



Stress Management Family Counseling Center
300 Boardwalk Drive, Building 5-A
Fort Collins, CO 80525

INFORMED CONSENT FOR RETURNING TO IN-PERSON SERVICES

This document (“Informed Consent for Returning to In-Person Services”) contains important information about the decision to resume in-person services in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic and public health crisis. This document is a supplement to the Informed Consent that you and your Clinician agreed to at the outset of your therapeutic relationship. Please read this document carefully and let your Clinician know if you have questions.

The threat of COVID-19 is ongoing throughout the United States, and across the globe. As a way to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19, SMFCC has transitioned to providing most services via Telehealth (including therapy and assessments/evaluations). Use of Telehealth reduces in-person contact and minimizes crowding in spaces where exposure to COVID-19 may occur. However, SMFCC recognizes that, in some situations, Telehealth services may not be adequate, and in-person services may be more appropriate. The decision to engage in in-person services is based on current conditions and guidelines, which may change at any time. It is possible that a return to Telehealth services may be necessary at some point based on the consideration of public health and safety issues. Such a decision will be made in consultation with you, but SMFCC will make the final determination based on consideration of the risks and applicable government and licensing board regulations.

DECISION TO MEET IN-PERSON

Thank you for your trust in SMFCC, including our Clinicians and Staff, as we re-integrate in-person services. Given the benefits, and inherent risks, in conducting in-person services while COVID-19 remains an active contagion in our society, SMFCC wishes to address the ways in which we are working to mitigate risk of infection at our offices. We strive to protect you and our staff via hygiene and infection control practices informed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other guiding government and licensing board organizations. We also ask that you (the client) engage in infection control practices to contribute to the health and safety of in-person services, and that **you recognize that you are voluntarily choosing to seek in-person services with knowledge of the inherent risks of infection. If there is a resurgence of the COVID-19 virus, or if other health concerns arise, we may require a return to Telehealth for everyone’s well-being and to support public health and safety.**

If you decide, at any time, that you would prefer to stay with, or return to, Telehealth appointments, please speak to your Clinician. SMFCC clinicians will respect that decision, as long as it is feasible and clinically appropriate. Reimbursement for Telehealth appointments, however, is also determined by insurance companies and applicable law, so that is an issue to discuss with your Clinician.

OUR PLAN FOR OFFICE SAFETY AT SMFCC

SMFCC takes the health and safety of our clients and Staff very seriously. SMFCC strives to provide excellent clinical services in the safest possible environment by taking the following measures:

- General Guidelines:
 - Clients who are sick will be asked not to come into our offices.
 - Clinicians and Staff who show symptoms of a contagious illness, who have been in contact with those showing symptoms of COVID-19, or who are awaiting test results or have tested positive for COVID-19, will be required to stay home.
- Pre-Screening: Upon arrival, clients will complete a brief screening with their Clinician to ensure that they are symptom-free and have not had contact with anyone with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Hygiene Practices: SMFCC Clinicians and Staff will be practicing infection control hygiene practices, including covering coughs and sneezes, frequent hand-washing, refraining from handshakes, and maintaining a minimum of 6-feet physical distance.



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- **Masks/Face Coverings:** SMFCC requires that all Clinicians, Staff, and Clients entering the building wear a mask or face covering and that these coverings are worn in ALL shared/common spaces. If you are unable to wear a mask or face covering for medical reasons, please speak with your Clinician prior to scheduling any face-to-face appointments. If you arrive without a mask or face covering, one will be provided to you.
- **Waiting Room:** SMFCC will be asking ALL clients to wait in their car until the Receptionist or their Psychologist contacts them to enter the building for their appointment. This is necessary to maintain safety, cleanliness, and occupancy guidelines and regulations.
- **Shared Items:** SMFCC has removed commonly touched items in the waiting rooms to help minimize transmission of the virus, such as magazines, books, and toys.
- **During Appointments:** To minimize virus transmission, seating will be arranged to facilitate physical distancing of at least 6-feet; windows opened for ventilation (when possible); and each office and waiting room will be equipped with hand-sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, facial tissue, and trash cans for disposal.
- **Frequent Sanitizing:** Common/Shared areas and equipment, such as door knobs, will be sanitized throughout the day, offices will be sanitized between sessions, and therapy and testing materials (e.g., chairs, tables, desks, waiting room, toys, books/forms, and tablets/computers) will be sanitized between use, per CDC guidelines and recommendations.
- **Scheduling:** SMFCC will have staggering schedules to minimize occupancy in the office. We ask for your understanding and flexibility if your usual appointment time is impacted by such schedule changes.

*****SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL/NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING*****

The close physical interaction required to conduct psychological and neuropsychological testing makes the recommendation to keep 6-feet of physical distance between individuals impractical, if not impossible. For that reason, additional safety precautions will be in place to minimize risk to Clients and Clinicians.

