



Psychotherapist Discovers Service Excellence with RingRx HIPAA Compliant Phone System

**Dr. Mark Dombeck Says, “RingRx Checks
All the Right Boxes for Quality, Good
Value and Simplicity.”**

RingRx Customer Success Story

Dr. Mark Dombeck



A portrait of Dr. Mark Dombeck, a middle-aged man with short, dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

Dr. Mark Dombeck

Dr. Dombeck received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 1995 from the UCSD /SDSU Joint Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology (San Diego, California), after completing a predoctoral internship at the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center, San Francisco (California; 1994-95). Following his graduation, Dr. Dombeck was Assistant Professor of Psychology at Idaho State University, in Pocatello, Idaho. He left his university position in 1998 to pursue postdoctoral clinical training at the Yale Psychiatric Institute (Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut), in YPI's Dual Diagnosis Partial Hospital Program.

Presently, he is founder of Psychtools and an [Oakland Psychologist](#) in private practice offering evidence-based acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), addressing a range of life problems.

THE CHALLENGE

Technology and the Law in Private/Solo or Group Practice - What HIPAA Means

“I checked out several phone system providers including OOMA, 8x8 and RingCentral but RingRx stood out for its service excellence. RingRx offers excellent customer service with HIPAA expertise, a flexible month to month contract, great price and overall value.”

“Using a mobile phone or a digital phone system offers us a lot of flexibility and convenience as professionals and in life. But at work and in our professional practices as psychologists, clinicians and behavioral therapists, we need to ensure we are using phone technologies and others like faxing, scheduling and appointment reminders, in a way that meets regulatory compliance. Now more than ever.” According to Dr. Dombeck, many of his colleagues in small group or solo practices say they have been aware that the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a regulation that passed a long time ago. But until recently, enforcement was mainly focused on medical communities, so many psychotherapists took their time in investigating what HIPAA meant for them. Not anymore. Now Dombeck’s colleagues are taking the steps to learn what they need to know and do. Often, they turn to their professional associations, such as CAMFT or APA to provide guidance.

Slowly, awareness about HIPAA is growing and rightly so. Enforcement is increasing. Penalties are hefty and non-compliance can cause a serious reputation problem. Plus, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (**MACRA**), though still a couple years off for therapists, is also stimulating a technology review among colleagues. MACRA is bipartisan federal legislation signed into law on April 16, 2015 which does many things, but most importantly it establishes new ways to pay psychologists and therapists for caring for Medicare beneficiaries.

Behavioral therapists and staff must put **safeguards** in place to protect patient health information (PHI). Further it reasonably **limits uses** and sharing of PHI to the minimum necessary. Every therapist must have **agreements** in place (Business Associate Agreements or BAA's) with any service providers that perform covered functions or activities, to ensure they use/disclose/safeguard patient health information properly. And finally, therapists must write/have **procedures** in place to limit who can access patient health information, and implement a training program for therapists and employees about how to protect patient health information. Dr. Dombeck states, "With HIPAA, we have rules within rules. As we become more aware of technology and regulations—and it doesn't matter how cool the technology is—what matters is that the tech we use in our offices, with clients and among ourselves for communication must allow us to interact in a more effective way while meeting strict and exacting compliance standards. If we are using voice mail that is digital, then it must meet compliance. If you bill insurance, you need to use technologies such as faxing to communicate the sensitive client and patient data in a way that is secure, encrypted and meets regulatory requirements."

Leading Phone Systems Providers **Did Not Give Him the Best Service**

To ensure he was using the right digital phone system, Dr. Dombeck looked at several big-name phone system technologies. He knew that using digital phone technology or Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) could in theory help him save on costs. VOIP offers tremendous flexibility, including mobility. And because he bills insurance, efficiency, flexibility and cost-savings are vital. In searching for the best solution, Dr. Dombeck was aware that strict regulatory needs might require sacrificing functionality and features. He tested OOMA first but they were not able to give him the BAA he needed—a critical requirement to ensure HIPAA certification. Then, he checked out RingCentral but given his status as a solo practice and small business, RingCentral did not have a model to

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do business with him. RingCentral was far too costly with a focus on large healthcare systems. RingCentral was not a good fit. Next, Dombeck tried out 8x8 but did not enjoy the fact that he was feeling pressured into signing a long-term service contract—even before he had tested it out. He kept searching. Then he found RingRx. “RingRx checked all the right boxes. Immediately the service agent knew what I needed in terms of HIPAA compliance and the BAA. I found robust features and an industry-leading HIPAA solution in the same service.” After careful consideration, he determined that the RingRx HIPAA Business Associate Agreement (BAA) Program was the best option to meet his needs. The program includes a business associate agreement between RingRx and PsychTools. “The free trial was also attractive, and I found the service to be of high quality, reliable with very good call clarity and the price was right.”

THE FUTURE

RingRx and Other Technologies – What’s Best Right Now

“RingRx is on my recommendation list.” Dombeck recently gave a talk at the Northern California Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (NCCBT) meeting about technology and what’s next for clinicians and therapists. Here are his closing statements and recommendations. “As tech changes year by year, I recommend you invest in a workable solution for now, but be prepared to rebuild it as newer technology comes along. Keep an open mind; new tech can create new possibilities that were not there before. Using tech “because it’s new” is silly; use tech to solve specific problems when it is practical. Make it simple for the client more so than for you. Don’t force tech on your clients, who will have different levels of interest and different devices. And finally, use tech that offers multiple ways to accomplish tasks.”

Dombeck concludes, “What I enjoy about RingRx is that the product and the people at RingRx are excellent. The product offers a full range of technology

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including a softphone App for smartphones that you can use now with lots of flexibility to meet security and HIPAA compliance. And what's great is – as you adopt new kinds of tools for electronic health records and electronic claims and payment systems, for example, RingRx will serve as a worry-free solution that can extend and connect to new tools down the road. And lots of new tools are coming online such as client facing technologies for assessments and forms, psycho-education, worksheets and workbooks—even virtual reality. All of this is to say that with the right tools, you and your tech savvy Millennial associates, colleagues and business partners will be ready. You will be ready to benefit from useful tools that will help improve efficiency, cut costs, help you grow your practice and deliver optimal patient and client care.”



To learn more about our company, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us!

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