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COUNSELING vs. COACHING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Differences & Similarities Between Coaching and Psychotherapy

In addition to being a coach, Ryan is also a licensed professional counselor in Arizona, with knowledge, training, and experience in diagnosing and treating mental health disorders. While there are many similarities between role and function of a Coach and a Licensed Counselor, there are also important and distinct differences that are important for you to understand.

As defined by Arizona State Law and Arizona Board of Behavioral Health, the practice of “professional counseling” means the professional application of mental health, psychological and human development theories, principles and techniques to: (a) Facilitate human development and adjustment throughout the human life span. (b) Assess and facilitate career development. (c) Treat interpersonal relationship issues and nervous, mental and emotional disorders that are cognitive, affective or behavioral. (d) Manage symptoms of mental illness. (e) Assess, appraise, evaluate, diagnose and treat individuals, couples, families and groups through the use of psychotherapy.

Coaching is *different* from psychotherapy — it neither is, nor purports to be, a substitute for psychotherapy. The primary differences between coaching and counseling (“psychotherapy”) are that psychotherapy is a healthcare/medical service that usually involves a health/medical diagnosis from a state-licensed mental health professional. This is not true for coaching. You will not receive a medical/health diagnosis. Licensed mental health providers are regulated by state law and by a state board of behavioral health and are required to practice in accordance with these laws and ethics. “Coaching” is not a profession regulated by state law. Although a code of ethics is adopted, a code of ethics is not required to be followed. Counseling will result in formal medical records, subject to rules of HIPPA, while coaching will not include medical records.

Some of the similarities between coaching and counseling include: facilitating human development and adjustment throughout the human life span, assessing and facilitating career development, coaching interpersonal relationship issues and mental/emotional problems that are cognitive, affective or behavioral, managing symptoms of problems experiences, and helping individuals, couples, families, and groups. Both coaching and psychotherapy utilize knowledge of human behavior, motivation, behavioral change and interactive techniques to facilitate the change process.

Professional Counseling vs. Coaching

	Professional Counseling ("Psychotherapy")	Coaching
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health provider who helps assess and facilitate human development and adjustment throughout the lifespan. • Clinically assess, diagnose, and treat client(s) according to Diagnostic Statistical Manual and/or International Classification of Diseases Manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained/experienced coach who helps assess and facilitate human development and adjustment throughout the lifespan. • Provide (non-clinical) assessment, diagnosis of problems/solutions, and facilitate change process. • Partner with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. <p>*If needed, refer out for clinical professional services</p>
Diagnosis and Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis • Most subscribe to "BioPsychoSocial Model" that recognizes the influence and interaction between various personal factors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biological/physiological • psychological/cognitive/emotional • behavioral • social/environmental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does <i>NOT</i> provide medical diagnosis • Subscribes to "BioPsychoSocial Model" that recognizes the influence and interaction between various personal factors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biological/physiological • psychological/cognitive/emotional • behavioral • social/environmental
Issues/Topics Worked With	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive, Emotional, Behavioral Problems (<i>With Clinical Diagnosis</i>) • Clinical Mental Health, Relationships, Career-Related (<i>With Diagnosis</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive, Emotional, Behavioral Problems (<i>Without Clinical Diagnosis</i>) • General Health, Relationships, Career-Related (<i>Without Diagnosis</i>)
Education/Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a minimum of a master-level education, training, supervised experience, and ongoing professional training • Client must be diligent in uncovering the education, knowledge, and experience to ensure value will be provided in <i>therapy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, knowledge, and experience obtained in a variety of ways (formally and informally) • No formal education, knowledge, and experience required • Client must be diligent in uncovering the education, knowledge, and experience to ensure value will be provided in <i>coaching</i>
Law and Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governed by and works in accordance with state law for licensed mental health professionals • HIPPA-Compliant (Storage and portability of medical records) • In accordance with American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntarily subscribes to ethics set forth by particular area of service • Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life Coaching: ICF Code of Ethics - Tutoring: ACTP Code of Ethics - Fitness: NCSF Code of Ethics • No "Medical Records" kept • Confidentiality is still paramount
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Pay, Insurance (dependent on medical necessity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Pay

Purposes, Limits, and Risks of Coaching

Most clients that obtain coaching services benefit from the process, but coaching, like most endeavors in the helping professions, is not an exact science. While the ultimate purpose of coaching is to reduce your struggles and increase your level of competence, confidence, and level of fulfillment in a specified area through a process of personal growth, there are no guarantees that the coaching provided will be effective, useful, or will yield intended positive results.

Self-exploration, increasing affect tolerance, gaining insight, exploring options for coping, learning new skills, or sharing feelings/experiences are generally quite useful, but there are some risks. The process of coaching usually involves working through distressing personal issues that can result in some emotional or psychological pain for the client. Please understand that some people experience uncomfortable feelings throughout coaching. Exploring life issues may elicit feelings of unhappiness, anger, sadness, grief, guilt, or frustration. These feelings are difficult, but a natural and normal part of coaching and the change process for growth. Coaching is limited to the specific goals you are voluntarily working on, but coaching may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing, relationships, or virtually any other aspect of your life. Sometimes these decisions, that are deemed positive by Client, might viewed quite negatively by another family member. Change will sometimes be easy, swift, and rewarding, but often change will be challenging, slow, and frustrating. Change is a process. Change is hard work.

