

Conlon Psychological Services, PLLC
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Information about Videochat TeleMental Health Services (Telehealth)

What is TeleMental Health Services?

TeleMental Health (TMH) refers to telephone, videochat, email, and text communications with Dr. Conlon. (Other names for these same services include telehealth or telepsychology.) This information sheet is about the TMH videochat service offered by Dr. Conlon.

The videochat service allows patients to have a therapy session when they cannot be physically present in the therapy office for an appointment. Instead of talking by phone, you and Dr. Conlon will communicate over the internet using a video camera and an internet-enabled device such as computer, tablet or cell phone.

When is Telehealth used?

Telehealth, or TMH, can be very helpful during extreme weather conditions or national emergencies so that your sessions are not interrupted. Telehealth is also used when the patient must travel for business or is on vacation. Patients may also choose to use the service when they would otherwise miss a session due to transportation delays, weather issues, extended workdays, or while caring for a sick child/family member. Some patients live too far away to make regular office visits feasible and may wish to use videochat for most of their therapy sessions to save time and travel costs. In most cases, a videoconference session is planned in advance. Telehealth may also be used on the rare occasions when Dr. Conlon cannot be physically present, such as when she is traveling or working from home, and a patient does not want to miss a session.

How is it different than a regular session with Dr. Conlon?

Other than you and Dr. Conlon being in separate locations, there is very little difference in the session.

1. Just like sessions in the office, Dr. Conlon will take written notes about clinical information that you share with her. She is required to document the service that is provided, and she will ensure that documentation is included in your clinical record for future reference.
2. Dr. Conlon has the ability to record the videochat, but recording will not occur unless the reason has been discussed, you agree, and you provide written consent. Dr. Conlon asks that you also not record the videochat unless you inform her in advance that you will be recording.
3. Just like in a face-to-face session, Dr. Conlon requests that patients refrain from texting, email, social media or communication with others not present, for the entire session.
4. As occurs at the end of sessions in the office, Dr. Conlon may provide you written information such as a coping card, a resource, or a homework assignment. This information can be sent to you electronically during the session if you agree.
5. You will be billed at the end of the session via the credit card that you already have on file. If you prefer not to use a credit card, you will be asked to pay for the session in advance.

How do Telehealth services work?

The set-up is easy. Your device (computer, tablet or cell phone) must have a videocamera (usually built in), and an internet connection. Copy this link into your internet browser and follow the instructions.

<https://drceleste-conlon.vsee.me/u/clinic>

Sign into VSee about 10 minutes before your appointment time and check to make sure your connection is strong. Dr. Conlon will see that you are online, and will connect with you as soon as she is available. The connection works almost the same as Skype or Facetime, but it is encrypted.

Is it private and confidential?

Videochats can be as private as a session in the therapy office, but each of us has responsibility to create this level of privacy.

1. VSee and Dr. Conlon have an agreement, in which VSee agrees it “...protects data privacy in that all audio/video communication is securely encrypted and transmitted from point-to-point such that even VSee does not have access to any identifiable health information that may be communicated.” VSee does not store any of your data.

2. Dr. Conlon must uphold all applicable State and Federal privacy rules governing the practice of psychology. These rules were reviewed with you at your first session (Office Practices and Agreement, and Notice of Psychologists' Policies and Practices (HIPAA)). You signed these documents, and a copy was offered to you. These rules continue to apply to all communications from Dr. Conlon, regardless of method.
3. Dr. Conlon will be located in her professional office during your session unless she is in her home office or traveling. She will inform you of her location. When she is working outside of her professional office, Dr. Conlon follows the same Privacy Guidelines for Patients as she recommends for you below. She also uses a VPN connection for added security.
4. Your privacy is very important, and Dr. Conlon strongly recommends that you follow these guidelines. If Dr. Conlon does not feel that the session is sufficiently secure, she will talk with you about improving the situation or rescheduling the session.
5. **Privacy Guidelines for Patients:** Dr. Conlon strongly recommends that you follow these guidelines during a videoconference to maximize privacy on your end.
 - a. Choose a location for the session where you cannot be overheard. An enclosed location is preferred, both for confidentiality and for noise management.
 - b. No one else should be present if this is an individual session. If you decide to allow someone else in the room with you during your session, you must inform Dr. Conlon of his/her presence. Dr. Conlon will not allow anyone else (such as an intern) to be in the room with her during your session without your written consent.
 - c. Choose a location where you will not be interrupted for at least 50 minutes.
 - d. Use only your own device, rather than a public computer.
 - e. The security of your internet connection is your responsibility. In general, a public Wi-Fi internet connection is not likely to be secure or private, and you could be overheard. In a hotel, a cellular connection may be more secure than the free connection offered by the hotel. This website may be helpful: <https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/phones-tech/internet-security-for-travelers>. If you are connected to someone else's home WiFi connection, make sure they use a firewall. Choose a hardwired internet connection if at all possible (carry an Ethernet cord with you). If you are not sure if your connection is secure, please consult with an IT specialist.
6. **Concerns or Complaints:** What if I do not like telehealth or I am dissatisfied with my session(s)? If you are dissatisfied with my services for any reason, please let me know. If I am not able to resolve your concerns, you may report your complaint to the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, 333 Guadalupe, Tower 2, Room 450, Austin TX 78701 or phone (512) 305-7700 or online at <https://www.tsbep.texas.gov/how-to-file-a-complaint-enforcement>.

