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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 note any questions you might have so that we can discuss them over the phone, email or in our first session. Once you sign this form, it will constitute a binding agreement.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES: Psychotherapy is not easily described in general terms. The process varies depending on the personality of both the therapist and the client, as well as on the particular problems the client brings to treatment. As a therapist, I use a variety of methods to help each client meet his/her goals. This may involve biblio-therapy, homework, journaling, role-playing and other ways to best address the presenting problem. In order to be successful, therapy involves dedication on both the therapist's and the client's part. Therapy can be an exciting time of self- discovery. Psychotherapy has great benefits as well as potential risks, including the possible experience of uncomfortable feelings such as sadness, fear, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, and helplessness. These feelings are normal and to be expected when discussing painful issues. I am available for brief phone or email conversations between sessions if you are having difficulty processing issues that come up in sessions. Eventually, the feelings of resolution to old issues and current ones should enable you to feel more empowered and better about the situations that brought you into therapy.

Our first session will involve an evaluation of your needs and allow us to get to know each other. By the end, you should have a feeling about whether I am the right person to work with. Psychotherapy is a collaborative process; it involves time, energy and a commitment on your part.. Therefore, you must select a therapist whom you believe can help you.

QUALIFICATIONS: I hold a Master's degree in Counseling from Clemson University and have been a Licensed Professional Counselor since 2002. (SC 4014) . I keep up with current best practices by attending conferences, workshops and trainings every year to help me maintain competence and learn more about different issues. I have had the pleasure of working with a diverse group of people on a wide range of treatment issues, including but not limited to: depression, anxiety, substance abuse, identity development, history of child abuse or neglect, difficulties with peer relationships, ethnic and racial issues, anxiety, LBGT issues and family conflict. Outside of my practice, I have also worked in the field of domestic violence and sexual assault, as an in-school therapist working with youth and their families, with seriously ill patients, and in drug/alcohol settings focusing on youth and dual diagnosis women.

MEETINGS: My normal practice is to conduct a preliminary evaluation in the first session. This first session will usually last 60 minutes. Please note that if you have Providence or United Health Care, they will only pay for 45 minutes. At the end of the initial session, I will let you know whether I believe I am the right person to help with your problems, or I will suggest another qualified professional who may have specific skills that would better benefit you.

With your agreement to continue therapy, we will schedule therapy according to your needs. Most people prefer weekly sessions but there are some who wish for more or less frequent sessions. Some sessions will run longer than the standard hour depending upon your needs.

PROFESSIONAL FEES: My hourly fee is \$120. However, I know that many people without insurance cannot afford this rate. I encourage you to contact me if this is the case so that we may look at lower rates. I accept cash or check and will be accepting credit cards soon. If a client is not making regular payments; therapy will be terminated until balance is paid. I reserve the right to collect any unpaid balance due.

Unless you provide 16 hours advance notice of cancellation, you will be expected to pay a missed appointment fee of \$75 unless we agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. If possible, I will reschedule your appointment for later in the week. There is a \$30.00 bank charge fee for any returned check. If you have missed more than three appointments within 8 weeks, other than for extreme circumstances, it is up to therapist's discretion to terminate therapy.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS: You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held. If insured, you will only be expected to pay the copay of your insurance unless your deductible has not been met. However, you, and not your insurance company, are responsible for the full payment of the fee, which we have agreed upon. I encourage you to call your insurance company before your first appointment and find out if you have met your deductible. Some insurance companies require prior-authorization. It is your responsibility to determine if this is the case. Some insurance contracts require you to authorize me to provide a clinical diagnosis, a treatment plan or summary. While the insurance companies claim to maintain confidentiality, I have no control over what they do with the information once they receive it. Some clients prefer to pay for their treatment privately, rather than trying to get insurance reimbursement, in order to avoid the complexities that are described above. I accept cash or credit cards. In circumstances of financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a lower rate. I reserve the right to collect any unpaid balance due. If a client is not making regular payments, therapy will be terminated until balance is paid.

CONTACTING ME: I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am often in the office, I will not answer the telephone while I am with a client. I use voice mail and check my messages frequently. On my business days I will make every effort to return your call that day. On weekends and holidays, it may take up to 48 hours for me to return your call. I am not available on a 24-hour-a-day basis. **If you have an emergency, and you feel you cannot wait for me to return your call, you should call 411 -Crisis Line, 1-800-SUICIDE, or the emergency room at the nearest hospital and ask for the psychiatrist on call.** If I will be unavailable for an extended period of time, I will notify you of my absence and make every effort to let you know when I will be able to see you again or attempt to help you find another therapist if you indicate the need.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS: Both law and the standards of my profession require that I maintain appropriate treatment records. You are entitled to a copy of the records or an appropriate summary. Because professional records can be easily misunderstood or misinterpreted by lay readers, I provide them only upon request, and recommend that you review them with me so we can discuss the contents together. My confidential therapy notes are **not** part of these records.

CONFIDENTIALITY: I am committed to protect your privacy and confidentiality to the fullest extent possible in accordance with the Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (**HIPAA**) and SC laws (chemical abuse/drug addiction). The copy of your HIPAA is in the forms section of my webpage and I ask you to read it and sign to acknowledge that you've read it.

The current state laws and regulations limit confidentiality and require disclosure under the following circumstances: (1) A valid court order. (2) If there is any suspicion of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child, I am required by law to inform the Department of Social Services. I am also required by law to inform Adult Protective Services if there is any suspicion of physical abuse of a dependent adult. (3) If I have a reasonable cause to believe that you are a danger to yourself or to the person or property of someone else, then disclosure must be made to an appropriate individual or agency that can prevent the threatened danger. These types of situations have rarely arisen in my practice. Should such a situation arise, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

While this summary of exceptions to confidentiality should be helpful in general, it is important that we discuss any specific questions you might have at our next session. The laws governing these issues are quite complex, and I am not an attorney. While I am happy to discuss these issues with you, if you need specific advice, formal legal consultation may be desirable. Your public confidentiality is also entitled to respect. There may be an occasion that we will encounter one another outside of the office by chance. In order to protect your privacy, I will not acknowledge that we are acquainted. If you choose to greet me, I will happily do so as well.

Legal Matters: If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information concerning your evaluation, diagnosis or treatment, such information is protected by the counselor-client privilege law. I cannot provide any information without your (or your personal or legal representative's) written authorization. However, if a court orders or subpoenas me to disclose information, I am required by law to provide it. If you are involved in or contemplating litigation you should consult with your attorney to determine whether a court would be likely to order us to disclose information.

Consent for Treatment: I have read and understand the above, and agree to engage your professional services under these terms and conditions.

Client Signature _____ / /

Lisa Wilson, LPC _____ / /