# SERENITY NEUROPSYCHOLOGY, PLLC

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## PATIENT-PSYCHOLOGIST AGREEMENT

When "clinic" is mentioned, this refers to Serenity Neuropsychology, PLLC and owner Melody Snider, Ph.D. Dr. Snider wishes to welcome you. We are required to provide you with this document which contains important information about our services and business policies. Please read this document and feel free to ask any questions. Your signature below represents an agreement between you, Dr. Snider, and Serenity Neuropsychology, PLLC. We reserve the right to change this document. Any changes significantly affecting your treatment will be discussed with you and you will be asked to sign a new document. If you remain under our care for counseling, we will also request you review and sign this document on an annual basis.

### ABOUT DR. SNIDER

Dr. Snider is a licensed psychologist with specialized training in clinical neuropsychology and clinical psychology. She has experience in therapy, psychological and neuropsychological assessment, and cognitive rehabilitation in adult populations. She returned to her home state of Idaho to work in a private practice setting in September 2007. Prior to private practice, she gained experience working in neuropsychology and pain clinics, rehabilitation and VA hospitals, a medical school, a state prison, outpatient counseling clinics, and nursing homes. She earned her Master's and Doctorate degrees at the University of Montana, completed her internship at Central Arkansas VA and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and attended her residency at Emory Medical School. Her curriculum vitae is available upon request.

### FOR INDIVIDUALS PRESENTING FOR NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL and PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Dr. Snider has the ethical responsibility to refer you to a different provider for assessment/evaluation if she determines it is in your best interest. We will conduct an intake interview. Unless you are otherwise scheduled and instructed during the scheduling process, please allow approximately 1 ½ hours for your intake. You may bring a friend and/or family member to the intake appointment. At that time, you will be scheduled for the next available testing session(s). It is common for additional history gathering to occur during the testing portion of the assessment. Typically, an assessment/evaluation includes a few hours of testing that may be completed in 1 or 2 separate sessions, depending on many factors. Due to test security reasons, only you and Dr. Snider will be allowed in the testing room. Approximately 3 weeks after the conclusion of testing, as scheduling allows, you will be scheduled to return to the clinic for your feedback session. Unless you are otherwise informed, please allow approximately 1 ½ hours for your feedback session. You may bring a friend and/or family member to the feedback session. Feedback is often necessary for clarification of select issues. **Thus, the full report will not be completed until a few weeks after feedback. Report completion delays may occur due to the following: the only opportunity to work on reports is typically during weekends and holidays, the thoroughness of every report, and unusually busy times of the year. Moreover, in order to provide you with Dr. Snider's level of expertise during each step of your treatment, she prefers to solely conduct your entire evaluation. Consequently, we do not employ assistants, psychometrists (a technician who administers the tests), extended providers, students, or trainees. That is, Dr. Snider conducts 100% of your evaluation. Expected delays and timelines will be discussed. Updates will be provided as necessary to aid in continuity of care**. Reports include your history, test results, comprehensive summary to aid your busy providers, several recommendations, and when relevant, a table with the results. Typically, tables are only included with neuropsychological assessments. **One comprehensive report will be prepared and will include documentation for your intake, testing session(s), and feedback. Unless your insurance requires a different process, submitting claims to your insurance for all appointments occurs after the report is completed.**

Although every neuropsychological evaluation is tailored to patient needs, the evaluation typically involves a wide variety of tests and questionnaires and will assess several abilities such as problem-solving, attention, learning, memory, intellect, word finding and other language abilities, visual-spatial, and motor skills. We also assess emotional status, personality traits, strengths and weaknesses, and life stressors as part of evaluations.

