

Client-Therapist Agreement

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personality of both the therapist and the client and the particular problems that the client brings. Psychotherapy can aid you in discovering tools, techniques, and a stronger sense of self, that can be utilized to improve the quality of your life and your relationships.

Psychotherapy involves change, and at times change may bring up emotions that may be uncomfortable and possibly even difficult, not only to you but also to those people close to you. The prospect of giving up old habits, no matter how destructive or painful, can often make one feel very vulnerable. The process can include experiencing feelings like sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, and fear and making changes that you did not originally intend. Like any professional service, therapy may not work, and for a relatively small number of people, problems may get worse. Even so, many people find that therapy is worth the discomfort they feel.

As the client involved in this process I ask that you work with me in an honest and collaborative manner. That may include asking me about my professional experience, background, and theoretical orientation. As the therapist I am offering the following information regarding the therapeutic relationship in response to frequently asked questions. If at any time you have further questions about our working relationship, please discuss them with me. Maximum benefit from therapy can be obtained only in a frank and open atmosphere.

Frequently Asked Questions

Fees and Appointment times

My fee is \$160 for a standard 45-50-minute session for individual psychotherapy and \$170 for couples and families. I schedule extended sessions for couples and families for the initial few sessions, 75-80 minutes pro-rated at \$250.

For therapy to be most productive, weekly sessions are recommended, especially in the early phases of the work. The length of sessions, and the frequency of sessions, will be best decided collaboratively, after the initial few sessions.

Payment for services is requested at the time of the services. I accept cash, checks, Visa and MasterCard at this time. Monthly billing arrangements are available upon request.

As with all businesses, I may raise my fees while you are in treatment. I limit increases to no more than yearly changes for current clients, usually in \$5 increments. I will give you advance notice of such changes.

If a change in fees would compromise your ability to continue treatment, please discuss this with me openly and we can make arrangements. Furthermore, if at any time during your treatment your financial situation changes significantly, I invite a frank and direct discussion with me to work out possible financial arrangements so your treatment will not be interrupted due to costs.

Insurance

I do not accept direct insurance payments, nor am I a provider for any HMOs or PPOs. If your policy allows for full or partial payment for providers outside a panel, or if you are enrolled in a pre-tax spending program through your employer, or have an HSA, I will gladly provide you with monthly statements that you may submit in an attempt to receive reimbursement. Please talk to me if you need this type of statement to assist you financially.

Missed or cancelled appointments

Missed or cancelled appointments will incur your usual fee for the time scheduled unless a 24-hour notice is given. You may always leave a cancellation notification or a request for a change in your appointment time on my answering machine or in an email, weekdays or weekends.

Telephone calls and emergency services

I will do my best to return all calls within 24 hours. My phone number 530-304-3004, is both my personal and professional mobile phone, and is only used by me. It is confidential.

Because of the nature of private practice, I do not offer 24-hour crisis services, however I will make every attempt to be available to you as quickly as I am able during the daytime work week. If you are unable to reach me, and you need immediate assistance, please call the Sutter Center for Psychiatry at 916-386-3620, or the Yolo County Crisis Line at 530-756-5000, or in case of a life-threatening situation please call 911.

If you have further questions about after hour situations please feel free to ask me for more information.

Confidentiality

Your therapy will include talking over very private things with me. To a great extent, my ability to help you will depend on how open you can be about yourself---your thoughts, feelings, and actions. So that you may feel free to talk openly with me while also protecting your right to privacy, as a licensed therapist it is my duty to keep information confidential. Generally this means I cannot discuss your case with anyone or send out information about you without your permission. To serve you best, it is standard practice for me to collaborate with other mental health providers you are working with, or even in some situations, with providers with whom you have worked with previously, or in rare situations, to speak with a family member. Any of these collaborative conversations may only occur if you sign a consent form allowing me to exchange information with that particular person. You also have the right to limit the content of my contact, and rescind the permission in writing at any time. However, remember limiting contact might hinder the team effort of your providers.

Specific confidentiality for couples. Since “the couple is my client”, both of you will need to sign any release of information for me to speak with other providers for collaboration. Periodically, I may determine it useful to see you each alone for a few visits. As is usual with therapy, any information you share in an individual session with me will be held in confidence. If you share information in our private session I believe might be clinically useful to speak about in the couple’s session, I will only reveal the information after receiving permission from you. All confidentiality practices are to make you as safe as possible with me, and with the therapy process. Please ask me if you have any questions or concerns.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

There are exceptions to confidentiality, however, that you should know about. Please note that most of these situations are rare, but they are important for you to understand.

1. If you threaten to harm someone else, I am required under the law to take steps to inform the intended victim and appropriate law enforcement agencies.
2. If you threaten to cause severe harm to yourself, I am permitted to reveal information to others if I believe it is necessary to prevent the threatened harm.

3. If you reveal or I have reasonable suspicion that any child, elderly person, or incompetent person is being abused or neglected, the law requires that I report this to the appropriate county agency.
4. If a court of law orders me to release information, I am required to provide that specific information to the court.
5. If you are or become involved in any kind of lawsuit or administrative procedure (such a worker's compensation), where the issue of your mental health is involved, you may not be able to keep your records of therapy private in court.
6. In order to provide you the best treatment possible, there may be times when I seek consultation from another licensed mental health professional regarding your care. In these consultations, I make every effort to not reveal your identity. Any consultant I use is legally bound by the same confidentiality laws as I am. If you would like to know who my consultants are, or have any concerns regarding any aspect of confidentiality please feel free to discuss your questions with me.

Acknowledgement and Consent

If you would like to discuss any of the above information further, before treatment begins, or at any time in the therapy, please do so. By signing this form, you are acknowledging that you understand and consent to what you have read above.

Name (print)

Name (sign)

Date

Name (print)

Name (sign)

Date