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**St. Louis DBT, LLC**

Phone Coaching Agreement

**Rational for phone coaching:** Not all therapy can be done within the context of individual and group sessions. Sometimes, it is necessary for you to call for phone coaching, especially in crisis situations when your urges to engage in harmful behaviors are very high. Telephone calls between sessions to the primary therapist are encouraged in DBT.

**Reasons for phone coaching:**

• Reinforce appropriate help-seeking behavior (versus using suicide attempts or self-injuring behavior).

• Practice changing ineffective ways of asking for help

• Generalize DBT skills to everyday life

• Report successes to the therapist

**Goals of phone coaching:**

• Decreasing suicidal crisis behaviors

• Increase application of skills to everyday life

• Reinforcing successful skill use

• Resolve interpersonal crises, alienation, and sense of distance

**What to expect from phone coaching calls:**

• Calls are brief, generally ten to fifteen minutes

• The call must occur before a self-injurious behavior has occurred; a phone call is no longer useful after a patient has engaged in self-injurious behavior,

• The therapist will be following the Phone Coaching Protocol, which you should review with your individual therapist. After a brief description of the current situation, the therapist will discuss skills that have been tried and review other skills that might help.

• Phone coaching calls are not meant for analyzing or solving a crisis. They are to assist you in getting through the crisis without using ineffective behaviors so that analyzing and solving can be done in the next therapy session.

• To assist in generalizing skills, you may call for a brief check-in when there is no crisis situation.

• Your individual therapist will discuss procedures for calling, including how to reach her most effectively, how long you can expect to wait for a call back, and what to do while waiting for a return call. Please be aware that there will almost certainly be some times when your therapist will not be able to return your call for several hours.

**24-Hour rule:**

• Following self-harming behaviors, you are not allowed to call for phone coaching, or to contact your individual therapist in other ways, for a 24-hour period. However, you can and should attend scheduled appointments, even during these 24 hours.

• If you do call during the 24-hour period following self-harming behaviors, you will be instructed to contact other resources and the call will end.

• You are expected to call for phone coaching before you engage in ineffective or self-harming behaviors. Calling after engaging in these behaviors is not appropriate. The therapist can only be helpful before you use these behaviors because, in essence, afterwards you have already taken care of your distress by engaging in ineffective behaviors.

I have read and understand St. Louis DBT’s policies and procedures for telephone coaching.

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