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Risks and Benefits of Therapy

Potential Risks:

- Sometimes, therapy can initially make clients feel worse, as it can bring up thoughts, feelings, memories, etc. that have been buried or ignored. It is important to be very open with your therapist if you feel that you are struggling to cope with all of the thoughts and emotions that are being brought up, and your therapist can help you to cope.
- Some clients develop strong feelings for their therapists (either positive or negative), especially when therapy has been a long process. This is a very common phenomenon, and is *normal*. It is important, however, to acknowledge these feelings, however uncomfortable they may make you feel. Your therapist will help you to understand how this is a part of your therapeutic progress, and will help you to deal with them in an appropriate and professional manner.
- Therapy may actually seem to complicate your life, initially. It often involves making life changes or altering your perspectives about situations, people, etc. It can change how you live, and how you relate to others. This can feel uncomfortable at times; however, ultimately it can bring about significant positive effects.
- Therapy can be expensive, and is not covered by OHIP. While many EAPs and insurance plans do offer full or partial coverage, it can be a significant financial investment.
- Finally, not all therapy is effective. If you have been in therapy for several weeks or months, and it does not feel like you are making progress, you should feel free to address this with your therapist. Perhaps you would do better with a different approach to therapy, or even with a different therapist. As a therapist, I know that I will not be the perfect fit for every client, and it is important that you feel a solid connection to me in order for therapy to make a positive difference in your life. If at any point you are questioning therapy's effectiveness, please inform me and we can discuss the issue together.

Benefits of Psychotherapy:

*While I cannot guarantee a specific outcome, there are a number of potential benefits that **may** result from attending therapy. The benefits usually depend on the specific problems (e.g. presenting problems) or difficulties that you hope to address. The benefits are also dependent on factors such as: the goals that are set during therapy, the duration of treatment, and the degree of motivation and commitment that you are bringing to the treatment. Following is a list of some common benefits that clients derive from therapy. It is important to note that not all benefits will apply to you, and this is not a comprehensive list.*

Some Potential Benefits:

- Improvement in your general mood
- Increased self-esteem and confidence
- Increased ability to set realistic goals and accomplish them
- Increased ability to manage stressful life circumstances
- Improved coping skills
- Increased intimacy with self and others
- Increase of feelings of connection with yourself and others
- Increased ability to manage strong emotional reactions such as anger, fear, and sadness
- Increased ability to trust and feel close to others
- Enhanced personal relationships
- Increased ability to communicate your feelings, thoughts, and needs to others
- Increased ability to stop behaviors that are not serving you well and start engaging in healthier behaviors

***** Research has shown that most of the common approaches to therapy are about equally successful. It is actually the *quality of the therapeutic relationship* that is the biggest predictor of outcomes from therapy. In general, psychotherapy clients are better off after therapy than they were before it, and they are better off after therapy than approximately 80% of untreated persons. *****