There is no way to study for the tests and all tests will be explained in a standardized manner. Psychological evaluations will include a variety of questionnaires to evaluate one's mood, personality traits, life stressors, and medical history. Evaluations can have benefits and risks. There are no guarantees of what you will experience. Possible benefits include, but are not limited to, discovering your strengths in order to compensate for your weaknesses and finding the appropriate diagnoses in order to apply accurate treatment. Testing often aids in continuity of care with other providers. People sometimes find specific tests to be entertaining and find it interesting to better understand their mood and personality. Possible risks include becoming frustrated and upset during the testing. You may feel nervous and become fatigued. Memory of traumas and other negative experiences from your history may surface. Furthermore, in certain cases the final diagnoses and certain recommendations may be upsetting to you and your family. At times, a nonspecific diagnosis is most accurate. It is not uncommon for neuropsychological evaluations to be requested as part of the entire treatment process planned by your physician. Thus, a definitive diagnosis is not always expected until your physician has conducted additional tests. We are often seen as one step in a multi-step process and at times are not the final step, depending on the specific referring issues, your concerns, history, and prior tests conducted.

**FOR INDIVIDUALS PRESENTING FOR COUNSELING SERVICES**

The first session/intake is typically 90 min. Frequently, a second session is needed to complete a comprehensive intake to address counseling goals, treatment plan, and to thoroughly understand your history. Typically, follow-up individual counseling appointments will be 45-50 minutes. **In order to allow every patient equal time and consideration, Dr. Snider stresses the importance of keeping appointments to 45-50 minutes and will ask for your continued cooperation.**

During the first few appointments, Dr. Snider will conduct a thorough history as she believes your history is necessary in determining the most appropriate treatment. Please be advised Dr. Snider has the ethical responsibility and reserves the right to refer you **at any point in the treatment process** if she feels she is no longer the most appropriate psychologist. Typically, we can assess within 3-4 sessions whether your needs will be better met by a different provider, though she may determine this later in treatment depending on your presenting issues/life changes. If she feels it is in your best interest for a different provider to see you, she will discuss this with you and she will assist you in finding another provider. Similarly, if you feel another therapist is better suited to provide your treatment, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with Dr. Snider. You have the right to seek a second opinion and transfer your treatment. Counseling often involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy so you are encouraged to evaluate whether you feel comfortable working with Dr. Snider.

Throughout counseling you will be asked to complete various questionnaires assessing your symptoms. Typically, these questionnaires will be administered at no cost to you or your insurance company. If a complete psychological assessment, or much more rarely, a neuropsychological assessment is determined to be helpful, this will be discussed with you and insurance coverage will be determined prior to administration. If necessary, you may be referred to another clinic to complete a formal assessment.

Counseling can have benefits and risks. There are no guarantees regarding what you will experience. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience several uncomfortable feelings such as sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, anxiety, and helplessness, to name a few. Questionnaires may trigger these emotions as well. On the other hand, therapy has also been shown to have benefits including improvement in relationships and quality of life, finding solutions to specific problems, significant reduction in distress, helping people accomplish their goals, finding better ways to cope, reducing chronic health problems, and learning to use your strengths.

You are more likely to see benefit from therapy by being active in the process. You will be asked to work on certain techniques at home in order to transfer what you learn in session to your daily life. Keep in mind therapy is a joint process and you and Dr. Snider will work as a team. The types of treatments she offers are flexible and designed to meet your specific needs.

**MEDICATION EVALUATIONS**

If appropriate, Dr. Snider will refer you for a medical/medication evaluation or will encourage you to seek such an evaluation from a physician whom you already trust. Although you have choices in regard to the types of treatments you seek, understand that ethically, we need to ensure that you are aware of your treatment options. Certain conditions are most appropriately treated with a combination of medication and counseling.

**DISABILITY, LIFE INSURANCE, and SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION CLAUSE**

Dr. Snider MAY assist with disability and life insurance claims, on a case-by-case basis, by sending the report with a signed release for the length of time she keeps your report. Additional charges may apply and may be the patient's responsibility (see below). No actual legal testimony/deposition will occur in such cases. **Dr. Snider will not complete any disability forms/documentation** (ST or LT disability forms via your employer, a disability policy through a specific insurance, and/or any company responsible for processing your disability claim, etc.). **Dr. Snider does not perform disability evaluations. Therefore, she will not make a formal opinion about whether an individual qualifies for disability benefits**. Moreover, **we will not complete life insurance related documents/forms**. Evaluations conducted at Serenity Neuropsychology, PLLC are clinical evaluations, not meant to be used for any other purpose.