- Testing will take place in rooms that have ventilation and/or in two separate rooms with the use of Bluetooth Technology and additional tablets/computers.
- Clients and Psychologists are asked to wear masks to provide protection from spreading infection. However, if 6-feet of physical distance is not possible and if administration requires verbal and nonverbal language and communication to be visible, masks may be temporarily removed.
- Response booklets and other items for Client use will be placed in bins for Client access to minimize the need to share handling of materials.
- A water bottle or snack can be brought to sustain energy but will not be provided by SMFCC. Hand-washing and sanitizing will be required before and after eating and before and after use of the restroom.
- All surfaces will be sanitized after use and between each client, and SMFCC will make efforts to space out sessions so that there is an opportunity for air ventilation and cleaning.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROTECTING YOURSELF AND MINIMIZING EXPOSURE

In order to participate in in-person services, you (Client or Parent/Legal Guardian of Client) agree to take certain precautions that will help keep Everyone (you, your family, SMFCC Clinicians and Staff and our families, and our other Clients) safer from exposure, sickness, and possible death. If you do not adhere to these safeguards, it may result in starting or returning to Telehealth services. Additionally, SMFCC may change these precautions if additional local, state, or federal guidelines are published.

Initial each point to indicate that you understand and agree to these actions:

- _____ If you, a family member, or anyone with whom you have been in contact within the last 14 days have had COVID-19 symptoms; including fever/chills, coughing, shortness of breath, aches/pain, sore throat, headaches, and/or loss of taste/smell (OR tests positive for COVID-19 or is awaiting results from a COVID-19 test); please do not come into the office.



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- _____ You will take your own or your child's temperature (depending on the Client) at home prior to coming to the office. Anyone with a temperature of 99.5 Fahrenheit or greater is asked to reschedule the appointment or change to a Telehealth session if possible. If you are cancelling for this reason, SMFCC will not charge a cancellation fee.
- _____ In order to minimize the number of people and prevent crowding in our waiting rooms, we ask that you wait in your car or outside until the Receptionist or your Clinician gets you for your appointment. Should you arrive early, please wait in your car or outside.
- _____ When possible, please come to appointments alone. In the case of young children, please have only a parent or legal guardian bring them to the office, and, when possible, wait in the car or outside until the appointment is complete. Such requests help SMFCC staff disinfect and clean between appointments, which is essential to health and safety.
- _____ SMFCC requires anyone entering the building at this point in time to wear a mask. This applies to all Clients and family members who accompany them to appointments. Please keep masks on in the waiting rooms and all common/shared spaces.
- _____ You will maintain safe physical-distancing procedures SMFCC has set up in the waiting rooms and offices. For example, you will not move chairs or sit where signs have been posted requesting that space not be used.
- _____ You are encouraged to use bathrooms and wash your hands prior to your appointment. Hand sanitizer will be available in all rooms, and we ask that clients refrain from touching faces and maintain social distancing, when possible (no shaking of hands or hugs).
- _____ If you bring your child, you will make sure that your child follows all of these sanitation and distancing protocols.
- _____ You will take steps between appointments to minimize your exposure and that of your child (depending on the Client) to COVID-19.
- _____ If you have a job that exposes you to people who are infected, you will immediately alert your Clinician.
- _____ If your commute or other responsibilities or activities put you in close contact with others (beyond your family), you will alert your Clinician.

Please indicate the date of your final COVID-19 vaccination (if received) _____

IDENTIFICATION AND NOTIFICATION OF EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

Although SMFCC is making every reasonable effort to manage infection risk and spread, and believes that most clients are doing the same, we recognize that some individuals with the virus remain asymptomatic and that there is no way to guarantee that those entering our offices will not be exposed to COVID-19. For public health protection, *we ask that any client who has been in our offices and substantially experiences symptoms of COVID-19, or has been exposed to another person with symptoms of COVID-19, **please notify our office immediately so that we can take any additional infection control measures and notify others who may have been exposed.***

Should SMFCC learn that any staff member, client, or household member of anyone who has been in our office has symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive for the COVID-19 virus, we may notify individuals who have been in our offices and building in the same time frame of the potential that they may have been exposed. Notifications will be provided to those who had been in SMFCC offices and building and may have come into close contact on the day that the infected individual was also in that office. SMFCC also may be required to notify local health authorities that you have been in the office. If SMFCC have to report this, your Clinician will only provide the minimum information necessary for data collection and will not go into any details about the reason(s) for appointments. By signing this form, you agree that your Clinician may report without an additional signed release.



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DISCLAIMER

We realize that these changes might feel strange or uncomfortable, and that the COVID-19 virus situation may change in the coming days, weeks, and months. We encourage you to speak with your Clinician if you have difficulty adjusting to new public health practices. Telehealth continues to be an option for you at any time if you are not comfortable coming to the office for in-person sessions. However, you are encouraged to check with your insurance plan for coverage of such benefits as the COVID-19 Pandemic evolves over time.

As you elect to return to the office for in-person appointments, we have procedures in place to mitigate risk per recommended guidelines from government agencies and clinician licensing boards. However, as with the transmission of any communicable illness, you can still be exposed to COVID-19 at any time. By signing below, you agree to hold SMFCC and all staff members harmless in the even that you, or anyone exposed by you, becomes ill with the COVID-19 virus.

This document is considered a supplement to the general Informed Consent that you and your Clinician agreed to at the outset of your therapeutic relationship.

Client Signature

Client Printed Name

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name

Date

Clinician Signature

Clinician Printed Name

Date