



Counselor, Social Worker & Marriage and Family Therapist Board

77 South High Street, 24th Floor, Room 2468
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6171
614-466-0912 & Fax 614-728-7790

<http://cswmft.ohio.gov> & cswmft.info@cswb.ohio.gov

Consumer Information Regarding Electronic Service Delivery 4757-5-13 Standards of practice and professional conduct: electronic service delivery (internet, email, teleconference, etc.).

The Ohio Counselor, Social Worker & Marriage and Family Therapist Board (OCSWMFTB) provides the following information to Ohio consumers who choose to receive services using electronic means (e.g., “e-therapy” or online/internet therapy, etc.).

Individuals who provide counseling, social work, or marriage and family therapy services, either in person, or electronically are required by Ohio law to be licensed by the OCSWMFTB. The licenses issued by the OCSWMFTB to Ohio counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists who have met and maintained legally required qualifications are intended to safeguard Ohio consumers against unauthorized, unqualified, and improper practices and also to identify the scope and limitations of authorized practices.

The licenses and credentials issued by the OCSWMFTB authorize Ohio counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists to practice within the State of Ohio. However, an

Ohio counselor, social worker, and marriage and family therapist who otherwise engages in ESD with a non-Ohio client in another state or country, must also be authorized to practice in the jurisdiction where that client is located. Because the licensing laws and regulations for practicing will vary from one state to another, non-Ohio consumers seeking ESD should require confirmation from their provider that he or she is authorized in that particular location to provide ESD.

A counselor, social worker, and/or marriage and family therapist who uses electronic means to provide services shall abide by all regulations of their professional practice, understanding that their practice may be subject to regulation in both the jurisdiction in which the client receives services and the jurisdiction in which he or she provides those services.

Cautious consumers seeking ESD should consider the following:

1. Verify that the practitioner has a current and valid license in the State of Ohio.
2. A person who provides services using the Internet shall have a web site, which must include information relative to the license the licensee holds, his or her physical location, his or her contact information, contact information for the licensing Board(s) and display of licensure. See 4756.13 Prominent display of license <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/4757.13>
3. Understand the fee that you will pay for the services rendered.

4. Fully comprehend how and to whom the fee is paid.
5. Be satisfied with the methods used to ensure the confidentiality of communication with and by the provider.
6. Make yourself aware of the risks and benefits of receiving the services so you can make an informed choice about the services provided.

Per paragraph (B) of rule 4757-5-02 of the Administrative Code, counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists shall provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship with a valid informed consent. Licensees shall inform clients/consumers of services the extent and nature of services available to them, as well as the limits, rights, opportunities and obligations associated with the services to be provided which might affect the decisions of clients/consumers of services to enter into or continue the relationship.

1. Licensees and registrants shall use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purposes of services, limits to the services due to legal requirements, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, the clients' rights to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent.
2. If a client, because of age or mental condition, is not competent to provide informed consent the licensee will obtain consent from the parent, guardian, or court appointed representative. Best professional practice dictates that a counselor, social worker, or marriage and family therapist shall adhere to the court documents. A counselor, social worker, or marriage and family therapist who does not understand the court document shall contact the court for clarification before proceeding with treatment.
3. Licensees shall use clear and understandable language when discussing issues related to informed consent.

If you have complaints about professional services from a counselor, social worker and/or marriage and family therapist contact the:

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