

# TEMPORARY ADDENDUM TO VAIL PLACE INFORMED CONSENT

## PROVISION OF SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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To minimize public health risks associated with the virus (COVID-19) and the national public health emergency, Vail Place is limiting the provision of in-person services from March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 until further notice. During this time, employees will encourage individuals receiving our services to take care of their health and continue receiving Vail Place services over the phone or virtually.

- Individuals will be contacted in order to inform them of the suspension of in-person services.
- “Virtual” services refer to services provided through video conferencing software, with the verbal consent of the individual or their legal guardian.
- Individuals will be given the option to engage in virtual services and will be required to provide verbal consent to this form of communication in order to engage in these services.
- Verbal consent will be accepted in place of signature when individuals consent to services at Intake, consent to receive virtual services, or wish to authorize the release of information to coordinate services both verbally and in writing.
- When the option of in-person services becomes available again, all individuals who gave verbal consent and wish to continue services will be notified. At that time, individuals will need to provide signature for a written consent in order to continue services.

### **THIS ADDENDUM COVERS THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO CURRENT PRACTICES:**

#### **USE OF VIDEO CONFERENCING TO RECEIVE SERVICES**

- There are potential benefits to receiving services through video conferencing or phone during this time. Two main benefits are: 1) we can initiate or continue to provide necessary mental health services, including talking about how you are doing and what may be helpful for you during this time of the virus, and 2) we reduce the health risks for you and for the general public (everyone) by minimizing personal contact and the potential spread of illness.
- There are potential risks to receiving services this way, including limits to confidentiality. There is a small risk for phone and video conferencing communications to be intercepted or disrupted (e.g., cut off due to lost internet connection). Vail Place will use only secure programs for these meetings, however there is always a small risk that confidentiality of any electronic communication can be broken or compromised. This applies to email, phone, and text messages that you send every day as well; it is not new to this time or situation. While Vail Place providers will provide services in private spaces and take all precautions to maintain the confidentiality of the phone/video conference/email/text communications with you, Vail Place cannot guarantee that such communications will not be intercepted.
- Confidentiality still applies for video conferencing services, and Vail Place will not record the session. The Vail Place provider will be in a private space and make every effort to avoid or minimize interruptions. This also applies to interpreters.
- If you are using email to receive video conferencing appointment links, you should only respond to emails that come from addresses previously identified to you by Vail Place. *This will include your staff contact’s first initial and last name @vailplace.org – for example, [jdoe@vailplace.org](mailto:jdoe@vailplace.org)*

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- Vail Place has identified Microsoft Teams as our main video conferencing tool. This is a secure, HIPAA-compliant form of communication. Other video conferencing options that may be added will maintain secure standards.
- Your Vail Place provider will explain how to access and use the video conferencing tool. The provider will schedule the appointment, and you will receive a link by email or text.
- You will need to use a webcam (laptop with a camera) or smartphone during the video conferencing session.
- It is important to not be in a public place (library, café) and to be in a space that is as quiet and private as possible during the session. It is preferred to use a secure internet connection.
- If you have a legal guardian, we need the permission of your legal guardian for you to participate in video conference sessions.

### EMAILING AND TEXTING PRIVATE INFORMATION

- Vail Place's standard recommendation is to use texting and email with caution since they are not typically secure forms of communication.
- During this time, we may use text and email more frequently to help coordinate your services since we won't be able to meet with you in person. However, we will continue to be cautious about communicating private information. If you have questions, please ask a Vail Place employee.
- You can always decline communication through text or email.

### VERBAL CONSENT

- Verbal consent will be accepted in place of written signatures. Employees will review all documents with you over the phone and documents will be available to view on the Vail Place website. Paper copies can be mailed by request.
- Records will include the statement, "Consent obtained verbally due to current health and safety concerns related to COVID-19 pandemic. Vail Place will make efforts to obtain new forms with written signatures once we return to face to face service delivery."
- You can revoke consent to this addendum at any time. If consent is revoked or not given, services may be interrupted during the time that Vail Place staff and many others are working remotely due to the public health emergency. We encourage you to try video conferencing or other communication methods while we are not able to see you in person.
- If you give verbal consent for communication with other service providers or members of your care team, you may withdraw consent at any time.