**Authorization for Electronic Communication**

**W Schaffer & Associates Electronic Communication Policy**

In order to maintain clarity regarding our use of electronic modes of communication during your treatment, W Schaffer & Associates has prepared the following policy. This is because the use of various types of electronic communications is common in our society, and many individuals believe this is the preferred method of communication with others, whether their relationships are social or professional. Many of these common modes of communication, however, put your privacy at risk and can be inconsistent with the law and with the standards of our profession. Consequently, this policy has been prepared to assure the security and confidentiality of your treatment and to assure that it is consistent with ethics and the law.

**Email and Text Communications**

We use email and text communication only with your permission and only for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. That means that email exchanges and text messages should be limited to things like setting and changing appointments, billing matters and other related issues. Please do not email or text about clinical matters because email is not a secure way of communication. If you need to discuss a clinical matter, please feel free to call to discuss it on the phone or wait so it can be discussed during your therapy session. The telephone or face-to-face context simply is much more secure as a mode of communication.

**Social Media**

It is W Schaffer & Associates’ policy to not communicate with, or contact, any of our patients through social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. In addition, if an online relationship was established with you, that relationship will be cancelled. This is because these types of casual social contacts can create significant security risks for you.

Many of our W Schaffer & Associates therapists participate on various social networks, but not in a professional capacity. If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter a W Schaffer & Associates therapist by accident. If that occurs, please discuss it with your therapist during your time together. W Schaffer & Associates believes that any communications with patients online have a high potential to compromise the professional relationship. In addition, please do not try to contact your therapist in this way.

W Schaffer & Associates as a professional group practice has social media accounts and we would encourage you to follow these accounts as you wish to.

**Websites**

W Schaffer & Associates has a website that you are free to access. It is for professional reasons to provide information to others about our practice. You are welcome to access and review the information on our website and, if you have questions about it, please discuss with your therapist during your therapy sessions.

**Web Searches**

It is W Schaffer & Associates’ policy to not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission. We believe that this violates your privacy rights; however, we understand that you might choose to gather information about our therapists in this way. There is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the internet, much of which may actually be known to that person and some of which may be inaccurate or unknown. If you encounter any information about our therapists through web searches, or in any other fashion for that matter, please discuss this with your therapist during your time together so that you and your therapist can discuss its potential impact on your treatment.

Some use the internet to review their health care provider on various websites. Unfortunately, mental health professionals cannot respond to such comments and related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews of your W Schaffer & Associates, please share it with your therapist so it can be discussed and its potential impact on your therapy. Please do not rate your work with your therapist with you while you are in treatment together on any of these websites. This is because it has a significant potential to damage you and your therapist’s ability to work together.

**By signing below:**indicates that I have read and understand the information in this form.

Signature: Date: