

## What Clients Need to Know

### E-Mail and Text Communication

For administrative purposes, Lumenus uses email communication to schedule, confirm and/or cancel appointments. Additionally, we will send non-identifying client information such as consent forms, information sheets (e.g., details to schedule video-sessions), home practice suggestions, resources etc. Lumenus may also use text communication for these same purposes.

**Potential Benefits of Electronic communication:** Allows for delivery of information, scheduling of appointments and general administration relating to your child's services

**Potential Risks of Electronic communication:** Your child's privacy is important to us and his/her health information will be kept secure. As with any service, there may be potential risks associated with the use of email or texts. These risks include, but may not be limited to:

- The privacy and security of email and text communication cannot be guaranteed.
- Employers and online services may have a legal right to inspect and keep emails or texts passing through their systems.
- Emails and texts can be intercepted, forwarded, circulated, stored or even changed without the knowledge or permission of either the sender or recipient.
- Copies of an email or text may continue to exist, even after reasonable efforts to delete it have been made.
- Someone other than the account holder may send an email or text in the account holder's name, and this impersonation may not be detected by the recipient.
- Emails or texts may carry computer viruses that may damage computer data or software or disclose information against a person's wishes.
- Emails or texts may be accidentally sent to an unintended recipient, or to many such recipients.
- Emails or texts may be disclosed to third parties or to the public, regardless of the intentions of the receiver or sender.

As with any service, you can withdraw your consent to communicate by e-mail or text at any time. If your e-mail address or cell number changes, please promptly inform your clinician.

### Telepractice

Telepractice is the delivery of services using technology, when the clinician and client are not in the same physical location. Typically, these sessions take place using computers and tablet devices using an online platform (e.g., Zoom or Microsoft Teams). Sessions may take place in an individual or group format (e.g., parent workshops). If you do not have access to technology or prefer not use to use an online platform, telephone appointments can also be arranged.

## **How will my telepractice appointment work?**

For appointments through an online platform: Before your appointment, you will receive an email with a link to your video session. At the time of your appointment, when you click on the link, your video session will automatically open. You will be visible to (and able to see) your clinician. You may need to make sure your microphone is enabled before the session. Try your best to be in a quiet place. Please set up your camera so that your clinician can see you and the area where you'll be with your child!

For group sessions, if your camera and microphone are turned on, others in the group will be able to see and hear you. You can choose to turn your camera and/or microphone off.

For telephone appointments: The clinician will arrange a time to call you on the phone. At the arranged time, the clinician will call you at the number you have provided. The number may say that it is coming from a private/blocked caller. Please answer this call.

## **What do I need to be able to use telepractice?**

For appointments through an online platform: You can open the link to your session on a smartphone, tablet or computer. You will need a device with a camera and a microphone. You will also need a connection to the internet. We want you to be aware of your internet usage limits. If you do not have unlimited data/Wi-Fi allowances you may incur overage charges from your cell phone/internet provider. If you have concerns or questions, please contact your provider.

For telephone appointments: You will need a telephone with phone service. Please be aware of your phone plan. If you do not have unlimited minutes, or if you are calling from a long distance number, you may incur charges.

## **What are the potential benefits of telepractice sessions? They include:**

1. The clinician can support your child's development by focusing on caregiver-child interactions so that caregivers have the tools they need and are able to implement strategies at home that will help their child reach their goals. It will also allow for learning in your child's natural environment.
2. It allows for intervention when in-person appointments are not available. Telepractice has been proven to be an effective mode of service provision for a range of presenting needs.
3. It allows clinicians to be able to continue to provide early intervention. It is beneficial to your child to begin services as soon as possible.

## **What are the potential risks of telepractice? These risks include, but may not be limited to:**

1. The internet connection used may not be sufficient for a successful video session (e.g. poor picture or sound quality, dropped connections, or background audio interference). In which case we will attempt to problem solve and discuss alternatives (e.g. phone consultation).



2. Our agency is committed to meeting the highest standards of ethics with respect to the collection, use, security and disclosure of personal information. We are committed to meeting or exceeding the privacy standards established by relevant legislation, including Ontario's Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA 2004).

