

John A. Watterson, Ph.D.

## **Authorization for email/online/texting communication**

This form includes the Communication Guidelines for my practice. By giving authorization on the signature page at the end of this guideline, you give consent to be contacted by phone for administrative and treatment-related purposes. You may also give your consent to be contacted by text for appointment reminders.

My email address is [johnawatterson@gmail.com](mailto:johnawatterson@gmail.com). You may use this email for scheduling, billing, or administrative purposes. By contacting me by email, you give consent for me to respond to you and to initiate new emails for administrative and treatment-related purposes.

Email, texting, and online applications can be useful and convenient ways to communicate for both treatment and administrative purposes. I will utilize all reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of all communications via email, text and online applications. However, it is impossible to guarantee the security and confidentiality of communications that occur with these methods. Should confidential information be improperly disclosed - through no fault of my office - I will not be liable for such disclosures.

Transmitting confidential information by email can involve a number of risks, including, but not limited to the following:

- \* Mis-delivery of emails or texts to an incorrectly typed address or phone number.
- \* Email and online accounts can be hacked.
- \* Email is easier to falsify than handwritten or signed documents.
- \* Backup copies of email, texts, and online platform data may exist even after the sender or recipient has deleted his/her copy.
- \* Employers and on-line servers have a right to archive and inspect emails, texts, and online communications transmitted through their systems.
- \* Information sent via emails, texts, and online applications can be intercepted, altered, forwarded, or used without authorization or detection.
- \* Email and online applications can be used to introduce viruses into computer systems.
- \* Emails, texts, and online communications of all types can be used as evidence in court.

All emails and texts to or from patients concerning psychological treatment will be filed as part of the patient record. As part of the record, other individuals authorized to access the record, such as staff or billing personnel, will also have access to private health information.

**Communication via email, text, or online applications should not be used for medical emergencies.**

You have the option of choosing whether to communicate with my office via email, texting, or online applications and what information you wish to communicate. **You do not have to consent to communication via email, texting or online applications** - you may communicate via phone call or U.S. mail. You may revoke any permission given at any time by writing my office.

By consenting to communicate through email, text, online platforms or applications, you also agree to the following responsibilities:

- If you send a communication that requires or invites a response, and I do not respond within a reasonable timeframe, it is your responsibility to notify my office that communication back to you has not been received. You cannot assume that your initial communication to me was received.
- It is your responsibility to schedule appointments.
- My office phone (512-306-0663) is a land-line that does not receive text messages.
- To the extent possible, you should not use email, texting, or online applications to make disclosures about sensitive medical information such as mental health treatment, drug, alcohol or substance abuse, information related to AIDS and HIV, and genetic information.
- It is your responsibility to inform me of any changes to your communication preferences including changes in mailing address, phone number, email address, or online account usernames.
- **By signing the authorization page, you give consent to be contacted by text and email, for the purposes and under the guidelines stated above. Consent can be revoked in writing at any time.**

### Social Media

Requests to connect from current or former clients on social media networking sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+ or other sites or apps will not be accepted. This prevents communications that might compromise privacy and confidentiality. Please do not communicate with me via any social media sites.

I have a professional Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/johnawattersonphd>. This account is used to share research and general information about psychology, marriage therapy and couples counseling.

### Blog

I maintain a professional blog about psychology topics and the practice of marriage therapy and couples counseling at [www.johnwatterson.com/blog](http://www.johnwatterson.com/blog). Clients are welcome to read my blog, comment and sign up for email notifications. Please be mindful that - similar to social media - leaving any comments on my blog may compromise your confidentiality. Any comments that divulge personal information will be edited at my discretion.

### Business Review Sites

At present I have not listed my practice on any review sites such as Google Place and Yelp. However, some business review sites add mental health practitioners without that professional's knowledge. If you encounter my practice on a business review site it is not a request for testimonials, ratings or endorsements from any of my current or former clients. You have the right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality guidelines, I cannot respond to any review on any site regardless of whether it is positive or negative. As stated previously - with review sites - like other online communications, there are privacy risks.

## John Watterson, Ph.D. - Signature Page

### Electronic and Telecommunication Authorization

I recognize that technology is ever-evolving and that electronic communications cannot be fully protected from unauthorized interception. Understanding the risks of electronic communication via email or texting, I have indicated my preferences and consent for the following communications methods:

I give my consent for Dr. Watterson to communicate with me by email \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no using the following email address: \_\_\_\_\_ .

I give my consent for Dr. Watterson to send me appointment reminders via text message \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no to the following cell phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Consent can be revoked in writing at any time.

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signature