One school accommodation letter will be completed for $35 to be paid during the evaluation by the patient (this is an additional fee beyond any copays, deductibles, and coinsurance). **This letter needs to be completed within 2 months of the comprehension report**. Dr. Snider needs to base accommodation letters on current data. If a letter is needed further into the future, we recommend seeking the letter from a provider you have been regularly seeing or undergoing a specific, academic focused evaluation. **Although we will complete the aforementioned accommodation letter for a $35 fee, we will not complete additional forms or documents that may be required by an individual's school.** We have found this extra documentation is rare, but when this is required, the degree of information goes beyond the scope of our evaluation. Our purpose is to conduct a clinical evaluation. If you need more extensive documentation to satisfy school guidelines, then a specialized academic evaluation is recommended with a clinic who performs learning evaluations. This is up to the individual patient to find out about the school's requirements.

**Serenity Neuropsychology, PLLC and Dr. Melody Snider cannot guarantee the outcome of your disability claim, life insurance claim, and/or school accommodation request and are not to be held responsible for the outcome.**

**TERMINATION ISSUES**

Counseling is typically terminated by patient and psychologist agreement. Our clinic highly believes a formal termination session is helpful. **If treatment is terminated, there are no guarantees you will be able to return to the clinic in the future.** It is common for the counseling schedule to be full, though Dr. Snider does her best to prioritize previous patients. Patients presenting for assessment/evaluation, will typically attend 3-4 appointments unless the decision is made by both parties to continue treatment via counseling or via brief follow up sessions. Dr. Snider will strive to treat you with the utmost respect. In return, we expect you to be respectful. There are situations in which we may close your file without a formal termination. For example, if you or a family member/friend physically, sexually, legally, or verbally threatens Dr. Snider, comes to our clinic intoxicated, carries weapons onto our premises, or engages in illegal acts at our clinic, we have the right to immediately terminate the professional relationship. We also have the right to terminate for excessive no-show or late cancellations, refusal to comply with treatment, determination that treatment is no longer medically necessary or beneficial, excessive unpaid balances, if you change insurances and we are out of network, or if your case involves representation for legal or worker's compensation issues.

**EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Please know we are not a crisis center, though we will make every effort to return your call within a timely manner during regular business hours. You will be provided an emergency instruction sheet. Dr. Snider will not answer the phone when she is with a patient. When unavailable, the phone is answered by a confidential voicemail which is frequently monitored. At times, Dr. Snider is required to attend out-of-state conferences, which will usually result in an absence from the office for approximately 2 weeks. Moreover, 2 times annually,

for approximately 2 weeks each time, Dr. Snider is required to take time away from direct patient appointments in order to perform various administrative/office management duties (typically taken in January and July but may vary depending on business requirements). You will be given a notice several weeks and at times several months in advance of this lapse in treatment. At any point during your treatment, if you have an emergency and are unable to reach us (or if we determine it is in your best interest to be treated in the hospital), we expect you to go to the ER. **If at any point during your treatment we determine your needs are better served by a crisis center, a clinic who offers 24-hour on-call service, a clinic who has multiple providers available to you (i.e., a group practice with an on-call after-hour rotation system), or inpatient hospitalization, etc., we are ethically required to refer you and transfer treatment if medically necessary.**

**APPOINTMENTS**

Typically, if you are presenting for counseling/therapy, in the beginning of treatment, people find a weekly appointment beneficial. Dr. Snider does her best to accommodate patients seeking therapy on a weekly basis by not accepting more counseling patients into the clinic than her schedule allows. However, at times we may not be able to schedule you every week. We will strive to find a standing appointment for you (same time, same day of the week) if you desire as her schedule permits. Less frequent sessions are also possible and depend on your treatment plan, needs, insurance limitations, financial concerns, and scheduling considerations. If you are presenting for evaluations, please know, more times than not, evaluations require 3-4 appointments (intake x 1 session, testing x 1 or 2 session(s), feedback x 1 session), separated by a few weeks, as described above.

