

Consent for Treatment and Office Policy Statement

This document contains important information regarding office policies and confidentiality, in addition to your rights and responsibilities. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask me any questions you have regarding these policies.

Appointments and Availability. Sessions are typically 50 minutes in length for individuals and 60 minutes in length for couples, scheduled by appointment only. **Fees.** Fees will be payable at the end of each session, unless we make other arrangements. You may pay via credit card, cash or check. However, a credit card number will be collected at the end of the first session, if a second session has been scheduled, in case of cancellations made within 48 hours of your scheduled session (see below). Sessions longer than 50 minutes for individual or 60 minutes for couples, will be billed at the agreed hourly rate on a prorated basis. There is a \$25 service fee for bounced checks. A limited number of sliding-scale fee openings are available.

Clients are generally at least one time per week, although frequency can vary depending upon need. I am available and check messages during normal business hours, and you can contact me at 650-603-0625. If there is an emergency, and you are unable to reach me directly, call 911, go to the local emergency room, or call the crisis hotline at 650-579-0350.

Cancellations and Missed Appointments. If you must cancel an appointment, please contact me as soon as possible: you are responsible for the full session fee if you cancel fewer than 48 hours in advance of our scheduled appointment.

Confidentiality. What we discuss in therapy is private and confidential, and in general, I will not release information without your prior written consent. If we agree that consultation with others (e.g., healthcare providers, family members, teachers, etc.) would be beneficial to your therapy, I will provide you with a written Authorization to Exchange Confidential Information form for your signature. I am required to contact the appropriate authorities but not required to alert you that I am doing so under the following situations:

- If there is suspected abuse or neglect of a child, elderly person, or disabled person;
- If you threaten serious bodily harm to another person;
- If you are in danger of harming yourself or you are unable to care for yourself; and
- If I am ordered by a court to release information. Of course, if it is appropriate, I will make every effort to discuss the situation with you before breaking confidentiality in these situations.

Record Keeping. I will maintain in a secure location a clinical chart describing your therapy goals and progress, dates and fees for sessions, and notes describing each therapy session. Your records or any portion thereof will not be released without your written consent, except possibly in the situations described above. You are entitled to receive a copy or summary of your records, and a request for records must be made in writing. I reserve the right, under California law, to provide you with a treatment summary in lieu of a copy of the actual records, if I believe that seeing the full record would be emotionally damaging to you. You will be charged a prorated portion of my hourly rate for time I spend preparing and reviewing information requests. I will securely maintain your records for 10 years following the termination of therapy, or when a minor client turns 21 years of age, whichever is longer. After this time, your records will be destroyed in a manner that preserves your confidentiality.

Risks and Benefits of Therapy. Participation in therapy can result in emotional discomfort: some clients temporarily feel worse before they improve. And specific therapeutic outcomes cannot be guaranteed: some clients find that participating in psychotherapy results in changes they didn't expect at the outset. While there are some risks, many benefits are typically experienced as a result of therapy:

- It can be helpful just to know that someone is there for you, understands, and cares;
- Therapy can help clarify your understanding of yourself, your values, and your goals;
- Therapy can provide a fresh perspective on a difficult problem and point you in the direction of a solution; and
- Therapy can result in improved relationships, both with others and with yourself.

You and I will work together to develop a plan that will address the issues and goals you bring to therapy. Whether or not your therapy is successful depends upon many factors, including what your specific goals are, your willingness to actively participate in therapy, your commitment to change, and the therapeutic relationship you and I are able to develop.

Ethical Standards. As a Marriage and Family Therapist Associate, I am bound by ethical standards to “advance the welfare of families and individuals, respect the rights of those persons seeking their assistance, and make reasonable efforts to ensure that their services are used appropriately.” (California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, Ethical Standards, Part I). I do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, and disability, socioeconomic or marital status. I will not exploit the trust you place in me as your therapist.

Complaints. You have the right to have your complaints heard and resolved in a timely manner. If you have a complaint about your treatment, please inform me immediately so that we can discuss and resolve the situation. If you feel that I have breached an ethical or legal standard, you may contact the licensing board, the Board of Behavioral Sciences, 400 R Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.