

**Rachel Finch Sulka, M.S. MFT**  
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist #51499  
(805) 364-4427

## **AGREEMENT FOR SERVICE / INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINORS**

### **Introduction**

This Agreement has been created for the purpose of outlining the terms and conditions of services to be provided by Rachel Finch Sulka, M.S. MFT for the minor child(ren)

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and is intended to provide [name of parent(s)/legal guardian(s)]

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with important information regarding the practices, policies and procedures of Rachel Finch, and to clarify the terms of the professional therapeutic relationship between Therapist and Client. Any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this Agreement should be discussed with Therapist prior to signing it.

### **Policy Regarding Consent for the Treatment of a Minor Child**

Therapist generally requires the consent of both parents prior to providing any services to a minor child. If any question exists regarding the authority of Representative to give consent for psychotherapy, Therapist will require that Representative submit supporting legal documentation, such as a custody order, prior to the commencement of services.

### **Therapist Background and Qualifications**

Rachel has extensive experience working with individuals, families, and groups who are affected by eating disorders. Rachel served four years as the Program Director of La Ventana Eating Disorder Programs in Santa Barbara. She developed and ran the outpatient and residential treatment programs. Prior to her work with La Ventana, she also served as Clinical Director of Recovery Road Eating Disorder Programs where she developed and ran the program. Rachel works with the full spectrum of Eating Disorder diagnoses including Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Exercise Addiction, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder as it relates to ED's, and Binge Eating Disorder. She has experience working at all levels of care, from inpatient to residential to outpatient care.

Rachel earned a Bachelor's of Science in Kinesiology from Westmont College, and her Master's degree in Marital and Family Therapy from Fuller Theological Seminary. She currently serves as a board member of the Central Coast Chapter of the International Association of Eating Disorder Professionals (IAEDP). She regularly presents ED educational material within a variety of Santa Barbara community venues. Rachel's mission is to help those with eating disorders find a joyous

### **Risks and Benefits of Therapy**

A minor client will benefit most from psychotherapy when his/her parents; guardians or other caregivers are supportive of the therapeutic process. Psychotherapy is a process in which Therapist and client, and sometimes other family members, discuss a myriad of issues, events, experiences and memories for the purpose of creating positive change so client can experience his/her life more fully. It provides an opportunity to better, and

more deeply understand oneself, as well as, any problems or difficulties client may be experiencing. Psychotherapy is a joint effort between client and therapist. Progress and success may vary depending upon the particular problems or issues being addressed, as well as many other factors. It is suggested that the parent(s)/guardian of the child participate in therapy once a month with me to address the goals, progress, and work towards a better quality of life for the child. This session is used for the parent/guardian to work on the issues surround their child and not their own personal issues. If the therapist sees a need for the parent/guardian(s) to have their own therapist, referrals can be made.

Participating in therapy may result in a number of benefits to client, including, but not limited to, reduced stress and anxiety, a decrease in negative thoughts and self-sabotaging behaviors, improved interpersonal relationships, increased comfort in social, school, and family settings, and increased self-confidence. Such benefits may also require substantial effort on the part of client, as well as his/her caregivers and/or family members, including an active participation in the therapeutic process, honesty, and a willingness to change feelings, thoughts and behaviors. There is no guarantee that therapy will yield any or all of the benefits listed above.

Participating in therapy may also involve some discomfort, including remembering and discussing unpleasant events, feelings and experiences. This discomfort may also extend to other family members, as they may be asked to address difficult issues and family dynamics. The process may evoke strong feelings of sadness, anger, fear, etc. There may be times in which therapist will challenge the perceptions and assumptions of the client or other family members, and offer different perspectives. The issues presented by client may result in unintended outcomes, including changes in personal relationships.

During the therapeutic process, many clients find that they feel worse before they feel better. This is generally a normal course of events. Personal growth and change may be easy and swift at times, but may also be slow and frustrating. Client should address any concerns he/she has regarding his/her progress in therapy with therapist.

