



## Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine

# Frequently Asked Questions *From Parents*



### **How do I talk to my child about their therapy session?**

Sessions can be different for every child. Some children will feel comfortable sharing what was said, while others are more private. It is important to not pressure your child to talk about their sessions. Should your child threaten harm to themselves or others, you will be contacted by the therapist. It is important to remember that progress takes time, and children must be allowed to work at their own pace to build a trusting, therapeutic relationship that will result in lasting changes.



### **Are the TCHATT counselors certified?**

All of our counselors have a master's degree and are licensed, with an array of skills and certifications unique to each counselor. Any certifications will be taken into consideration for referrals based on the needs of your child.



### **Does my child really need therapy?**

If your child has been referred to TCHATT, it is because there are some signs that could indicate a concern. Part of this program is to understand some of the concerns that have been presented and what factors are in play for your child. In the first session, the therapist will talk with your child, and preferably you as well, to get a clear picture whether or not therapy is recommended. If it is, the therapist will explain how they think therapy can provide a positive change.



### **What are some signs my child may need therapy?**

Changes in mood or behavior, feelings of anxiety or high stress, challenges in relationships, and thoughts of suicide or self-injury are a few signs your child may need therapy. While there could be many reasons for these types of symptoms, they are often signs indicating a problem in coping with a certain circumstance.



### **How much will this cost me?**

All TCHATT sessions are provided at no cost. Should TCHATT recommend a referral to establish care with a medical or mental health provider, the cost would be based on the organization's fee schedule. The therapist will discuss any referrals with you prior to a referral being placed. Should insurance or any financial hardships be involved, the therapist will take that into account when placing a referral recommendation. Any referrals or recommendations made by the TCHATT therapist are optional and will be left to your discretion as the child's parent/legal guardian.



### **How much communication will I have with the school?**

Initially, the school liaison will assist in scheduling the sessions with your child. Should you want the school to be more involved, you will need to sign a release of information form. As the parent/legal guardian, you have the right to dictate how much information, if any, will be shared. However, if your child is threatening to harm themselves or others, we are ethically bound to ensure they are safe, which may mean breaching confidentiality to get help.



### **What about confidentiality?**

We are bound by very strict ethical guidelines that include keeping certain information confidential. If your child is under the age of 18, you have a legal right to know what is said in their sessions. However, since the basis of therapy depends on trust, we ask that you respect your child's confidentiality and know that the therapist will share any information that could indicate harm toward your child. Confidentiality could be broken if your child states they intend to harm themselves or someone else, or if a court has ordered a release of information. Your child's information will remain in our HIPAA-compliant system and will not be released to anyone you do not authorize. You will always have a right to release information to another party, but it must be done with official documentation.



### **How will my child's information remain confidential?**

All of the information with TCHATT is stored within HIPAA-compliant systems. Our therapists are well-trained in ensuring that confidentiality is not breached unless there is a threat of potential harm. In order to release any information about your child, you would have to sign a form giving permission for that to happen. If someone calls to confirm if your child is a patient, all we can say is "we can neither confirm nor deny they are a patient with us."



### **What if my child needs or currently takes medication?**

At the beginning of treatment we will gather information about any medications your child is currently taking. Should they need medication, consultations will be available to discuss the best method of treatment. It is possible for TCHATT psychiatrists to prescribe medication, but it is determined on a case-by-case basis. TCHATT works with other programs that might be able to assist in getting your child established with providers for medication assistance if needed. They may also work with your child's physician to help consult on medication options. To help make this determination, TCHATT will conduct a treatment team meeting to discuss options and recommended course of treatment.



### **What about referrals for additional counseling or other resources?**

Our therapists are versed and connected with community resources. Should they feel a referral is warranted, they will discuss it with you. We are continuously identifying resources and ensuring they are accurate and up to date. Our team will make every effort to pair your child with a counseling service that will accept your insurance or a provider that will work with your financial situation to ensure your child can continue to receive the healthcare they need.



### **If my child is referred to another counselor, how do we get their records from the TCHATT therapist?**

Upon arrival at the new therapist's office, you will be asked to sign a release of information that will then be sent to our medical records department, who will get the requested documents sent to the proper location.



### **We have joint-managing conservatorship. Who makes the decision for counseling?**

It is very important to have a working relationship with both parents/legal guardians so we can be open and honest about what is going on with your child. In cases where there is joint custody, a document indicating which parent/legal guardian has the legal right to make medical decisions may be requested.



### **How soon will my child be seen?**

We hope to have your child seen within a week of all documentation being signed and returned.



### **Can I get official evaluations?**

The TCHATT team will utilize assessments and/or screening tools to get a clear picture of what your child is experiencing. If more extensive evaluation is needed, a referral can be placed.



### **Are there any benefits for our family?**

We encourage you to take part in your child's sessions. The TCHATT provider may be able to share coping skills that not only help your child, but may help your family as well.