If you are a counseling patient and you begin limiting times in which we can see you, then frequency, standing appointments, and/or preferred times may not be accommodated. In such cases, transfer of care to another provider may be necessary. Similarly, if you cancel your regular appointments and wish to reschedule for another time, there may be times we are unable to accommodate.

Except for illness, an emergency, or inclement weather, Dr. Snider is committed to being available at your appointment time. If she is running late, she will do her best to provide you with your full appointment. If this is not possible due to her schedule or your schedule, you will only be charged for the time provided. If you are late to the appointment, in most cases we will only be able to provide a brief appointment. **Given our high demand for services, once an appointment is scheduled, we reserve the right to charge $50 if you do not show for the appointment or if you cancel without providing a 24-hour advanced notice of cancellation** (see registration form). If this policy is not adhered to, then we reserve the right to terminate.

We typically make reminder calls the business day prior to your scheduled appointments. Reminders may be in the form of text, if you have agreed to such communication (see Registration Form). Reminder calls are a courtesy and may not always be made due to other priorities.

**INSURANCE**

If you have a health insurance policy, our clinic will provide you with assistance in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled. However, you (not your insurance company) are ultimately responsible for the cost of your treatment. As a courtesy, we will inquire about your insurance benefits, but you are also asked to call your insurance to determine what your responsibility will be. Despite our best efforts and years of experience, we have been misinformed on occasion and are limited to the information we are told during each verification. We typically use the following billing codes (also called CPT codes): These codes need to be checked according to "**in an office setting, not in a facility.**" Verify that Dr. Melody Snider is in network with your specific insurance plan.

**Typical counseling billing codes:** 90791, 90832, 90834, and 90837
**Typical neuropsychological evaluation billing codes:** 90791, 96132, 96133, 96136, 96137
**Typical psychological evaluation billing codes:** 90791, 96130, 96131, 96136, and 96137

It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. There is no guarantee your insurance company will approve additional sessions at which point we will discuss further

payment options. Neuropsychological or psychological testing often requires preauthorization and at times a limited amount of hours will be approved by insurance. Dr. Snider will discuss these factors with you. Please also be aware most insurance companies require you to authorize us to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes we will have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or in some cases, copies of your entire record or comprehensive report. This information will become part of the insurance company files. Dr. Snider has no control over this information once it is in the insurance company's possession. You may also choose, in most cases, to pay for services without using your insurance to avoid many of these issues. A Good Faith Estimate (GFE) will be provided if you do not wish to use your insurance or if we are out of network with your insurance.

**PROFESSIONAL FEES**

*****If you have insurance, you will most likely only be responsible for a copay (specific amount) or coinsurance (percentage) and at times a deductible, which is determined by your insurance company.**

**Your portion of payment responsibility as determined by your insurance is due at the time of each appointment unless other arrangements have been made.** Failure to make reasonable payments on a timely basis may result in termination of treatment. When your insurance benefits have been exhausted, and further treatment is determined to be necessary, our clinic will discuss fee options with you.

Dr. Snider's fee as a licensed psychologist in the state of Idaho for the intake for all services (counseling, neuropsychological assessment, and psychological assessment/evaluations) is $285 per session. It is not uncommon for 2 sessions, on separate days to be needed for a comprehensive intake for counseling patients. For evaluation patients, as additional time is needed, portions of the intake may occur during the testing session as noted above. Intake codes may also be billed on an annual basis for counseling patients who remain in Dr. Snider's care. Subsequently, most counseling sessions are 45-50 min. and are $200. On occasion, sessions may last 60 min. and these counseling sessions are $245. In rare circumstances, it may be necessary to conduct 30 min. counseling sessions, which are $150.

Testing and feedback appointments for neuropsychological and psychological assessments are $220 per hour with the need to schedule several hours per assessment as described above. **The total evaluation price will include the following:** direct face-to-face time required to conduct each session as well as a limited amount of time toward scoring, interpretation, and comprehensive report writing. This time is captured according to the above-mentioned codes.