Who is eligible for Telehealth services?

1. Established patients only. At least one face-to-face session with Dr. Conlon is required before Telehealth services can be provided.
2. Children (12 and under) must have a parent present in the room during the session.
3. Adolescents may have their own private session if parents agree.
4. Dr. Conlon must approve participation in Telehealth services, based on assessment of patient's safety. Individuals who have suicidal or homicidal thoughts or a history of erratic behavior are usually not good candidates for Telehealth services. Safety cannot be 100% guaranteed for anyone, but a safety plan is required for all patients, based on the information described next.

Medical Emergency Plan for Travelers and College Students

1. Think about what you would do if you had a medical emergency while you are away from home. Who would you contact first? Are you traveling with anyone who could help you? Is a roommate available nearby?
2. Prior to agreeing to a videochat session, Dr. Conlon has informed you that this method for therapy is not sufficient for someone in a mental health crisis, and with your input, she has determined that this method for therapy is safe for you. However, despite the best planning, situations can change. It is important to have a safety plan just in case you need more help than Dr. Conlon can provide remotely. Dr. Conlon is required to protect your privacy, but as previously discussed, complete confidentiality may not be applicable if you or someone else is in danger.

3. To develop this safety plan, please send Dr. Conlon this information before your session if at all possible.
 - a. Your address and location during the session.
 - b. An identified emergency contact (name, phone, address). This would be someone who you would contact if you had a medical emergency at your location. Some examples include a family member, the resident advisor of your dorm, a traveling business associate, or the manager of the hotel where you are staying.
 - c. If you are outside of the United States, you must provide the name, address and telephone number of the nearest police station and hospital.
4. This information will help Dr. Conlon locate a local mental health provider should a mental health emergency occur. If she is unable to facilitate your connection with mental health support, she will call your emergency contact number for assistance. Dr. Conlon will be required to follow local laws regarding duty to warn, and these laws may vary depending on your location.
5. If you have any questions about this safety plan, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Conlon. This plan will be briefly reviewed at the beginning of your session. If you have not made an emergency plan, this will be developed during the first 10 minutes of your session. You will not be charged for this time. By mutual agreement regarding availability, your regular 45-minute session will then commence after the plan is made.

Backup Plan for Technical Difficulties and Other Service Interruptions:

Despite the best preparation, technical problems can occur and service can be interrupted. Unexpected but rare events such as a fire alarm, weather alert, loss of power, bomb threats, or other emergency alerts have the potential to interrupt the session. The start of a session can be accidentally delayed by traffic, a crisis with another patient, or something in your travel location. Sometimes during traveling, unexpected demands occur.

1. If you need to change your appointment, kindly provide 24 hours notice. If you suggest a two alternate times, Dr. Conlon will call or email you to confirm options for rescheduling.
2. Same day communication (should an unintentional delay occur) - Dr. Conlon will call or email you if she will be delayed. Patients are encouraged to call or use secure email or texting if they are delayed. Texting can be very convenient, but please only use the Signal app so that texting will be encrypted (secure).
3. If the connection is dropped or fails, Dr. Conlon will try three times to reconnect via videochat. If reconnection is not possible, she will wait an additional 15 minutes while you attempt to reconnect three times. If connection does not occur, she will try call you on your cell phone and then will complete the session over the telephone.
4. If Dr. Conlon is unable to connect with you by videochat or phone, she will be concerned about you and will watch for a message from you. However, after your scheduled session time, she may be in session with another patient, and will be unable to answer immediately. Methods of contacting Dr. Conlon are listed below. She will try two more times later in the day to make contact. Dr. Conlon asks that you attempt to send her a message via voicemail, text or email at your first opportunity so that she knows you are safe. As soon as regular communication is possible again, your session will either start again or be rescheduled.

Dr. Conlon's Contact Information

Main office number: 281-944-5588

Texting: Dr. Conlon will text you only through Signal, an encrypted app. Please install the free Signal app and register your phone. Then text Dr. Conlon at 281-944-5588.

Non-encrypted Email: drconlon@drconlon.org

Encrypted Email: logon to your account [here](#) or at <http://www.conlonpsychservices.com/>

On-call psychologist (when Dr. Conlon is out): Dr. Charles Cox 281-265-4566

Preparing for your session:

1. Send Dr. Conlon your emergency contact information. If you do not have this information, your safety plan will be developed during the first 10 minutes of your session.
2. Before the session, eliminate external noise. Turn off televisions, radios, and music players. Turn off the ringer on your phone or place it on Do Not Disturb. All of these devices can interfere with the sound quality on Dr. Conlon's end during your session.
3. Secure pets and children.
4. Your therapy appointment is an opportunity for you to fully invest in yourself. To protect this time, and to prevent interruptions and distractions, please close all other browsers, windows, email, social media, and messaging apps on your device.