Although no electronic communication is completely secure or risk free, the following security procedures will minimize risk:

For both telephone and video sessions (using an online platform):

- We will confirm that we have the correct client when beginning each session. We will also confirm your address in case there is an emergency.
- **Neither the clinician, nor the client, will record or capture images of the session** unless consent is obtained. If any recordings do occur they will be considered confidential health information and will be handled as such. All information from the sessions will be documented in your regular client chart.
- Sessions will be conducted in a manner to maximize protecting client privacy. This includes the use of headphones as required, finding a quiet space away from other people, being aware of camera range for video sessions etc. Clients will be informed of the presence of other individuals as needed (e.g. for technical support, clinical supervision, education, etc.). We strongly recommend that families follow this practice as well.

Additionally, for video sessions:

- We will use secure software programs to conduct the sessions. Each staff member will have their own account, will not share passwords, and will sign out of the program when the session is done.
- You will be provided with a direct link to join the session or a meeting ID code and password.
- All sessions will be locked once it begins so no one else can join.
- No personal health information (including the client's name) will be used in the meeting title.
- Computers used by the staff member will be password protected, have up-to-date antivirus software and a supported operation system. We strongly recommend that families follow this practice as well.
- We will ensure that the internet connection used by the staff member will be a known, private and a trusted connection. Their WIFI connectivity will be password protected and encrypted. We strongly recommend that families follow this practice as well.

3. Additional Risks for Group Sessions:

- If your video is turned on, others in the group will be able to see you. If you don't want to be seen, please leave your video off. We will do our best to try to ensure it does not get turned on.
- If your microphone is turned on, others in the group will be able to hear anything within your microphone range. Please keep your microphone muted if you are not speaking.



- Depending on the group format, others may be able to see your name when you enter the workshop. To help maintain confidentiality please do not enter your full name. For example, use your first name and the first initial of your last name (e.g., John S).
- Others in the group session will be able to hear any discussions/questions you have about your child. If you enter information into the group chat, this information will be able to be seen by other participants. To help maintain confidentiality, we ask that any information about a participant or child discussed during the workshop stays in the workshop. It is not to be shared with others. If you are not comfortable sharing information in a group setting, we are happy to connect with you outside of the group to have a private conversation.
- Although we ask that all information in the sessions remain confidential, the agency does not have control over whether other families or caregivers comply with this request.

In addition to the details above, the information in the Lumenus – Preschool Speech and Language Consent to Service form also applies to virtual services. This document can be reviewed with you again if that would be helpful.

As with all services, you have the right to withdraw consent at any time

### **Electronic Sharing of Documents (e.g., reports)**

Instead of mailing documents through Canada Post or faxing them, the Preschool Speech and Language Program at Lumenus can securely send and receive documents using sync.com. We send you a link to access the documents.

**Potential Benefits of Electronic Sharing of Documents:** Allows for timely sharing of documents (e.g., don't need to wait for it to arrive in the mail).

#### **Potential Risks of Electronic Sharing of Documents:**

Your child's privacy is important to us and his/her health information will be kept secure. As with any service, there may be potential risks associated with sharing documents electronically. These risks include those outlined in the "E-Mail Communication" section above. In addition, if anyone has access to the password, they will also have access to the documents. It is imperative that passwords are not shared. Those with access to the folder will be able to view all uploaded documents. Careful attention needs to be given when uploading documents to the folder to ensure that they are the correct ones.

The following will be put into place to minimize the risk:

- Staff will create an individual sync.com folder for each family.
- Staff will double check documents when uploading them to a folder in sync.com to ensure that the correct document has been uploaded. We recommend that you double check any documents that you are uploading.
- When it is time for us to share documents, or for you to send us documents, we will e-mail you a link to access your folder in sync.com. The body of the e-mail itself will not contain any personal information.



- The link provided will allow you to download or upload documents to your sync folder. This is a secure web portal that has end-to-end encryption. It ensures that data in the cloud is safe, secure and 100% private.
- The link that is sent to you will be password protected. The only way to open the link in the e-mail is with the password. This password will be provided to you by phone.
- The link will have an expiry date. For documents that we send to you – once the link expires, we will delete the documents from the sync folder.
- For documents that you upload to share with us – once we have reviewed the document and saved it to your child's file, it will be deleted from the sync folder.
- All staff have individual passwords for sync.com and will log out when finished.

As with any service, you can withdraw your consent to share documents electronically at any time.

