

# Liz Mau, MS, LP

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## River Woods Counseling Services

### USE OF EMAIL AND TEXT MESSAGING FOR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

HIPPA stands for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. It was passed by the US government in 1996 to establish privacy and security protections for health information. The regulation requires that email be encrypted during transit.

Your stored health information is protected on my computer system. Any emails sent to you or received from you via my email address is encrypted with Transport Layer Security (TLS). This means that while the email is in transit, it is encrypted and delivered securely. However, if the email is from a domain that does not support TLS, the email will not be sent, and you will receive a non-delivery report. In that case, we will be unable to use email to communicate.

#### Risks of using email and text messaging for Protected Health Information

Email can be a very convenient mode of communication regarding scheduling and minor issues about your care. However, it is important for you to understand the risks involved.

- Emails can be easily misaddressed and sent to and unintended recipient.
- Backup copies of emails may exist even after the sender and recipient have deleted the copy.
- Employers and on-line services have a right to inspect emails sent through their company systems.
- Emails can be intercepted, altered, forwarded or used without authorization or detection.
- Emails can be used as evidence in court.
- Non-TLS emails may not be secure and therefore it is possible that the confidentiality of the communication may be breached by a third party.

#### Conditions for the use of email and text messaging

This therapist will use reasonable means to maintain security and confidentiality of email information sent and received. This therapist is not liable for improper disclosure of confidential information that is not caused by this therapist's intentional misconduct. As a client, you acknowledge and consent to the following conditions:

- Email/text messages are a convenience and are not appropriate for emergencies or time-sensitive issues. This therapist cannot guarantee that an email/text message will be read and responded to within any particular period of time.
- Highly sensitive or personal information should not be communicated by email/text message (i.e. diagnosis, social security number, credit card number).
- Emails/text messages should be concise. The client should schedule an appointment for any complex or sensitive information.
- Clinically relevant messages and responses will become part of your permanent medical record.
- This therapist will not forward a client's messages without written consent, except as required by law.
- Therapist is not liable for breaches of confidentiality caused by the client or any third party or This by technical errors or failures.

#### Client Acknowledgement and Agreement

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I understand the risks associated with the communication of email/text messaging between my therapist and me. I consent to the conditions and instructions outlined above.

Client/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_