Dr. Snider may also charge $100 per hour (or $25 per 15 min.) for other services including regular telephone conversations with you or a family member lasting longer than 20 minutes, frequent consultations with your other providers, copying/sending/mailing the report for disability or life insurance benefits, making copies, and time spent performing any other services you may request of us. As mentioned above, we charge $35 to complete 1 letter of accommodation for school. If you request copies of your health information, we charge you 25¢ for each page, $25.00 per 15-minute increment for administrative time, and postage if you want the copies mailed to you (please see the Notice of Privacy Practices for additional information). A formal copy of the original report is mailed for free to each patient undergoing a neuropsychological or psychological evaluation. There is a $50 fee for all returned checks. As previously mentioned, you may be expected to pay $50 if you do not show or do not provide a 24-hour advanced notice of cancellation. These various services/costs are not covered by insurance companies and will be your responsibility.

Dr. Snider does not actively seek legal cases. However, if you become involved in legal proceedings that require her participation, you will be expected to pay for all of her professional time even if she is called to testify by another party. Travel time, report and other preparation time, research, literature review, record request and review, court testimony, wait time at the courthouse, depositions, consultations, attendance at any legal proceeding, and any other legal involvement will be charged to you and require a retainer and hourly fees. Costs can be provided upon request. These legal costs are nonrefundable even in the event the actual testimony or deposition is cancelled as such activities require extensive preparation regardless of final outcome (see termination section).

**DOCUMENTATION**

Please know Dr. Snider destroys entire records/charts after a designated period of inactivity. Beginning January 2026, all adult patient charts will be destroyed at a 10-year inactivity date, regardless of the patient's payment method (i.e., 100% cash payment) or insurance. At that time, your entire chart will be shredded, in a confidential manner. You will not be notified at the time of chart destruction. Consequently, **if you present for an evaluation/assessment, you are strongly encouraged to keep your copy of the report in the event a comparison is needed after 10 years.**

**PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Dr. Snider will do everything in her power to protect your privacy and confidentiality in accordance with state and federal law. In most situations, the communication between the patient and Dr. Snider is confidential. There are a few exceptions in which Dr. Snider is required to break confidentiality as listed below:

- Suspected or reported abuse, neglect, and/or abandonment in children, elderly, or dependent adults
- If there is reason to believe a patient may hurt him/herself or an identifiable someone else
- If a governmental agency is requesting the information for health oversight activities
- If the records are subpoenaed or court ordered
- Dr. Snider may occasionally find it helpful to consult with other health professionals. During such consultations, every effort is taken to preserve your confidentiality by not revealing any identifying information. These other professionals also are legally bound to keep information confidential.
- At times, administrative staff, billing staff, and independent contractors may be employed. They require access to your protected health information to perform their job duties such as scheduling, billing, and quality assurance. They are trained according to HIPAA guidelines and are legally and ethically required to maintain your confidentiality.
- Dr. Snider has contracts with a billing and credit card software company, an electronic fax company, telepsychology platform, assessment companies, a computer cloud-based company, and computer IT services. As required, a formal business associate's agreement is maintained between Dr. Snider and these organizations. Upon request, we will provide you with their names.
- If a patient becomes involved in a legal suit or Worker's Compensation (WC) case, we may be required to provide all clinical information relevant to the case for which the claim is filed. Dr. Snider does not actively seek legal/WC cases but in the event such cases emerge, patients are encouraged to understand how legal/WC situations will impact their confidentiality.
- We are also allowed to disclose confidential information to protect our clinic in the event a patient brings a lawsuit against Dr. Snider or Serenity Neuropsychology, PLLC.

**As part of your treatment, you will also be asked to sign the Notice of Privacy Practices/HIPAA, which includes additional information regarding confidentiality and your rights.**

Your signature on this patient-psychologist agreement document indicates you have received, understood, and agree to abide by its terms during your treatment. Your signature also indicates you consent to treatment which may involve an intake, neuropsychological assessment, psychological assessment, and/or counseling, as indicated and agreed upon by you and Dr. Snider to be medically necessary and in line with your goals. If you need to discuss any of these issues with Dr. Snider, please notify her before beginning your treatment.

_____
Patient or Authorized Representative's PRINTED Name

_____ _____
Patient or Authorized Representative's SIGNATURE Date