



Toni La’Zurs, M.Ed., LPC - Middle Upper Counselor
tlazurs@briarwoodschool.org 832-775-9564

Informed Consent for Telecounseling Consultation

General Information

With all that is going on surrounding the Covid-19 virus, the uncertainty of each day, and the changes that are coming rapidly; anxiety, stress and fear are all emotions that we each are facing. As a result, Briarwood has implemented a way in which we can still assist our students and families with this ever changing emotional rollercoaster we are all riding. Effective Monday, March 23, 2020 I will be available by appointment should your student need to talk to someone about this or any other situation that may be impacting their mental health.

Confidentiality

The content and all relevant materials to the student’s discussion will be held confidential unless the student requests to have all or portions of such content released to his or her parent. However there are some limits to the client held privilege of confidentiality, including but not limited to:

- If a court of law issues a legitimate subpoena for information stated on the subpoena.
- If a judge signs a validly executed search warrant or compels me to testify in court.
- If a client is in therapy or being treated by order of a court of law, or if information is obtained for the purpose of rendering an expert’s report to an attorney.
- If a client threatens or attempts to commit suicide or otherwise conducts him/her self in a manner in which there is a substantial risk of incurring serious bodily harm.
- If the therapist has a reasonable suspicion that a client or other named victim is the perpetrator, observer of, or actual victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or suspected neglect of, children under the age of 18 years, persons with disabilities, or elderly persons.
- Information may be provided to parents, if the client is a minor.

CONFIDENTIALITY WITH ADOLESCENTS/TEENS

I use my best clinical judgment regarding the information that adolescents/teens sometimes disclose to me. This is a time of tremendous growth and change in their lives, as well as a time of experimentation and increasing age-appropriate autonomy and separation from their parent(s) or legal guardians. This can put me in the difficult position of being aware of behaviors that may be illegal and/or present some level of risk (for instance, lying, stealing, engaging in sexual behaviors, or experimenting with substances), but which are not necessarily imminently life-threatening. A teen may feel comfortable sharing things with me, which they are simply not willing to discuss with their parents. *So I want to clarify at the outset that I try to honor the teen's confidentiality whenever possible, knowing that if and when I do break confidentiality and report things back to the parents or guardians, it can irretrievably damage the therapeutic relationship and interfere with making progress and meeting goal(s).* Instead, I prefer to counsel our students towards responsible behaviors and healthier life choices, and I always encourage them to engage in honest communication with their parents about what is happening in their lives. I ask parents to trust that I continually consider the best course of action regarding potentially breaking a teen's confidentiality. This involves first and foremost considering the overall welfare of the teen, and then balancing their need for a safe place to discuss difficult topics with your need as a parent to remain informed. Please be assured that if I become aware of situations or behaviors that I consider to be very high risk, I will absolutely inform you as soon as possible. I have found most parents are grateful their teen is opening up to an adult who is not only a trained professional but who can provide some sensible guidance. By allowing your teenage child to engage in a conversation with me, you agree to my stated approach regarding their confidentiality, regardless of any legal right you may have to know the content.

While it is my intent to be in a secured, private location wherein I can provide confidentiality, I can't assume the responsibility for complete confidentiality on your end. In that we are conducting these conversations via video, it is up to you to ensure you are in a room or location that will provide you with the type of confidentiality you are wanting. **Students and their families are prohibited from recording the session.**

Telecounseling

The telecounseling appointment will be done through a two-way video link-up whereby the student can see my image on the screen and hear my voice. I have selected a video-conferencing system with a HIPAA compliant secure platform to allow for the highest possible security and confidentiality of the

content of your sessions. I will be using Zoom since it is the video service that we are asking all students/families to get familiar with.

You are responsible for creating and using additional safeguards such as creating passwords to use the computer, keeping your email and chat IDs and passwords secret, and maintaining security of wireless internet access points. However, unlike a traditional conversation in my office, I will not have the use of my other assets such as body language and it may not be equal to true face-to-face conversations.

Counselors are observers of human behavior and gather much information from body language, vocal inflection, eye contact and other nonverbal cues. Please be aware that misunderstandings are possible since non-verbal cues are relatively lacking. Even with video chat software, misunderstandings may occur since bandwidth is always limited and images lack detail. I know there are potential risks with the use of this new technology. These include but are not limited to: Interruption of the audio/video link. ·

Disconnection of the audio/video link · A picture that is not clear enough to meet the needs of the students. If any of these risks occur, the conversation might need to be stopped. I will do my best to re-contact the student to conclude our conversation.

Briarwood Handbook Information

At Briarwood, school counselors provide brief therapy and not long term therapy. Given the circumstances, families may find it very difficult to maintain regular sessions with outside therapists, but for liability reasons please do not assume that online counseling sessions will replace your appointments with a psychologist.

Emergency Information

If your student is having an emergency crisis please contact one of the following community resources:

Crisis Intervention Houston	(832) 416-1177	Teenline (713) 529-TEEN
National Suicide Prevention Hotline	1-800-273-8255	
Houston Behavioral Health Hospital	832) 834-7710	
West Oaks Hospital	(713) 995-0909	
Emergency Responders	911	

I certify that this form has been fully read and understood by me. I understand and agree to its contents. I volunteer to have my student participate in the telecounseling program as provided by the Briarwood School during this distance learning time period.

Date: _____

Time: _____ am/pm

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

I am aware that Students and families are prohibited from recording the session.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____