

**Barbara Fritts, Ph.D.**  
**Licensed Psychologist**



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**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION CONSENT FORM**

I will make every effort to keep all protected health information confidential according to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) guidelines whenever possible, as stated in the privacy and confidentiality policies. However, please be aware that some methods of communication that are frequently used are not fully secure and encrypted to the standards of HIPAA. My email server (gmail) and text communication, for example, are not fully secure. In other words, they are hypothetically accessible by third parties.

**SignNow**

I use SignNow software for ease of paperwork completion and to reduce paper waste. If you prefer not to use electronic signatures, please let me know and I am happy to provide you with physical copies of all forms.

**Venmo**

I offer Venmo as a payment option. My user name is @Barb-Fritts.

**Electronic storage**

All of my files are stored electronically on my laptop computer which is password protected. No one has access to these files except me. I back-up my files on an external hard drive and also on the Google Drive cloud service. Google Drive is a HIPAA compliant service. Some of my older paper files are also stored in a locked storage cabinet in my office.

**Email**

I routinely use email as a form of communication for logistical and scheduling purposes.

**Text Messaging**

Because text messaging is a very unsecure and impersonal mode of communication, I do not text message to nor do I respond to text messages from anyone in treatment with me. Please do not text message me unless we have made other arrangements.

**Social Media**

I do not communicate with, or contact, any of my clients through social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. In addition, if I discover that I have accidentally established an online relationship with you, I will cancel that relationship. These types of casual social contacts can create significant security risks for you and are a breach of professional boundaries.

I participate on various social networks, but not in my professional capacity. If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter me by accident. If that occurs, please discuss it with me during our time together. I believe that any communications with clients online have a high potential to compromise the professional relationship. In addition, please do not try to contact me in this way. I will not respond and will terminate any online contact.

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### **Websites**

I have a website that you are free to access. I use it for professional reasons to provide information to others about me and my practice. You are welcome to access and review the information that I have on my website and, if you have questions about it, we should discuss this during your therapy sessions.

### **Web Searches**

I will not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission. I believe that this violates your privacy rights; however, I understand that you might choose to gather information about me in this way. In this day and age there is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the internet, much of which may actually be known to that person and some of which may be inaccurate or unknown. If you encounter any information about me through web searches, or in any other fashion for that matter, please discuss this with me during our time together so that we can deal with it and its potential impact on your treatment.

Recently it has become fashionable for clients to review their health care provider on various websites. Unfortunately, mental health professionals cannot respond to such comments and related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews of me or any professional with whom you are working, please share it with me so we can discuss it and its potential impact on your therapy. Please do not rate my work with you while we are in treatment together on any of these websites. It has a significant potential to damage our ability to work together.

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### **Acknowledgment of Receipt of Electronic Consent**

I have been advised and understand that the use of email and other forms of technology in psychotherapy has not been defined as a best-practice strategy. I have also been specifically advised of the following:

1. Email communication with Barbara Fritts, Ph.D. may be used for the purpose of simplifying and expediting scheduling/administrative matters.
2. Email communication is NOT to be used to provide/receive treatment services or take the place of therapy sessions. Therefore, email/texting should NOT be used to communicate:
  - Suicidal or homicidal thoughts or plans
  - Urgent or emergency issues
  - Serious or severe side effects or concerns
  - Rapidly worsening symptoms
3. In a life-threatening emergency, clients should:
  - Call 911
  - Proceed to the nearest hospital emergency room
  - And/or call a crisis hotline such as 512-472-HELP or 1-800-SUICIDE
4. Any information exchanged electronically or with the use of technology increases the risk of confidentiality breaches. No technology is 100% secure and the therapist cannot guarantee protection from unauthorized attempts to access, use, or disclose personal information exchanged electronically.

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By signing, I consent to the use of email as needed for scheduling and administrative purposes only, within the guidelines above. If more urgent help is needed, I will utilize the crisis services listed above in Line 3. Furthermore, if at any time my therapist or I believe email/texting is interfering in my therapeutic process or being used ineffectively, either of us can revoke this consent verbally, refuse to respond to emails/texts, and insist upon a verbal conversation before proceeding.

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Client Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_