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## INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS

Welcome to my practice. I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to be of help to you. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and write down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting.

### *Psychological Services*

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It depends on the personalities of the therapist and client(s) and the particular problems being addressed. There are a number of different approaches that may be utilized to address the difficulties that you are here to treat. I will provide you with information on these different approaches and make recommendations based on the particular circumstances as to what I believe would be most beneficial. In order to be most successful in therapy, you will have to work both during and between our sessions.

Psychotherapy has both benefits and risks. Risks sometimes include uncomfortable levels of unpleasant feelings, like sadness, anger, loneliness, or frustration. Most of these risks are to be expected when people are making important changes in their lives. Even with our best efforts, there is no guarantee that your goals for therapy may all be achieved.

While you consider these risks, you should know also that the benefits of therapy have been shown by scientists in hundreds of well-designed research studies. People who are depressed may find their mood lifting. Others may no longer feel afraid, angry, or anxious. Clients' relationships and coping skills may improve greatly. They may get more satisfaction out of social and family relationships. Their personal goals and values may become clearer. They may grow in many directions—as persons, in their close relationships, in their work or schooling, and in the ability to enjoy their lives.

I do not take on clients I do not think I can help. Therefore, I will enter our relationship with optimism about our progress but will be forthcoming if I believe that we hit roadblocks that require different methods of intervention.

Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about myself or my colleagues, please feel free to discuss these questions with me. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you secure an appropriate consultation with another mental health professional.

## *Confidentiality*

All information disclosed within sessions is confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without written permission except where disclosure is required by law. Disclosure may be required in the following circumstances: a) when there is reasonable suspicion that the client presents a danger of violence to others; b) when the client is likely to harm him/herself unless protective measures are taken; c) when there is reasonable suspicion of child or elder abuse. Disclosure may also be required pursuant to legal proceedings. To better meet your individual needs, I may consult with another professional about your case, but I will not use your name or any identifying information when doing so. Confidentiality of information shared by a minor child may differ from that of an adult. There may be situations in which it is appropriate for the therapist to disclose information shared with the parents. This depends on a range of factors, including the age of the child and types of information discussed. We will discuss these limits to confidentiality in more detail regarding your particular situation.

## *Insurance*

Clients are responsible for all negotiations with their insurance company. Although you may be eligible for reimbursement through your insurance company, it is your responsibility to check with your insurance carrier regarding: the need for prior approval, deductible, the percentage of reimbursement, the maximum allowable rate, the total number of visits allowed in a calendar year, and any requirements regarding the provider. Some "Managed Health Care Plans" such as HMOs and PPOs often require advance authorization before they will provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often oriented towards a short-term treatment approach designed to resolve specific problems that are interfering with one's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek additional approval after a certain number of sessions. In my experience, while quite a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some clients may feel that more services are necessary or desired after their insurance benefits expire.

Once we have all the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if the benefits run out before you feel ready to end our sessions.

You should also be aware that most insurance agreements require you to authorize me to provide a clinical diagnosis and, sometimes, additional clinical information such as a treatment plan or summary or, in rare cases, a copy of the entire record. In contracting to work with me you are authorizing me to release the necessary information to your insurance provider to secure payment of benefits. This information will become part of the insurance

company files and likely will be computerized by the insurer. All insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, but once it is in their hands I have no control over what they do with it. In some cases, they may share the information with a national, medical information data bank. If you request it, I will provide you with a copy of any report that I submit.

It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself and avoid these complexities of dealing with insurance coverage.

## *About Our Appointments*

A canceled appointment delays our work. I will consider our meetings very important and ask you to do the same. Please try not to miss sessions if you can possibly help it. When you must cancel, please give me at least 24 hours notice. Your session time is reserved for you. **Any appointment canceled without 24 hours notice (including "no shows") will be billed at the regular hourly rate. Please be aware that insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions and it will be your responsibility to pay.**

### ***If You Need to Contact Me***

I cannot promise that I will be available at all times. I usually do not take phone calls when I am with a client. You can always leave a message with on my voicemail, and I will return your call as soon as I can. Generally, I will return messages daily except on weekends and holidays.

**Emergencies:** If you have a behavioral or emotional crisis and cannot reach me immediately by telephone, you or your family members should call the RESOLVE Crisis Line at 1-888-796-8220.

### ***Other Points***

If you ever become involved in a divorce or custody dispute, I want you to understand and agree that I will not provide evaluations or expert testimony in court. You should hire a different mental health professional for any evaluations or testimony you require. This position is based on two reasons: (1) My statements will be seen as biased in your favor because we have a therapy relationship; and (2) the testimony might affect our therapy relationship, and I must put this relationship first.

### ***Statement of Principles and Complaint Procedures***

It is my intention to fully abide by all the rules of the American Psychological Association (APA) and by those of my state license.

Problems can arise in our relationship, just as in any other relationship. If you are not satisfied with any area of our work, please raise your concerns with me at once. Our work together will be slower and harder if your concerns with me are not worked out. I will make every effort to hear any complaints you have and to seek solutions to them. If you feel that I, or any other therapist, has treated you unfairly or has even broken a professional rule, please tell me. You can also contact the state or local psychological association and speak to the chairperson of the ethics committee. He or she can help clarify your concerns or tell you how to file a complaint.

In my practice as a therapist, I do not discriminate against clients because of any of these factors: age, sex, marital/family status, race, color, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, place of residence, veteran status, physical disability, health status, sexual orientation, or criminal record unrelated to present dangerousness. This is a personal commitment, as well as being required by federal, state, and local laws and regulations. I will always take steps to advance and support the values of equal opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic/cultural diversity. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please bring this matter to my attention immediately.