### **Professional Consultation**

Professional consultation is an important component of a healthy psychotherapy practice. As such, therapist regularly participates in clinical, ethical, and legal consultation with appropriate professionals. During such consultations, therapist will not reveal any personally identifying information regarding client.

### **Records and Record Keeping**

Therapist may take notes during session, and will also produce other notes and records regarding client's treatment. These notes constitute therapist's clinical and business records, which by law, therapist is required to maintain. Such records are the sole property of therapist. Therapist will not alter his/her normal record keeping process at the request of any client or representative. Should client or representative request a copy of therapist's records, such a request must be made in writing. Therapist reserves the right, under California law, to provide client, or representative, with a treatment summary in

lieu of actual records. Therapist also reserves the right to refuse to produce a copy of the record under certain circumstances, but may, as requested, provide a copy of the record to another treating health care provider. Representative will generally have the right to access the records regarding client, however, this right is subject to certain exceptions set forth in California law. Should representative request access to therapist's records, such a request will be responded to in accordance with California law. Therapist is allowed to charge \$0.25 per copied page and \$24.00 per administrative hour it takes to produce copies. If a summary is created, therapist will charge her normal session rate.

Therapist will maintain client's records for ten years following termination of therapy, or when client is 21 years of age, whichever is longer. However, after ten years, client's records will be destroyed in a manner that preserves client's confidentiality.

### **Confidentiality**

The information disclosed by client is generally confidential and will not be released to any third party without written authorization from client, except where required or permitted by law. Exceptions to confidentiality, include, but are not limited to, reporting child, elder and dependent adult abuse, when a client makes a serious threat of violence towards a reasonably identifiable victim, or when a client is dangerous to him/herself or the person or property of another.

Representative should be aware that therapist is not a conduit of information from client. Psychotherapy can only be effective if there is a trusting a confidential relationship between therapist and client. Although representative can expect to be kept up to date as to client's progress in therapy, he/she will typically not be privy to detailed discussions between therapist and client. However, representative can expect to be informed in the event of any serious concerns therapist might have regarding the safety or well-being of client, including suicidal ideation.

### **Client Litigation**

Therapist will not voluntarily participate in any litigation, or custody dispute in which client and another individual, or entity, are parties. Therapist has a policy of not communicating with client's attorney and will generally not write or sign letters, reports, declarations, or affidavits to be used in client's legal matter. Therapist will generally not provide records or testimony unless compelled to do so. Should therapist be subpoenaed, or ordered by a court of law, to appear as a witness in an action involving client, client agrees to reimburse therapist for any time spent for preparation, travel, or other time in which therapist has made him/herself available for such an appearance at therapist's usual and customary hourly rate of 150 dollars per 50 minutes. In addition, therapist will not make any recommendation as to custody or visitation regarding client. Therapist will make efforts to be uninvolved in any custody dispute between client's parents.

### **Psychotherapist-Client Privilege**

The information disclosed by client, as well as any records created, is subject to the psychotherapist-client privilege. The psychotherapist-client privilege results from the special relationship between therapist and client in the eyes of the law. It is akin to the

attorney-client privilege or the doctor-client privilege. Typically, the client is the holder of the psychotherapist-client privilege. If the therapist receives a subpoena for records, deposition testimony, or testimony in a court of law, therapist will assert the psychotherapist-client privilege on client's behalf until instructed, in writing, to do otherwise by a person with the authority to waive the privilege on client's behalf. When a client is a minor child, the holder of the psychotherapist-client privilege is either the minor, a court appointed guardian, or minor's counsel. Parents typically do not have the authority to waive the psychotherapist-client privilege for their minor children, unless given such authority by a court of law. Representative is encouraged to discuss any concerns regarding the psychotherapist-client privilege with his/her attorney.

