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PSYCHOTHERAPIST-CLIENT SERVICES AGREEMENT

Welcome to my practice. This document (the Agreement) contains important information about my professional services and business policies. It also contains summary information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law that provides privacy protections and patient rights with regard to the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) used for the purpose of treatment, payment, and health care operations. HIPAA requires that I provide you with a Notice of Privacy Practices (the Notice) for use and disclosure of PHI for treatment, payment and health care operations. The Notice, which is attached to this Agreement, explains HIPAA and its application to your personal health information in greater detail. The law requires that I obtain your signature acknowledging that I have provided you with this information at the end of this session. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is very important that you read them carefully before our next session. We can discuss any questions you have about the procedures at that time. When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between us. You may revoke this Agreement in writing at any time. That revocation will be binding on me unless I have taken action in reliance on it; if there are obligations imposed on me by your health insurer in order to process or substantiate claims made under your policy; or if you have not satisfied any financial obligations you have incurred.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and client, and the particular problems you are experiencing. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will need to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home. You may experience a worsening of symptoms while you are working on emotionally difficult issues before you begin to feel better. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

APPOINTMENTS

All appointments will be made with me directly. *Appointment cancellation is needed at least 24 hours in advance in order to avoid being charged half of the full fee for your scheduled appointment.* This may be done by calling (513) 860-3156 and leaving a message for me. This allows for reassignment of that appointment time. This charge cannot be billed to your insurance, as it does not pay for missed or late cancelled sessions. Extenuating or emergent circumstances will most likely not result in a charge.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

My fees are \$150 for an initial assessment (50 min.), \$160 for individual therapy (53+ min.), \$120 for individual therapy (38-52 min.), and \$80 for individual therapy (16-37 min.). I also charge \$150 per hour for other professional services you may need, prorated if under an hour. Other services include telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes, consulting with other professionals with your permission, report writing, preparation of records or treatment summaries, travel, and time spent performing any other service you may request of me. *This fee does not apply to legal proceedings or requests.* In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan. Please note that rates are subject to change.

If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for all of my professional time, including preparation and transportation costs, even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$300 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. There is a \$20.00 return check fee.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court which will require me to disclose otherwise confidential information. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, address, phone number, social security number, the nature of services provided, and the amount due. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the collection or claim. I also have the option to terminate professional services. If your account ever achieves a credit balance, any overpayment will be promptly refunded.

CONTACTING ME

Due to my work schedule, I am often not immediately available by telephone, as I am seeing clients. You may leave a message for me on my voice mail and my pager will alert me. I will make every effort to return your call by the next business day. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, contact your psychiatrist or primary care physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the mental health specialist on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

LIMITS ON CONFIDENTIALITY

The law protects the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychologist. In most situations, I can only release information about your treatment to others if you sign a written authorization form that meets certain legal requirements imposed by HIPAA. There are other situations that require only that you provide written, advance consent. Your signature on this Agreement provides consent for those activities, as follows:

- ◆ I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other health and mental health professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. The other professionals are also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together. I will note all consultations in your Clinical Record (which is called "PHI" in my Notice of Psychologist's Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information).
- ◆ Disclosures required by health insurers or to collect overdue fees are discussed elsewhere in this Agreement.

There are some situations where I am permitted or required to disclose information without either your consent or Authorization:

- ◆ If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information concerning your evaluation, diagnosis or treatment, such information is protected by the psychologist-client privilege law. I cannot provide any information without your (or your personal or legal representative's) written authorization, or a court order. If you are involved in or contemplating litigation, you should consult with your attorney to determine whether a court would be likely to order me to disclose information.
- ◆ If a government agency is requesting the information for health oversight activities, I may be required to provide it for them.
- ◆ If a client files a complaint or lawsuit against me, I may disclose relevant information regarding that client in order to defend myself.
- ◆ If a client files a worker's compensation claim, the client must execute a release so that I may release the information, records or reports relevant to the claim.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take actions, which I believe are necessary to attempt to protect others from harm, and I may have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. These situations are unusual in my practice.