If the Coach or Client recognize that a problem would benefit from psychotherapeutic intervention, client will be referred to appropriate resources. In some situations, the Coach may insist that Client initiate and participate in psychotherapy as a condition of continued coaching.

**Coaching is not a substitute for getting legal, medical, financial, business, or psychological guidance. You agree to seek professional guidance in these areas, as needed. You understand that all decisions in these areas are your sole responsibility.*

Crisis Situations

Mastering ME LLC does not have the capability to respond immediately to emergencies or crises. Crisis situations and emergencies should be directed to community emergency services (911) or to the crisis line (MMIC Behavioral Health Crisis Line, 602-222-9444). Because our practice does not have in-house psychiatric medication management or crisis services we do not work with serious mental illness, violent behaviors, or personality disorders. If you present with these conditions, we reserve the right to refer you to appropriate providers or programs.

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Records

Confidentiality is the protection of any information obtained through the coaching process. To deliver continuity of your coaching sessions, your Coach *may* take general electronic notes/record keeping regarding your coaching sessions, including topics discussed, successes/progress recognized, struggles/problems experienced, next steps/action recommended from session to session, and financial records. Any notes taken and records kept are stored in a confidential manner. Furthermore, your Coach may expect you to take notes within or at conclusion of sessions to document learning, which serves as a reference and guide between sessions.

Ordinarily, all communications and records created in the process of coaching are held in the strictest confidence. However, there are numerous exceptions to confidentiality defined in the state and federal statutes. Limitations of such client held privilege of confidentiality exist and are itemized below:

1. If a client threatens or attempts to die by suicide or otherwise conducts him/herself in a way there is a substantial risk of incurring serious bodily harm.
2. If a client threatens grave bodily harm or death to another person.
3. If the therapist has a reasonable suspicion that a client or other named victim is the perpetrator, observer of, or actual victim of physical, emotional or sexual abuse of children under the age of 18 years.
4. Suspicions as stated above in the case of an elderly person who may be subjected to these abuses.
5. Suspected neglect of the parties named in items #3 and # 4.

Our Coaches may also participate in a process where selected clients/coaching sessions are discussed with other professional colleagues to facilitate continued professional growth and to get you the benefit of a variety of coaching

experiences and skillsets. While no identifying information is released in this peer consultation process, the dynamics of the problems and the people are discussed, along with the coaching approaches and methods.

Termination Policy

Ending relationships is usually difficult. Therefore, it is important to have a termination process to achieve some closure. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the coaching. Due to the voluntary nature of coaching, either party, Coach or Client, has liberty to terminate coaching, at any time, for any reason. Your coach may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you and a termination process if your coach determines that the coaching is not being effectively used or if you are in default on payment. Your coach will not terminate the coaching relationship/agreement without first discussing and exploring the reasons and purpose of terminating.

**Unless arrangements between Coach and Client are made, if Client fails to schedule an appointment and more than 30 days passes without any communication from Client, Coach will administratively close out of coaching services at that time. Coaching will be considered 'Terminated'.*

Dispute Resolution

Problems can arise in the relationship with your provider, just as in any other relationship. If you are not satisfied with any area of your work with your coach, please raise your concerns with your coach immediately. You can communicate in-person, preferably, or email your Coach at ryan@masteringme.org. Your work together will be slower and more challenging if you are not able to address your concerns. Your provider will make every effort to hear any complaints you have and to seek solutions to them.

Limitation of Liability & Waiver

You acknowledge and agree that throughout coaching services, you are fully responsible for your physical, mental, and emotional well-being, and for any actions, choices and decisions made as a result of the coaching. In no event shall "MASTERING ME LLC" or its service providers be held liable to client for any special, punitive, incidental, indirect, or consequential damages of any kind in connection with this signed "Coaching Agreement/Contract". You understand that your Coach makes no guarantees or warranties, expressed or implied, about any results to be achieved.

Consent for Coaching

Consent is hereby given for my Coach, Ryan Helton, at Mastering ME LLC. It is agreed that either of us may discontinue coaching at any time and that you are free to accept or reject the coaching provided. I understand that I have the right to participate in coaching decisions, the formation of goals, and the development and periodic review and revision of my goals. In the case of a minor child, I hereby affirm that I am a custodial parent or legal guardian of the child and that I authorize services for the child under the terms of this agreement. I understand that no specific promises have been made to me by this Coach about the results of coaching, the effectiveness of the methods and procedures used by this Coach, or the number of sessions necessary for coaching to be effective.

I have read, or have had read to me, the issues, and points in this "Counseling vs. Coaching Memorandum of Understanding" document. I have discussed those points I did not understand, and have had my questions, if any, fully answered. I agree to act according to the points covered in this information. I understand the similarities and differences between Counseling and Coaching, as outlined in this document, and as shown by my signature here.