

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER THERAPY

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Welcome to my practice, *Knowledge is Power Therapy*. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. It also contains summary information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law that provides privacy protections and patient rights about the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is very important that you understand them. When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between us. We can discuss any questions you have when you sign them or at any time in the future.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Therapy is a relationship between people that works in part because of clearly defined rights and responsibilities held by each person. As a client in psychotherapy, you have certain rights and responsibilities that are important for you to understand. There are also legal limitations to those rights that you should be aware of. I, as your therapist, have corresponding responsibilities to you. These rights and responsibilities are described in the following sections.

Psychotherapy has both benefits and risks. Risks may include experiencing uncomfortable feelings, such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness, because the process of psychotherapy often requires discussing the unpleasant aspects of your life. However, psychotherapy has been shown to have benefits for individuals who undertake it. Therapy often leads to a significant reduction in feelings of distress, increased satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, greater personal awareness and insight, increased skills for managing stress and resolutions to specific problems. There are no guarantees about what will happen, however, or what feelings may arise that you will have to deal or cope with. Psychotherapy requires a very active effort on your part. In order to be most successful, you will have to work on things we discuss outside of sessions.

The first 2-4 sessions will involve a comprehensive evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some initial impressions of what our work

might include. At that point, we will discuss your treatment goals and create an initial treatment plan. You should evaluate this information and make your own assessment about whether you feel comfortable working with me. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

APPOINTMENTS

Appointments will ordinarily be 45-50 minutes in duration, once per week, twice per month or monthly at a time and date we agree on. We may engage in more or less frequent sessions depending on your needs, availability (mine or yours), or based on your ability to pay for sessions. The time scheduled for your appointment is assigned to you and you alone. If you need to cancel or reschedule a session, I ask that you provide me with 24 hours' notice. If you miss a session without canceling, or cancel with less than 24-hour notice, my policy is to collect the amount of your payment [unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control]. If it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment. In addition, you are responsible for coming to your session on time; if you are late, your appointment will still need to end on time.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

The standard fee for the initial intake is \$ and each subsequent session is \$. You are responsible for paying at the time of your session unless prior arrangements have been made. Payment must be made by PayPal or Zelle; I am not able to process credit card charges as payment. Understand that the standard fee may change and increase over the course of time, but I do what I can to offer ethical, legal and meaningful therapy at below-average prices and will continue to attempt to do so as long as possible. If you refuse to pay your debt, I reserve the right to use an attorney or collection agency to secure payment.

In addition to weekly appointments, it is my practice to charge this amount on a prorated basis (I will break down the hourly cost) for other professional services that you may require such as report writing, telephone conversations that last longer than 5 minutes, attendance at meetings or consultations which you have requested, or the time required to perform any other service which you may request of me. If you anticipate becoming involved in a court case, I recommend that we discuss this fully before you waive your right to confidentiality. It is better practice not to include me *at all* in any litigation, if possible. This is to ensure that your therapy remains confidential and if prompted, requested or subpoenaed to come to court, this will compromise this confidentiality. If your case requires my participation or presence in court, mediation, or even arbitration, you will be expected to pay no less than \$1,000 per day for the professional time required even if another party compels me or subpoenas me to testify.

INSURANCE

I am not a participating provider for your insurance plan, but I will supply you with a receipt of payment for services, which you can submit to your insurance company for reimbursement. Please note that not all insurance companies reimburse for out-of-network providers. If you prefer to use a participating provider, I will refer you to a colleague or a counseling center that accepts insurance.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

I am required to keep appropriate records of the psychological services that I provide. Your records are maintained in a secure location in my office. I keep brief records noting that you were here, your reasons for seeking therapy, the goals and progress we set for treatment, your diagnosis (if any), topics we discussed, your medical, social, and treatment history, records I receive from other providers, copies of records I send to others, and your billing records. Except in unusual circumstances that involve danger to yourself, you have the right to a copy of your file. Because these are professional records, they may be misinterpreted and / or upsetting to untrained readers. For this reason, I recommend that you initially review them with me, or have them forwarded to another mental health professional to discuss the contents. If I refuse your request for access to your records, you have a right to have my decision reviewed by another mental health professional, which I will discuss with you upon your request. You also have the right to request that a copy of your file be made available to any other health care provider at your written request.

CONFIDENTIALITY

My policies about confidentiality, as well as other information about your privacy rights, are fully described in a separate document entitled Notice of Privacy Practice located [HERE](#). Please remember that you may reopen the conversation at any time during our work together.

PARENTS & MINORS

While privacy in therapy is crucial to successful progress, parental involvement can also be essential. It is my policy not to provide treatment to a child under age 13 unless s/he agrees that I can share whatever information I consider necessary with a parent. For children 14 and older, I request an agreement between the client and the parents allowing me to share general information about treatment progress and attendance, as well as a treatment summary upon completion of therapy. All other communication will require the child's agreement, unless I feel there is a safety concern (see also above section on Confidentiality for exceptions), in which case I will make every effort to notify

the child of my intention to disclose information ahead of time and make every effort to handle any objections that are raised.

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone or by email. I do not answer my phone when I am with clients or otherwise unavailable. At these times, you may leave a message on my confidential voice mail and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Please understand that it may take a day or two for non-urgent matters. If, for any number of unseen reasons, you do not hear from me or I am unable to reach you, and you feel you cannot wait for a return call or if you feel unable to keep yourself safe, 1) Contact the Cobb County Community Services Board Behavioral Health Crisis Center @ 770-429-5000 2) Go to your Local Hospital Emergency Room, or 3) call 911. I will make every attempt to inform you in advance of any planned absence. Please note that I am busy most days working hard to help others and may not be able to get to your call or email in an expedient manner. This does not mean I do not care or that I am apathetic to your needs. My email is monitored only periodically as is my voicemail. Again, if you are in immediate crisis of harming yourself or someone else, please dial 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

OTHER RIGHTS

If you are unhappy with what is happening in therapy, I hope you will talk with me so that I can respond to your concerns. Such comments will be taken seriously and handled with care and respect. You may also request that I refer you to another therapist and are free to end therapy at any time. You have the right to considerate, safe and respectful care, without discrimination as to race, ethnicity, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or source of payment. You have the right to ask questions about any aspects of therapy and about my specific training and experience. You have the right to expect that I will not have social or sexual relationships with clients or with former clients.

CONSENT TO PSYCHOTHERAPY

Your signature below indicates that you have read this Agreement and the Notice of Privacy Practices and agree to their terms.

Signature of Patient or Personal Representative

Printed Name of Patient or Personal Representative

Date _____

Description of Personal Representative's Authority: _____
