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OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. 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 benefits for people who go through it. 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 1-2 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 50-minute session (one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for 50% of it unless you provide 24 hours [1 day] advance notice of cancellation [unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control]. If it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

My hourly fee is \$140.00 for a 50 minute session. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. [Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$140 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding regardless of whether I am asked to contribute to the proceedings].

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise. I accept cash, check and all major credit cards. 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, 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. [If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim.] In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by my 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. If it is a life-threatening emergency and you cannot reach me by phone,

contact a psychological mobile response team or call 911. You may also contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or 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

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 emotionally damaging, in which case I will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent in preparing information requests.

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. It is my policy to request an agreement from parents that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless I feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, I will notify them of my concern. I will also provide them with a summary of your treatment when it is complete. 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 with what I am prepared to discuss. At the end of your treatment, I may prepare a summary of our work together for your parents, and we will discuss it before I send it to them.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work to others with your written permission, but there are a few exceptions:

- In some legal proceedings a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.
- If I believe that a child, elderly or disabled person is being abused, I may be required to file a report with the appropriate state agency.
- If I believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I may be

required to take protective actions. that may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient.

- If the patient threatens to harm himself/herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

These situations have rarely occurred in my practice. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

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 at our next meeting. 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.

Client's Printed Name

Date

Client's Signature

Client's Printed Name

Date

Client's Signature

By signing this document, I affirm that my client was given this document and given the opportunity to ask questions regarding this document, or declined to receive the document and ask questions.

Rachel Christensen, LCSW
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