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**Teletherapy/Distance Therapy:** Teletherapy (also called “distance therapy” or “telemedicine”), conducting sessions via video or telephone, is available to clients for whom it is clinically beneficial. At the beginning of each session, therapist and client must confirm the physical location and address of the client. Before starting teletherapy, as part of the consent agreement, the therapist will record in the client’s chart the contact information of client’s emergency contact, nearest Psychiatric Emergency (Response) Team, and an all-hours crisis hotline. Teletherapy is contraindicated for people actively in

crisis. Client engages in teletherapy (and any forms of electronic communication) ultimately assuming all responsibility and liability for any breach of confidentiality, inappropriate disclosure of sensitive information, or loss of electronic data during and after transmission with the understanding of the clinical and privacy risks.

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### **PRIVACY and CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Confidentiality:** The information disclosed by you in psychotherapy (including your patient records) is generally confidential and will not be released to any third party without your written authorization, except when required or permitted by law.

**Exceptions to Confidentiality:** Exceptions to confidentiality, include, but are not limited to, reporting child, elder, and dependent adult abuse, when a client makes a serious threat of violence towards a reasonably identifiable victim, or when a client is dangerous to herself/himself/themself or the person or property of another.

- Disclosure may also be required if you are involved in a legal proceeding initiated by you or filed against you. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation, the other party may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records by and/or testimony of your therapist.
- In relationship and family therapy, confidentiality and privilege do not apply among the members of the family/treatment unit as per Alexander Yoo's "no-secrets policy," except in the cases of HIV status, domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, dependent adult abuse, self-harm, or harm to another.
- HIV status: HIV is a protected class. If one member of a treatment unit discloses HIV status privately to the therapist, that information is privileged and cannot be shared by the therapist to the rest of the treatment unit, although the therapist may encourage the HIV-affected person to disclose in therapy and facilitate a discussion.
- Your therapist will not release records to any outside party unless authorized to do so by all adult parties who were part of the family therapy, relationship therapy, or other treatment that involved more than one adult client.

**Records and Your Right to Review Them:** Both the law and the standards of our profession require that your therapist keep treatment records for at least 7 years (or until the age of 25 in cases of treatment of individuals under the age of 18). Unless otherwise agreed to be necessary, your therapist will retain clinical records only for as long as is mandated by California State law. If you have concerns regarding the treatment records, please discuss them with your therapist. As a client, you have the right to review or receive a summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when your therapist assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. In such a case, your therapist will provide the records to an appropriate and legitimate mental health professional of your choice. Considering all the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, and upon your request, your therapist will release information to any agency/person you specify unless he or she assesses that releasing such information might be

harmful in any way. As mentioned above, when more than one client is involved in treatment, your therapist will release records only with signed authorizations from all the adults who can legally authorize a release.

**Health Insurance/3<sup>rd</sup> Party Payer Exception to Confidentiality:** Although your therapist is not on any insurance panels (no direct contact between the therapist and the 3<sup>rd</sup>-party payer), if you choose to bill your own insurance company for fees you have paid to your therapist for therapy, disclosure of confidential information will be required by your health insurance carrier to process the claims. You are responsible for understanding the terms and limits of your insurance coverage. If you instruct your therapist to provide you with a statement for you to submit to your insurance for reimbursement, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated. Your therapist has no control over, or knowledge of, what insurance companies do with the information you authorize your therapist to release or who has access to this information once it is released.

**Electronic Transmission and Communication including E-mail, Phone, Computers, Fax, and Social Media:** To protect your confidentiality, your therapist's electronic devices (laptop and smartphone) use password-protection, secure VPN connection, virus and malware protection, and regular backup to encrypted storage devices. Be aware that computers, smartphones, tablets, unencrypted e-mail, and text communication can be accessed by unauthorized people and can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. Servers and communication companies may have unlimited and direct access to all e-mails and texts. While data and e-mail on your therapist's laptop is encrypted, text messages and phone communication are not. It is always a possibility that texts, email, and faxes can be sent erroneously to the wrong address and computers. Please notify your therapist in writing if you decide to avoid or limit, in any way, the use of e-mail, texts, telephone calls, and voice-mail. If you choose to communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted e-mail, texts, web, fax, or phone, your therapist will assume that you have made an

informed decision and will view it as your agreement to take the risk of interception.

- E-Mail: Your email to your therapist usually remains on your computer or mobile device, or the one that you use, and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your therapist also cannot guarantee a response back to you and cannot guarantee confidentiality of any response; it is your responsibility to safeguard any sensitive information to and from this practice. If you use a computer at your place of employment, be aware that many employers monitor e-mail and can access your information from that computer.
- Website Tracking: Your therapist does not use cookies or other tracking devices for website visitors. GoDaddy and WordPress.org maintain information about browsers used, where you entered the site, keywords, search terms, and IP address as part of their basic usage statistics package, but the person cannot be identified.
- Comments on the Blog: Any comments you make on the blog at [www.alexanderyoo.com/blog](http://www.alexanderyoo.com/blog) are public, and all confidentiality is waived by placing your comments there. Alexander Yoo is not responsible for any adverse effects that your comments might have on you personally, on your employment, your relationships, or in any other way.

