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Welcome to our office. This document gives you some basic information to acquaint you with our procedures. We believe our work will be most helpful to you when you have a clear idea of what we are trying to do. This handout talks about the following in a general way:

- What the risks and benefits of therapy are
- What the goals of therapy are, and what our methods of treatment are like
- How much our services cost and how we handle money matters
- Other areas of our relationship including confidentiality, emergencies, appointments.

About Psychotherapy

Because you will be putting time, money, and energy into therapy, you should choose a therapist carefully. We believe you should feel comfortable with the therapist you choose and hopeful about the therapy. When you feel this way, therapy is more likely to be very helpful to you.

Our approach is based on collaborating with the client to understand how their current problems developed, what specific changes they can make, and what kind of support they will need to do this. We believe that relationships play a central role in this and will encourage examination of relationships with family members and friendships. Also, central to our work is looking at your self-concept, that is, ideas that you have developed about yourself. Finally, we find that a person's belief system is important in addressing problems, that is, how you make sense of what happens in life.

Therapy tends to happen in stages, the first involving exploring the issues and building trust, the second focusing on working through the problems, and the last stage consolidating changes. Psychotherapy requires your involvement through efforts to change thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and telling me important experiences, what they mean to you, and what feelings are involved.

Minor, major, and multiple problems take different amounts of time to resolve. Change will sometimes be easy and quick, but more often it will be slow and frustrating. You will need to keep trying.

The Benefits and Risks of Therapy

As with any treatment, there are some risks, as well as many benefits, with therapy. For example, there is a risk you will have for a time uncomfortable levels of sadness, anxiety, frustration, loneliness, helplessness, or other negative feelings. You may recall unpleasant memories or have conflicts with people important to you. Family secrets may be told. Most of these risks are to be expected when people are making any important changes in their lives. Finally, even with our best efforts, there is a risk that therapy may not work out well for you.

You should know also that scientists in hundreds of well-designed research studies have showed the benefits of therapy. People who are depressed may find their mood lifting. Others may no longer feel afraid, angry, or anxious. In therapy, people have a chance to talk things out fully, until their feelings are relieved or the problems are solved. Your relationships and coping skills may improve greatly. Your personal goals and values may become clearer, and your work life may improve.

Consultations

Based on what we learn about your problems, we may recommend a medical exam or use of medication. If we do this, we will fully discuss our reasons with you, so that you can decide what is best.

If you are treated by another professional, we will coordinate our services with them and with your own medical doctor.

About Confidentiality

We will treat with great care all the information you share with me. It is your legal right that our sessions and our records about you are kept private. That is why you are asked to sign a "release-of-records" form before we can talk about you or send our records about you to anyone else. We will not even reveal that you are receiving treatment from me without your permission. If we meet on the street or socially, we may not say hello or talk to you very much. Our behavior will not be a personal reaction to you, but a way to maintain the confidentiality of our relationship.

Also, in your best interest and following the APA's standards, we can only be your therapist. We cannot have any other role in your life. In all but a few rare situations, your confidentiality (that is, your privacy) is protected by state law and by the rules of our profession. Here are the most common cases in which confidentiality is not protected:

1. If you were sent to me by a court for evaluation or treatment, suing someone or being charged with a crime we might be ordered to show the court our records.
2. If you make a serious threat to harm yourself, the law requires me to try to protect you. This usually means telling others about the threat, such as family members, a local hospital, or police. We will fully discuss the need for this with you. Also if you make a serious threat to harm another person, we may have to inform the police of this or the intended victim.
3. If we believe a child or an elderly person has been or will be abused or neglected, we are legally required to report this to the authorities, such as child protective services. To "abuse" means to neglect, hurt, or sexually molest another person. We do not have any legal power to investigate the situation to find out all the facts; the state agency will investigate.
4. If you are a minor, your parents may have a right to know, in general, what we discuss.

In addition we are required to keep records of your treatment, usually notes about each session, as well as any assessment reports. You have a right to review these records. Finally, if you are using insurance to pay for treatment, they will request some information about your diagnosis, our treatment plan, etc. Please understand that we have no control over how these records are handled at the insurance company.

If we do family or couple therapy (where there is more than one client), and you want to have our records of this therapy sent to anyone, all of the adults present will have to sign a release.

Our Backgrounds

The licensed psychologists at this practice have been trained in the general practice of counseling/clinical psychology. They have completed a 5-year, Ph.D./Psy.D. degree program that covers individual, family, and group therapy, theories of psychology, and research. As part of the training, we completed a year-long internship, as well as supervised practicums in clinics and hospitals in which we gained clinical experience. We applied and received licensure through the state of Texas by taking additional examinations and obtaining supervised experience.

We have providers with other types of psychological licenses, such as LCSW, LPC, and LPA. These providers are also fully trained in individual, family, and group therapy, and in conducting psychological evaluations.

Our office is also a training facility, and we have interns working under the psychologists' supervision. You may be assigned to work with one of our interns. Each intern is in a doctoral program, has already completed several years of training, and is well qualified to work with you.

About Our Appointments

You will usually meet for a 50-minute session once a week. A few extra minutes will be used for scheduling/confirming our next session. We find that having the same appointment time each week is

beneficial to both parties, and our office will try to schedule your appointments in that manner whenever possible. **If you must cancel**, please give us as much notice as possible.

Fees, Payments, and Billing

Current fees for regular therapy: For a session of 50 minutes, the fee is \$ 175.00.

If You Need to Contact Me

Although we are in the office several days each week, we usually do not take phone calls when we are with a client. You can always leave a message on the office voice mail, and your call will be returned as soon as we can (usually that day or within 24 hours). If you have a behavioral or emotional crisis and cannot reach me immediately by telephone, you can contact your local hospital emergency room or call a crisis hotline. Tarrant County: (817) 927-5544, Dallas County: (214) 828-1000.

Complaint Procedures

Problems can arise in our relationship, just as in any other relationship. If you are not satisfied with any area of our work, please raise your concerns with me at once. We will make every effort to hear any complaints you have and to seek solutions to them. If you feel that any of our therapists have treated you unfairly or have broken a professional rule, please tell me. You may also contact the state board of psychologist examiners.

By your signature below (please sign both copies, keep one for your files and return the other copy to me), you are indicating that you have read and understood this statement, and/or that any questions you have had about this statement have been answered to your satisfaction.

Provider Signature

Client signature

Date: _____

Date: _____