



April 5, 2020

RE: CONFIDENTIALITY CONCERNS AROUND ZOOM SESSIONS

To our clients,

A number of news items have appeared recently online and on television about possible confidentiality issues related to the videoconferencing platform Zoom. Because clinicians at the Ottawa Institute of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy use Zoom to provide teletherapy during the COVID-19 situation, we want to inform you of the steps we are taking to protect the confidentiality of the information you share with your clinician during your sessions.

First, there are several types of Zoom plans. Our understanding is that the stories that featured in the news recently refer to the free (Basic) version of Zoom. Clinicians at the OCIBT do not use the free version of Zoom, but instead use the Business version. Unlike the free version, the Business version of Zoom is compliant with (1) the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), which provides a set of rules for the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information, and (2) the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), a Canadian law relating to data privacy that governs how private sector organizations collect, use and disclose personal information in the course of commercial business. PIPEDA also contains various provisions to facilitate the use of electronic documents.

Second, it is also our understanding that in at least some of the cases where online meetings were “Zoom-bombed”, the information to access the meeting was shared publicly. Rest assured that our clinicians do not share meeting codes with anybody else but their clients.

We have asked all clinicians to ensure that they (1) use a password when booking Zoom appointments and (2) use a waiting room to allow them to vet participants to the Zoom sessions so that only those clients who are supposed to be present for a session are accessing the Zoom meeting.

Sincerely,

Ottawa Institute of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy