

## Therapist-Client Contract

### Outpatient Services Contract

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it over 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.

### Counseling Services/Therapy

Therapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and the client. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. The methods I choose will depend on the problems you are looking to address, the type of treatment I think will best help you address these problems, and your own feelings about the methods that are suggested or utilized.

Therapy is not passive on the part of the client. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for therapy to be successful, you will need to be ready to commit to attending regular therapy sessions and I may ask you to work on things at home in addition to the work that we do in our sessions.

Therapy 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. Experiencing these feelings does not necessarily mean that therapy is not working. In fact, sometimes these feelings need to be experienced in order to work through underlying issues. However, if you notice that you are experiencing more uncomfortable feelings as we do our work together, please let me know and we will make a plan of how to address these feelings together. I will not be angry with you or think that you are being uncooperative if you express frustration or sometimes your symptoms get worse before they get better. Letting me know about any problems you experience during the process of therapy can often lead to you having a better result from your treatment. I might not have an answer to make unpleasant feelings go away, but this does not mean that I do not care or that I cannot help you.

On the other hand, therapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to a reduction of symptoms or feelings of distress. People who go through therapy often report feeling better about themselves, more empowered, and able to have better relationships. There are no guarantees of what you will experience. I hope that working with me will be a positive experience and you will feel like you have met your goals by the end of treatment.

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 I will suggest a treatment plan (my suggestions of issues we could address, some suggestions of how we may go about addressing these issues, how often I think we should meet, an estimate of how long I think we will have to meet). You should evaluate this information and form an opinion of whether you would feel comfortable working with me or not. 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 any suggestions I make, please discuss your concerns with me.

If either of us feels that this will not be a good match for treatment, I will be happy to help you find another health professional that may be able to better meet your needs. I reserve the right to refuse to treat and may refer a client to another professional or agency for any of the following reasons: 1. I do not feel my methods/training/specializations are appropriate to help a client with their issues 2. I feel that the therapeutic relationship is not safe for me, the client, or someone else 3. I feel that continuing treatment may not help with a client's issues or may actually make them worse. 4. The client refuses to comply with this contract. I will make an attempt to help clients address the issues that are preventing compliance before terminating treatment.

### **Sessions**

Therapy sessions typically last between 45-60 minutes. I generally begin my sessions at the beginning of the hour. If you are late for your session, our session will still end at the regular time. If you are running late for your session, please call me so I have an idea of when to expect you. I generally schedule one session per week, although some clients may meet with me more or less often depending on their needs. I reserve the right to charge \$50 for appointments that are not kept and not cancelled at least 24 hours in advance (unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances that were out of your control. If this is the case, then I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment).

### **Professional Fees**

My fee for the initial appointment is \$150. My fee for a standard 45 minute appointment is \$100 per session, or \$130 per session for a 60-minute appointment. I charge this amount for other professional services you may need, although I will pro-rate these services, rounding to the nearest 10 minutes, if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting more than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals that you have authorized (e.g. physician or psychiatrist), 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 time, even if I am called to testify by another party. I will also charge you for the time it takes me to prepare for or attend any legal proceeding.

Payment is due at the time of service. I accept payment by credit card, debit card, and cash. I collect payment at the beginning of each session since I have found that it is actually easier to take care of business items first. I reserve the right to refuse to treat a client who has a balance larger than \$300 unless they are experiencing a genuine life-threatening emergency. After 60 days any unpaid balance will be charged 1.5% interest per month (18% APR). In the event that an account is overdue and turned over to a collection agency, the client or responsible party will be held responsible for any collection fee charged to my office to collect the debt owed. I ask that every client authorize payment of medical benefits directly to Rebecca Malley, LCPC.

### **Using insurance**

If you are using your insurance benefits to pay for your treatment, I will need detailed information about your insurance to verify your benefits before your first session. Please let me know if you have coverage from more than one insurance company. If your deductible has not been met I will charge you the contracted rate I have agreed upon with your insurance company for services until your deductible has been met. I will submit these claims to your provider to help you meet your deductible. If your deductible has been met and I am a covered provider in

your network, I will only charge you for your co-pay or co-insurance as determined by your benefits plan for each session. Your insurance provider may request a referral from your primary health physician or pre-authorization before they will pay for your treatment. It is your responsibility to find out if you need a referral or pre-authorization for therapy.

Some insurance companies will only authorize a certain number of sessions for therapy. If this is the case with your insurance provider, then we will discuss a plan of how to address this issue (such as keeping our work focused on short-term goals, applying for additional sessions to address issues, etc.). Most insurance companies also require that treatment be “medically necessary” and that I make a clinical diagnosis for all clients in order to be reimbursed for treatment. If there is no mental health diagnosis, your insurance will not pay for services and I will bill you directly for services. We will discuss this further during the first few sessions so will you know what to expect.

### **Contacting me**

I do my best to answer all calls, but there are many times when I am not immediately available by phone. I do not answer my phone when I am with clients. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voicemail, and no one can access my voice mails except for me. Please leave me a voicemail and I will make every effort to return your call on the same day that I have received it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please tell me a good time to get in touch with you and let me know which number you prefer to me to call. If you prefer that I do not leave a voicemail or a message with a person, please let me know this in your message. I ask that clients do not send personal information via email because email is not always secure and I cannot guarantee that your information will be kept private. If I will be unavailable for more than a few days, I will provide you with the name of a colleague that you can contact if you need assistance.

In case of an emergency, please call my regular number. If I do not answer, please leave a voicemail and mark your call as urgent. If I do not answer your call immediately and you feel you may be in danger of harming yourself or others please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room and ask to speak to the crisis worker/psychologist/or psychiatrist on call.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Signature of therapist: \_\_\_\_\_