- ◆ If I know or have reason to suspect that a child under 18 years of age or a mentally retarded, developmentally disabled, or physically impaired child under 21 years of age has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child, the law requires that I file a report with the appropriate government agency, usually the Public Children Services Agency. Once such a report is filed, I may be required to provide additional information.

- ◆ If I have reasonable cause to believe that an adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, or is in a condition that is the result of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, the law requires that I report such belief to the county Department of Job and Family Services. Once such a report is filed, I may be required to provide additional information.
- ◆ If I know or have reasonable cause to believe that a client has been the victim of domestic violence, I must note that knowledge or belief and the basis for it in the client's record.
- ◆ If I believe that a client presents a clear and substantial risk of imminent serious harm to him/herself or someone else and I believe that disclosure of certain information may serve to protect that individual, then I must disclose that information to appropriate public authorities, and/or the potential victim, and/or professional workers, and/or the family of the client.

If such a situation arises, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action and I will limit my disclosure to what is necessary.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have now or in the future. The laws governing confidentiality can be quite complex, and I am not an attorney. In situations where specific advice is required, formal legal advice may be needed.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep Protected Health Information about you in your Clinical Record. Except in unusual circumstances that involve danger to yourself and/or others, you may examine and/or receive a copy of your Clinical Record, if you request it in writing and the request is signed by you and dated not more than 60 days from the date it is submitted. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. For this reason, I recommend that you initially review them in my presence, or have them forwarded to another mental health professional so you can discuss the contents. There may be a charge associated with conducting this review meeting. There is a charge for copies of medical records. This charge is in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code Section 3701.741. If I refuse your request for access to your records, you have a right of review, which I will discuss with you upon request.

PATIENT RIGHTS

HIPAA provides you with several new or expanded rights with regard to your Clinical Record and disclosures of protected health information. These rights include requesting that I amend your record; requesting restrictions on what information from your Clinical Record is disclosed to others; requesting an accounting of most disclosures of Protected Health Information that you have neither consented to nor authorized; determining the location to which protected information disclosures are sent; having any complaints you make about my policies and procedures recorded in your records; and the right to a paper copy of this Agreement, the attached Notice form, and my privacy policies and procedures. I am happy to discuss any of these rights with you.

MINORS & PARENTS

Clients under 14 years of age who are not emancipated and their parents should be aware that the law allows parents to examine their child's treatment records unless I decide that such access would injure the child or we agree otherwise. Children between 14 and 18 may independently consent to and receive up to 6 sessions of psychotherapy (provided within a 30-day period) and no information about those sessions can be disclosed to anyone without the child's agreement. While privacy in psychotherapy is often crucial to successful progress, particularly with teenagers, parental involvement is also essential to successful treatment. For children 14 and over, it is my policy to request an agreement between my client and his/her parents allowing me to share general information about the progress of the child's treatment and his/her attendance at scheduled sessions. I can also provide parents with a summary of their child's treatment when it is complete, if requested. Any other communication will require the child's Authorization, unless I feel that the child is in danger or is a danger to someone else, in which case, I will notify the parents of my concern. Before giving parents any information, I will discuss the matter with the child, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections he/she may have.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for

mental health treatment. Please note that I am considered an out-of-network provider with insurance companies and I do not bill them for services. I will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you, not your insurance company, are responsible for full payment of my fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what out-of-network mental health services your insurance policy covers.

You should also be aware that your contract with your health insurance company requires that I provide it with information relevant to the services that I provide to you. I am required to provide a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I am required to provide additional clinical information, such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of your entire clinical record. In such situations, I will make every effort to release only the minimum information about you that is necessary for the purpose requested. This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. I will provide you with a copy of any report I submit, if you request it. By signing this Agreement, you agree that I can provide requested information to your carrier.

Once we have all of 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 they run out before you feel ready to end your sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above, unless prohibited by contract.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information in this document and the Notice attachment, and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

Signature of Client

Date

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Relationship to Client (if minor)