

# Online Therapy Institute Verification

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**Version 1.1 (March 2010). Please also see Notes document 1.1(N)**

**We encourage ALL Online Therapy Institute Verification applicants to read through the applicable OTI Ethical Framework. We believe that whether you offer products, build services or conduct services, a fundamental understanding of the ethics involved in the delivery of mental health information and services is paramount.**

**Please address the points below that are applicable to the categories you selected on the application form. If you have queries, please consult the notes to see if they address them before contacting us at [info@onlinetherapyinstitute.com](mailto:info@onlinetherapyinstitute.com)**

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## **1. Client Services (therapy, counselling/counseling, coaching)**

### **1.1 Security/Compliance**

All data must be encrypted, including contact forms or an initial questionnaire where used

The service must have a clear protocol for security breaches

The service should follow security/confidentiality standards within their jurisdiction

Required notices should be available on the website

The service should perform daily back-ups on a remote server. Private practitioners should be sure files in their possession are stored securely via encryption on a hard drive or flash drive and/or backed up to a remote server

### **1.2 Safety/ethics**

The service must provide an emergency number or website on the home page for clients in crisis

The service must explain the pros and cons of online therapy and indicate when it may be inappropriate, signposting further resources

The service must make informed consent/terms of use accessible from the website. Practitioners who utilize an e-clinic to practice independently must be able to tailor the informed consent/terms to their own practice as appropriate.

The service must have a public ethics policy, which may be created or adopted through professional affiliations

Professional affiliations must be listed on the website.

Clients who access services may not be allowed to remain anonymous past an initial appointment setting consultation. Instant access to therapists and coaches should be used as part of the initial screening and not as a way to conduct coaching or therapy.

A phone number or VOiP number must be listed on your website as an additional form of contact

A mailing address must be listed on your website for the purposes of redress correspondence

### **1.3    *Licensing/Certification***

Where jurisdiction requires you to have a license or certification, verifiable information must be posted on your website, via hyperlinks where possible

E-Clinic services should authenticate that providers are licensed and in good standing, and indicate how this is verified to potential service users

All providers should carry malpractice insurance and specifically ensure that they are covered to practice online

### **1.4    *Training***

The provider should list training related to online therapy or coaching on the website

### **Therapist/Coach Directory**

The service must provide an emergency number or website on the home page for clients in crisis

If the directory offers contact via the directory site to the practitioner, the contact form must be secure and encrypted

If the directory offers the ability for consumers to “rate” services or give comments, the listing or site owner should have the ability to moderate comments or disable the feature

### **Social Network**

The service must provide an emergency number or website on the home page for clients in crisis

The social network must discourage the use of an open and public forum for the purposes of consultation and referral among professionals

The social network should allow members to moderate/modify their own blog and forum comments

The Social Network must discourage discussing or referencing client information in blog posts and forums unless the forum is private, secure and encrypted.

### **Blog**

The service must provide an emergency number or website on the home page for clients in crisis

The Blog administrator must moderate comments to avoid personal or sensitive information being posted

The Blogger must avoid discussing or referencing client information

The Blogger must offer identity and contact information

Where appropriate, the Blogger must offer accurate and cited information and/or delineate Blogger’s opinion.

The subject and “intention” of the blog must be obvious to the reader

### **Peer Support**

The service must provide an emergency number or website on the home page for clients in crisis

All Peer-to-Peer communication must be encrypted

The service should either offer training to peer volunteers or recommend compulsory access to third party training for peer volunteers

### **Self Help**

All information must be accurate, cited and referenced appropriately

The owner of the website must be identified with contact information

The service must provide an emergency number or website on the home page for clients in crisis

Where the self-help website offers consumer access (e.g. journal writing, mood tracking, testing), this must be encrypted

### **Practice Building/Marketing**

Practice Building websites that assist practitioners in marketing their services via the Internet and traditional means understand the unique ethical considerations for online therapists

Practice Building websites that assist practitioners in marketing their services via the Internet and traditional means understand the ethical responsibilities practitioners have in maintaining a professional web presence

Products and services such as website builds, form makers, virtual assistants and encrypted products take into account the unique ethical considerations for online therapists

The service must provide an emergency number or website on the home page for clients in crisis

### **Supervision/Consultation**

Supervision and consultation services follow the same points as Client Services

All supervision and consultation services, whether peer consultation and referral or formal clinical supervision, shall be encrypted.

## **Education/Professional Development**

Sites offering education about therapy, administration and/or support must offer or recommend courses that demonstrate best practice in the fields of psychology and mental health

Sites offering education about therapy, administration and/or support must provide an emergency number or website on the home page for people in crisis

Sites offering education about therapy, administration and/or support must state clearly the qualifications of the trainers/instructors with verifiable links as appropriate

A phone number or VOiP number must be listed on your website as an additional form of contact

A mailing address must be listed on your website for the purposes of redress correspondence

Professional organizations should specifically state as a minimum on the website their aims and objectives, membership policies, and their complaints procedures

## **Crisis Intervention**

Crisis intervention services must clearly state the boundaries and parameters of the service on the website

It must be made clear that anonymous clients should be accessing crisis services and not contracted counseling services on the website

The service must provide an emergency number or website on the home page for clients in crisis even if a dedicated crisis service