use other apps, programs, or games while engaging in sessions.
- ◆ Must not be eating, drinking, smoking, or engaging in any other activity during this time.
- ◆ Silence your smartphone and/or other notifications while you are connected to the session.
- ◆ Must be located in Idaho during these sessions.
- ◆ *If attending **group** via Telehealth:*
 - All clients **must** ensure that no one else can see their screen or the image/ video that is being transmitted.
 - If using a mobile device (smartphone or tablet), you must ensure that you can be seen at all times and that you are not adjusting, moving, or dropping your device during the session.
- ◆ If any issues arise that would keep the client or counselor from participating in the session as they normally would if they were face-to-face, the session will be terminated at that time.
- ◆ If any of the requirements are unable to be met or you refuse to ensure that they are met, the session will be terminated.
- ◆ If there is any real or perceived violation of confidentiality, the session will be terminated immediately and you may not be allowed to use this service in the future.

The following items are recommendations and they are not required:

- ◆ Wear headphones that have a microphone to ensure your confidentiality.
- ◆ Position your smartphone or tablet on a stand or other prop to avoid the need to hold it throughout the session.

When you are scheduled for a Telehealth Session, you will be sent (email or text) directions and links to connect to the video conferencing platform before your session start time. You may be required to wait until your start time but do not disconnect from the app or website for a minimum of 10 minutes after the start time of your session, just in case there are any technical difficulties.

Any violation of confidentiality will result in immediate termination from services!