Client, or representative, should be aware that he/she might be waiving the psychotherapist-client privilege if he/she makes his/her mental or emotional state an issue in a legal proceeding. Client, or representative, should address any concerns he/she might have regarding the psychotherapist-client privilege with his/her attorney.

### **Fee and Fee Arrangements**

The usual and customary fee for service is 150 dollars per 50-minute session; sliding scale available for low income, students, or single parents per availability. Sessions longer than 50-minutes are charged for the additional time pro-rated. Therapist reserves the right to periodically adjust this fee. Client will be notified of any fee adjustment in advance. In addition, this fee may be adjusted by contract with insurance companies, managed care organizations, or other third-party payers, or by agreement with Therapist.

The agreed upon fee between therapist and client is \_\_\_\_\_.  
Therapist reserves the right to periodically adjust fee. Client will be notified of any fee adjustment in advance.

From time-to-time, therapist may engage in telephone contact with client for purposes other than scheduling sessions. Client is responsible for payment of the agreed upon fee (on a pro rata basis) for any telephone calls longer than 15 minutes. In addition, from time-to-time, Therapist may engage in telephone contact with third parties at client's request and with client's advance written authorization. Client is responsible for payment of the agreed upon fee (on a pro rata basis) for any telephone calls longer than 15 minutes.

Clients are expected to pay for services at the time services are rendered. Therapist accepts cash and checks.

### **Insurance**

Representative is responsible for any and all fees not reimbursed by his/her insurance company, managed care organization, or any other third-party payer. Representative is responsible for verifying and understanding the limits of his/her coverage, as well as his/her co-payments and deductibles. Therapist will not negotiate with insurance to change or alter rates. Any insurance needs must be done by client, representative, or third party payer to insure reimbursement.

### **Cancellation Policy**

Representative is responsible for payment of the agreed upon session fee, but no less than \$100, for any missed session(s). Representative is also responsible for payment of the agreed upon fee for any session(s) for which Representative failed to give therapist at least 48 hours notice of cancellation. Cancellation notice should be left on therapist's voice mail at (805) 364-4427.

### **Therapist Availability**

Therapist's office is equipped with a confidential voice mail system that allows client or representative to leave a message at any time. Therapist will make every effort to return calls within 24 hours (or by the next business day), but cannot guarantee the calls will be returned immediately. Therapist is unable to provide 24-hour crisis service. In the event that client is feeling unsafe or requires immediate medical or mental health assistance, client or representative should call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room. 211 is another resource for client for mental health assistance if the therapist should not be available.

### **Termination of Therapy**

Therapist reserves the right to terminate therapy at his/her discretion. Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to, untimely payment of fees, failure to comply with treatment recommendations, conflicts of interest, failure to participate in therapy, client needs are outside of therapist's scope of competence or practice, or client is not making adequate progress in therapy. Client or representative has the right to terminate therapy at his/her discretion. Upon either party's decision to terminate therapy, therapist will generally recommend that client participate in at least one, or possibly more, termination sessions. These sessions are intended to facilitate a positive termination experience and give both parties an opportunity to reflect on the work that has been done. Therapist will also attempt to ensure a smooth transition to another therapist by offering referrals to client or representative if needed.

### **Acknowledgement**

By signing below, representative and/or client acknowledges that he/she has reviewed and fully understands the terms and conditions of this agreement. Representative and/or client has discussed such terms and conditions with therapist, and has had any questions with regard to its terms and conditions answered to representative's/client's satisfaction. Representative and/or client agree to abide by the terms and conditions of this agreement and consents to participate in psychotherapy with therapist. Moreover, representative and/or client agrees to hold therapist free and harmless from any claims, demands, or suits for damages from any injury or complications whatsoever, save negligence, that may result from such treatment.

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Client Name (please print)

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Signature of Client (if Client is 12 or older)

Date

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Signature of Representative (and relationship to Client)

Date

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Signature of Representative (and relationship to Client)

Date

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