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Psychotherapist-Patient Services Agreement

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Following this document is a second document that contains 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 for use and disclosure of PHI. The Notice 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. Although this document is long and sometimes complex, it is necessary for me to provide you with this information in order to comply with federal regulations. We can discuss any questions you have about this information at any 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 is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and the patient, 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. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have many benefits. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. 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.

MEETINGS

I normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 4 sessions. During this time, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, I will usually schedule one 55-60 minute session (one appointment hour of 55-60 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree on. **Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation (unless we both agree that you were unable to attend for reasons that were outside your control).**

PROFESSIONAL FEES

My hourly fee is \$190 for the first hour and \$175 for each visit thereafter.

CONTACTING ME

Due to my work schedule, I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am usually in my office between 9:30 AM and 5:30 PM, I probably will not answer the phone when I am with a patient. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail that I monitor frequently. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you will be available. In emergencies, you can try me at my cell number: 614-886-8449. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist [psychiatrist] 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.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

You should be aware that I keep Protected health Information about you in two sets of professional records. One set constitutes your Clinical Record. It includes information about your reasons for seeking therapy, a description of the ways in which your problem impacts on your life, your diagnosis, the goals that we set for treatment, your progress towards those goals, your medical and social history, your treatment history, any past treatment records that I receive from other providers, reports of any professional consultations, your billing records, and any reports that have been sent to anyone, including reports to your insurance carrier. Except in unusual circumstances that involve danger to yourself and 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. In most circumstances, I am allowed to charge a copying fee of \$1 per page for the first ten pages, 50 cents per page for pages 11 through 50, and 20 cents per page for pages in excess of fifty, plus \$15 fee for records search, plus postage. The exceptions to this policy are contained in the attached Notice Form. If I refuse your request for access to your Clinical record, you have the right of review, which I will discuss with you upon request.

In addition, I also keep a set of Psychotherapy Notes. These Notes are for my own use and are designed to assist me in providing you with the best treatment. While the contents of Psychotherapy Notes vary from client to client, they can include the contents of our conversations, my analysis of those conversations, and how they impact your therapy. They also contain particularly sensitive information that you may reveal to me that is not required to be included in your Clinical Record. These Psychotherapy Notes are kept separate from your Clinical Record. While insurance companies can request and receive a copy of your Clinical record, they cannot receive a copy of your Psychotherapy Notes without your signed, written Authorization. Insurance companies cannot require your Authorization as a condition of coverage nor penalize you in any way for your refusal. You may examine and/or receive a copy of your Psychotherapy Notes unless I determine that such disclosure would have an adverse effect on you.

MINORS AND PARENTS

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 patient 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 will also provide parents with a summary of their child's treatment when it is complete. 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.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay the insurance co-payment for your sessions at the end of each month if you have health insurance that is involved in the coverage of these services. If this is the case, there will be a

statement at the bottom of your bill that reads, "Amount Owed out of Pocket." Pay only this amount and the balance will be paid by your insurance carrier. If you do not have health insurance, or I am not a participating provider with your insurance carrier, then you will be expected to pay in full for each session at the end of each month. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested.

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. 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 mental health services your insurance policy covers. Please note that I am a participating provider with only a limited number of insurance carriers in the central Ohio area.

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.

YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT AND AGREE TO ITS TERMS AND ALSO SERVES AS A ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE HJPAA NOTICE FORM DESCRIBED ABOVE.

Client Signature _____ Date _____