

**CONSENT FOR EVALUATION AND TREATMENT
AND OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT**

This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and ask any questions you might have so that we can discuss them. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

VOLUNTARINESS

Your participation in outpatient evaluation and treatment is voluntary. You can discontinue services at any point. If you decide to discontinue services for any reason, you are encouraged to discuss your plans with your therapist. Your therapist will attempt to provide referrals for alternative services if you request them.

PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychotherapist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods the therapist may use to deal with your problems. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things you and your therapist talk about both during your sessions and at home. Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Risks may include discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness, or a worsening of your problems. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy can lead to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience. Your first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, your therapist will be able to offer you some impressions of what your 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 your therapist. Therapy can involve a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about our procedures, you should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, your therapist will help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

MEETINGS

An evaluation will be conducted that will usually last from 1 to 3 sessions. During this time, you and your therapist can decide if your therapist is the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, your therapist will usually schedule one 45-minute session (one appointment hour of 45 minutes duration) per week, although sessions may vary in duration or frequency.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless I believe that seeing them would be potentially dangerous, in which case I will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice or prepare a written summary. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent in preparing record requests.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

The fees for services vary according to the service. The hourly rate for individual evaluation, individual psychotherapy, family consultation, and other associated services is \$150 per hour. The rate for an individual psychotherapy session of 45 minutes is \$115, and the rate for a group psychotherapy session of 90 minutes is \$60. Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 48 hours advance notice of cancellation. If it is possible, your therapist will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment. In addition to weekly appointments, the rate of \$150 per hour is charged for other associated services you may need, though the hourly cost may be broken down for periods of less than one hour. Other associated services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings with other health professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$200 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 or unless you have insurance coverage which requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, our staff has the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court which would require releasing information about you. If such action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim.

Initials

Date

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. Our staff will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance we can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Some plans are limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. Some managed-care plans will not reimburse for services to you once your benefits end. If this is the case, our staff will try to find another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy. You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize our staff to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes our staff has to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). 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, we have no control over what they do with it. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. 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 our sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for services yourself to avoid the potential problems described above unless prohibited by contract.

CONTACTING ME

I do not provide emergency services and am often not immediately available by telephone. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail. I will make an effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, contact the nearest emergency room or call 911.

MINORS

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. Before giving them any information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections you may have.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work to others with your written permission, or in instances allowed or required by law. These situations include, but are not limited to, certain legal proceedings; child, elderly, or dependent adult abuse; a serious risk of harm to yourself or others; or a grave disability. In these situations, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for you, contact family members or others who can help provide protection, contact the police, or other governmental agencies. I may also occasionally consult other professionals about your case. During a consultation, I make efforts to avoid revealing the identity of my patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations. 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. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and I am not an attorney.

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

Print Name

Signature Date

Witness

Signature Date