**ORIENTATION PACKAGE**

Welcome to my private practice. Thank you for trusting me to assist you with your personal concerns. There are some things that you should be aware of as you enter counseling/therapy with me:

**Risks and Benefits of Treatment**: Psychotherapy and counseling involves both benefits and risks. In terms of risk, therapy may involve discussing, or bringing to awareness and attention, unpleasant aspects of your life; as a result you may experience uncomfortable feelings. The changes generated by therapy could create disruption or uncertainty in your life.

Research has shown that psychotherapy has many benefits. Dr. Scott Miller of the International Centre for Clinical Excellence has found: “We have mountains of evidence that treatment works – the average person in treatment is better off than 80% of those who have not had the benefit of treatment”. Therapy often leads to healthier relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But therapy doesn’t work for everyone and it doesn’t come with guarantees. Success in therapy requires active participation on your part. To maximize the benefits of therapy, you need to identify your treatment goals and work on them both in session and between sessions.

**Confidentiality**: The information you share in counseling is considered confidential and will not be shared with others. If I want to speak to someone about your situation, I will ask you to sign a consent form identifying what information will be sought/shared and with whom it will be shared.

There are some important exceptions to the rule of confidentiality. If you tell me that you or someone else is at risk of being harmed (for example by suicide or homicide) I am legally obliged to take steps to try to protect the potential victim. This may involve notifying the police or seeking hospitalization for the person who is at risk. If you tell me that a child is at risk of being harmed by a caregiver, I am legally obliged to report this to Child Protective Services. It is also possible for counseling records to be subpoenaed through a court order.

I reserve the right to report to the police if you share involvement or knowledge of an unsolved crime that resulted in serious injury or death of an individual or animal.

**Confidentiality with Couples/Family Counselling**: I generally do not provide marital counselling, but if you have requested that I work with both members of a couple; I will require that both sign consent forms allowing me to speak openly with both spouses – this means that anything I learn from you, I will feel free to mention to your spouse.

If you are a parent, and I am seeing your child; know that the parent will NOT receive all of the information your child shares. You will be advised if I have any concern about your child’s safety or well-being. Otherwise I will share only with the child’s (verbal) consent.

**Use of Technology**: Once you are my client, I will NOT communicate with you by text or email. This guideline is not just “my rule” but is set out as a practice standard for professionals. So…if you need to reach me please call me and leave a voicemail message.

**Availability of Alternate Services**: I work in two locations. Three days a week, I work at the Taber Mental Health Clinic where counselling is offered free of charge. I also have a private practice office, where counseling is offered on a fee-for-service basis. If, based on your symptoms, you are eligible for services at the mental Health clinic I will let you know this and give you the option of seeking counselling there. The contact number is (403)223-7932 and appointments are available Monday – Friday 8:30 – 4:30.

**My Training and Experience:** I am a Registered Clinical Social Worker with a Master’s Degree in Clinical Social Work. I am a certified EMDR Therapist and a Consultant-in-Training. I have been providing individual and family counselling for over 28 years and have a passionate interest in physical and emotional wellbeing.

**Payment of Fees**: Payment is made at the end of each session. You can pay by cash, check or e-transfer. I do not have a debit machine. My fee is $110 an hour billed to the closest ¼ hour. This usually means:

* $110 for an hour session.
* $165 for 1.5 hour session.
* Telephone calls: Call under 15 minutes are free. Longer calls are billed to the nearest ¼ hour ($25 per ¼ hour).

**Direct Billing:** I currently will direct bill for employees covered by Lanic Inc., ASEBP (Alberta School Benefit Program), and Blue Cross. If you have benefits with any of these programs you can request that I direct bill. That means I handle all of the paper work, and you don’t have to pay out of pocket.

**Cancellation and No Shows**: If you cannot attend a session, please call a minimum of 4 hours in advance to cancel – if you do so, there will be no charge for the session. If a session is booked but neither attended nor cancelled then there will be a $40 fee.

**Consultation:** I may occasionally find it helpful to consult with another professional for the purpose of improving service to you. I will be vigilant in maintaining your confidentiality and no identifying information will be released. For example, when working with a client with on medication, I may wish to consult with a pharmacist about dose or side effects. In doing so, I will speak of the client in general terms without using a name or any other identifying information.

**File Information**: I will keep notes to record what we have worked on in session. These notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. The files will be kept for 10 years after the last clinical contact (this is in accordance with the health professions act). You can request to see your file information.

**Complaints:** If you are not satisfied with any aspect of our work please discuss your concerns with me. If you believe that I have acted unprofessionally or unethically you can report your concerns to the Alberta College of Social Workers at (780)421-1168 or 1-800-661-3089.

**Duration of Sessions:** The first appointments is generally 80 minutes. Follow up appointments are usually 50 minutes. EMDR sessions are booked for 80 minutes.

**Funerals and Weddings:** My office is located in a church. Client sessions cannot occur when a funeral or wedding is being officiated. Weddings are booked in advance, but funerals can occur unexpectedly. This may result in the rescheduling of an appointment. I will contact you as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements.

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