

# NATSUMI SAWADA, REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGIST

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## INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEPSYCHOLOGY

I offer psychological services using an online audio-video platform with robust security features called [Zoom](#). Telepsychology (or *online therapy*) may provide some advantages over in-person sessions. It may enhance accessibility, convenience, and comfort and it enables people who cannot attend in-person sessions to obtain services.

Telepsychology also comes with risks and limitations not typically encountered during in-person sessions. Nonverbal information may not be noticed by the client or psychologist because communication is occurring through a screen. This may slow down or distort communication and lead to misinterpretations/miscommunications which might need to be clarified. Online therapy requires access to an electronic device and high speed internet services. Online therapy can therefore be negatively affected by technological difficulties/failures (e.g., power outages, time differences, service interruptions, poor connection, technology breakdown, etc). If one of our sessions is interrupted due to technical difficulties less than 40 minutes after the scheduled start time I will charge my prorated fee for the number of minutes of quality online therapy and we will reschedule the session. If a session is interrupted 40 minutes or more after the scheduled start time I will charge the full session fee.

**As with all online communication there is the potential for breaches in privacy and confidentiality with online therapy.** I will protect the security of your personal information to the best of my ability by conducting our online sessions in a private office, by using secure and encrypted audio-video platforms (end to end encryption settings are enabled and recording capabilities are disabled on Zoom), by changing my passwords frequently, and by password protecting my computers and storing them in a secure, locked location. However, any online communication is inherently at risk for a security breach, in part because there is always a chance that online communication could be intercepted or hacked. Furthermore, please note although Zoom currently uses a Canadian data centre for users in Canada, in the event that Zoom's Canadian data centre is down, **Zoom has stated that they will temporarily route data to the US. While Zoom has stringent privacy and security standards, in the event that data is routed outside of Canada, it could be subject to foreign privacy laws. If you do not consent to your data being transmitted/stored outside of Canada please do not consent to doing online therapy with me.**

The risk for breaches in privacy and confidentiality is also higher in online therapy because the client is likely at home where a third party could overhear or interrupt the session or find records of therapy sessions on the client's phone or computer. **Although using a secure, encrypted audio-video platform and email provider mitigates this risk to a degree, it is always greater in telepsychology than during sessions where a psychologist and client are in a private office together.**

**Because of the limitations of online therapy, some treatments may be less effective when provided online. It may also be contraindicated for certain issues or psychological problems**

Initials \_\_\_\_\_

(e.g., where there is risk of harm to a client/someone else and for complex/severe psychological problems). For this reason, it is important that the psychologist and client review on an ongoing basis whether continuing online therapy remains in the client's best interest or whether the client might receive greater benefit from in-person services. Accordingly, if during the course of our therapy I determine that online therapy is no longer the most appropriate option I will let you know, we will discuss, and I will refer you to a treatment provider in your region if one is available. Lastly, it is important to note that although I will attempt to contact your emergency contacts or the appropriate emergency services in your area in the event of a life threatening emergency that necessitates a breach in confidentiality, my ability to do so will be limited if I am providing services to you remotely.

Online therapy necessitates the use of email. I use [G Suite](#) for email, often but not always in combination with an encryption software called Virtru. **While G Suite has stringent privacy and security standards, data transmission and storage occurs outside of Canada and your data could therefore be subject to foreign privacy laws. If you do not consent to your data being transmitted/stored outside of Canada please do not consent to online therapy with me.**

As part of our online therapy I request that you:

- Read the [Zoom Security White Paper](#) and let me know if you have questions/concerns
- Participate from a secure, private location that is quiet and free from distractions
- Secure your computer so that records of our sessions are not found or intercepted a third party (e.g., use password protection, store your computer securely, delete records of our sessions)
- Never record or share any portion of our sessions without prior written permission
- Check whether your insurance will reimburse you for telehealth (not all plans do)

## SIGNATURE

By signing below, I attest that I have read the information above as well as the Zoom Security White Paper and have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the conditions of consent to telepsychology. I also attest that I fully agree and consent to all of the terms and conditions above. I understand that privacy and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in any online communication and I accept this risk. I also understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time by making a request in writing.

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Client Name

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Client Signature

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Date