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## OFFICE POLICIES

**Risks and Benefits of Therapy:** The therapeutic encounter can be a life-changing experience depending on numerous factors including the therapeutic match, the skill and experience of the therapist, and your willingness to fully participate in the process. Coming to appointments regularly also enhances the therapeutic process. Some of the benefits include a greater understanding of self, an increased reflective capacity, improved relationships with loved ones, and an enhanced sense of well-being. Sometimes therapy results in changes that you might not have expected or



anticipated. You and others in your life may find this a positive change; some may not. Because therapy involves talking about past and present struggles and experiences, it can at times be a painful process. Sometimes, people feel worse before they begin to feel better. Eventually, however, most clients in therapy begin to see improvement; if not, you and your therapist will discuss other alternative treatments, or referrals to other practitioners who may help to meet your needs. There are many forms of therapy to treat common and uncommon issues and circumstances, and an adjunct or another type of therapy may be beneficial or better suited to meet your needs. It is important to discuss any concerns or questions you may have about your therapy with your therapist so we can decide together what would be best for you.

**Potential Clients:** Feel free to read through [www.alexanderyoo.com](http://www.alexanderyoo.com), FaceBook ([www.facebook.com/alexanderyoodotcom](https://www.facebook.com/alexanderyoodotcom)) FaceBook Pages ([fb.me/alexanderyoomft](https://fb.me/alexanderyoomft); [fb.me/alexanderyoopsychconsult](https://fb.me/alexanderyoopsychconsult)), videos (links forthcoming), my blog, or any of my other directory profiles or professional social media. If you have any questions of a non-time-sensitive nature, call (323) 834-9828, or email me ([therapy@alexanderyoo.com](mailto:therapy@alexanderyoo.com)). If you're calling to start teletherapy/distance therapy, in-person therapy, or to obtain an assessment letter, however, please call me. Even with all the availability and immediacy of social media, text, video, and chat, in order to start we need to begin with a phone call. (323) 834-9828.

**Existing Clients:**

- Cancellation: To cancel or reschedule appointments, please call (323) 834-9828. Your weekly appointment(s) times belong to you exclusively. Understandably, life interruptions happen. Please give at least 24 business hours (not including Saturday or Sunday) to cancel or reschedule so the time may be used to help others. Thank you.
- Out of Session Contact and Emergencies: Text can work for appointments and scheduling, but not for emergencies or urgent concerns. If you have an urgent matter that cannot wait until your next scheduled appointment, call my voicemail at (323) 834-9828 and leave

a message. I will try my best to reschedule you for an additional session, as available (in-person or distance therapy/teletherapy).

- In case of mental health emergencies, call me at (323) 834-9828 and indicate 1) the nature of the emergency and 2) your phone number, twice, clearly. If I do not return your call within 20 minutes, please assume I did not get the message. In that case, call a crisis hotline, suicide hotline, 911, or any of the following resources. Call me back and leave a message to indicate that you have done so. (Links below subject to change and are provided for general information only. Alexander Yoo, LMFT assumes no responsibility as to their content, accuracy, or the privacy policies of the agencies listed.)
  - i. The Los Angeles 24-hour Crisis Hotline at (800) 854-7771
  - ii. Your local county Psychiatric Emergency (Response) Team (PET/PERT)
  - iii. 24-hour crisis intervention numbers (based on county) –
    - a. <http://mhsoac.ca.gov/county-mental-health-services>
    - b. <http://www.mhsoac.ca.gov/mhsa-programs-and-services>
  - iv. <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
  - v. <http://suicidehotlines.com/california.html>
  - vi. <http://cancer.ucsf.edu/files/9/9intz2j/CaliforniaCountyMentalHealthDepts.pdf>
  - vii. <http://namila.org/crisis-hotlines-hospitals/>

**Everyone:** I try to check my email daily and social media accounts as often as possible, and it may take 24-48 hours for me to return your message. For appointment-related concerns forego email and social media and call (323) 834-9828. Do not use email, text, or social media in emergencies or times of crises. Most forms of electronic communication including email, video conference, and phone service use high-level encryption; use at your own risk.

- Email, phone, and any other ways of contacting me do not constitute consent to conduct therapy or a therapeutic relationship. (Starting

therapy involves intake forms and signed informed consent with a mutual understanding of legal and practice guidelines).

- Fees: The full fee for an individual therapy session is **\$175**. The fee for couple's therapy (2-person unit) is **\$225** per session. Family therapy fees depend on the specifics of the family. Individuals between the ages of 12-17 consenting to their own therapy are responsible for payment. Fees subject to change. Each session lasts 45-50 minutes.
- Fees may be adjusted per sliding scale (financial circumstances of the client may necessitate a re-evaluation of the fee). Payment is due before or at the time of services for in-person therapy and prior to service for scheduled teletherapy appointments through credit card on file. For credit card payments, please contact me to discuss secure payment options. Occasionally, clients might need or request therapeutic phone calls up to fifteen minutes in length in between scheduled appointments. Calls longer than fifteen minutes will be charged at the same rate as the agreed-upon cost of a regular session; fees will be due either at the next in-person session or through credit card within one business day. You will be required to pay for scheduled teletherapy sessions prior to the session through credit card on file. Fees may vary for site visits, writing and reading of reports, consultation with other professionals, release of information, expert witness, and reading records.

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Client(s) signature(s) _____	Date _____
Client(s) printed name(s) _____	
Therapist Signature _____	Date _____