TS Counseling, PLLC

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**Statement of Understanding**

Welcome to therapy with Taraleigh Stemler Counseling. This document contains important information about the use of virtual platform services to assist in the in-session interaction between you -the client- and me-the therapist- at Taraleigh Stemler Counseling (TSC).

**HIPAA-COMPLIANT VIRUTAL PLATFORMS**

In the event that you, as the client of TSC need to meet from a distance, we may utilize a HIPAA-compliant virtual platform for a therapy session. **Zoom** allows for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) compliant use between health professionals and their clients. This is important because the things we will talk about while using **Zoom** is likely to be personal and taking appropriate steps to help keep our conversations confidential is required by law and is considered best practice in the mental health field. All video and audio streams are encrypted and users can join securely even when they’re not present in my office. This means you and I will be able to communicate with the added confidence that the content of our discussion is secured according to industry standards.

In order to use, you will have to download the free app:

https://zoom.us/

**LIMITS ON CONFIDENTIALITY**

I do ask you to please remember that there is always a risk of a breach of confidentiality whenever you share your personal information. I also want you to be aware that your computer and other electronic devices may not be secured according to health industry standards.

**INFORMATION SECURITY**

In order to decrease the chances that the confidentiality of your personal information is compromised, I highly suggest you consider doing the following:

1. Only use a HIPAA-compliant virtual platform when you have taken steps to decrease the likelihood that you can be overheard. These steps include:
	1. Making sure you are alone in a room.
	2. Placing a sound dampening device such as a white noise machine outside the room where you are using.
2. Enable two-step verification when logging into your email accounts. This security measure makes it harder for someone to breach your email and gain access to your computer or other electronic devices.
3. Limit access by being careful who you allow to use, look after, or borrow your computer or other electronic devices.
4. Be sure to log out of HIPAA-compliant virtual platform.
5. Encrypt your computer and other electronic devices
6. Regularly implement software patches and update antivirus software on personal computers.
7. Avoid the following to reduce the likelihood of malware getting installed on your computer and other electronic devices.

**STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE USE OF HIPAA-COMPLIANT VIRTUAL SERVICES**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the client, have fully read and agree to the terms outlined in this **STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE USE OF HIPAA-COMPLIANT VIRTUAL PLATFORM** services and give consent for use of agreed-upon virtual platform. I have discussed any questions I had with Taraleigh Stemler, and I understand the information in this consent. I acknowledge and agree that Taraleigh Stemler Counseling cannot guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of any communication through any HIPAA-compliant virtual platform, and hereby hold harmless and release Taraleigh Stemler Counseling from and against any and all losses, damages, claims, demands and actions arising from or related to any breach of privacy or confidentiality in connection therewith.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have read and understood this form, am at least eighteen (18) years of age and fully competent, and execute the same as my own free will this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

Printed name Signature (client)

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Printed name Therapist