5. Consider the lighting in your location.
 - Avoid backlighting because you cannot be seen clearly. Turn off lights behind you; close curtains behind you.
 - Arrange to be seated where some light will shine on your face.
6. At least 15 minutes before your session, turn on your device, and check your internet connection.
7. Sign into the VSee app at least 10 minutes before your session is to begin. Check to make sure your internet connection is strong.
8. Dr. Conlon will be notified that you are waiting. She will connect with you and start the session.
9. If you have any technical difficulties, follow the backup plan described above.

Is Telehealth (TMH) covered by insurance?

Please check with your insurance company to make sure. However, Section 1455.004 of Texas State Law says:

- (a) A health benefit plan may not exclude a telemedicine medical service or a telehealth service from coverage under the plan solely because the service is not provided through a face-to-face consultation.
- (b) A health benefit plan may require a deductible, a copayment, or coinsurance for a telemedicine medical service or a telehealth service. The amount of the deductible, copayment, or coinsurance may not exceed the amount of the deductible, copayment, or coinsurance required for a comparable medical service provided through a face-to-face consultation.

What happens if I choose not to consent to Telehealth Services?

Almost nothing happens. Telehealth is offered to you as a convenient additional service if you wish to take advantage of it. If you choose not to consent to Telehealth services, Dr. Conlon will be unable to provide you this alternative to in-person service, and your appointment will be rescheduled for a later date.

**Worksheet for Safety Plan
for Videochat Telemental Health Services**

Patient: _____

Date: _____

Emergency Contact Name (local – business associate, manager of facility, family member present)	Address	Phone
Your current location (name of hotel, for example)	Street Address, City, State, Zip Country if outside the USA	Phone in your room And/or Phone at this location
If outside the USA, Local Police	Address	Phone
If outside the USA, Nearest Hospital	Address	Phone

RESOURCES:

VSee Tutorial – One Click Waiting Room for Google Chrome users <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9H7qkvOrRRQ&t=214s>

VSee Waiting Room Tutorial for Safari Users <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mulKWIsjhxI>

VSee Waiting Room Tutorial for Firefox Users <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWYTptObaU>

VSee is not recommended for Internet Explorer

Consent for Telemental Health Services (Telehealth)

I, _____, consent to Telehealth Mental Health Services as described above. Dr. Conlon has discussed this information with me. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about this information, and all of my questions have been answered. I understand the written information provided on the previous pages.

I understand that:

1. I have the option to withhold consent at this time or to withdraw this consent at any time, including any time during a session, without affecting the right to future care or treatment.
2. By my signature, I also agree that
 - a. I will not record any session, including videochat sessions, without informing Dr. Conlon that I am doing so.
 - b. I will turn off all social media, email, messaging apps, other browsers and windows during our session.
3. Privacy policies were signed by me at the beginning of therapy, I was offered a copy, and may have another copy if requested.
 - a. All existing confidentiality protections continue to apply.
 - b. All existing laws regarding patient access to mental health information and copies of mental health records apply.

Potential benefits of these services:

1. Videochat offers an enhancement over phone appointments because Dr. Conlon and I can see each other while we talk. This allows Dr. Conlon to make a better evaluation of my needs. Many patients report that videochat is more personal than a phone appointment.
2. The service allows me to participate in the therapy I desire, while I meet my responsibilities at work or school, and at home.
3. I can continue regular sessions with Dr. Conlon despite circumstances that prevent my physical presence in her office.
4. Regular contact with Dr. Conlon allows me to receive timely feedback on homework projects or behavior experiments. This regular contact is likely to strengthen motivation to make the changes I desire.
5. Consistent effort, feedback, practice, and problem solving more quickly increases skills, improves accountability for progress, and helps reduce symptoms.
6. Development of skills and management of symptoms helps many patients make better progress on their goals.

Potential risks of these services:

1. There could be a partial or complete failure of the equipment being used, and this could result in Dr. Conlon's inability to complete the evaluation or therapy session.
2. Any risk associated with communicating over the internet which are outside the control of either myself or Dr. Conlon.
3. I will not have the support of a therapist in the room with me should I become extremely distressed. If I or my child/adolescent should have an urgent mental health need during the session, Dr. Conlon will be required to contact my emergency support person and/or emergency services in my area to assist me.

Signature of Patient

Printed Name

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Relationship to Patient

Date

Celeste Conlon, Ph.D.

Printed Name

Date

Patient Rights: I understand that I can talk to Dr. Conlon if I am dissatisfied with telehealth or any portion of my treatment. If this does not resolve the situation, I have received information about contacting TSBEF for additional help, and where to file a complaint if needed.

Patient Initials