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Outpatient Services Contract

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions that you might have so that we can discuss them during our first meeting. Once you sign this, it will constitute a binding agreement between us.

Psychological Services

The benefits from psychotherapy can be many. Resolution of the difficulties that prompted the psychotherapy, a greater sense of happiness and fulfillment, more satisfying relationships, and living more closely to your full potential are all possible outcomes. Psychotherapy may involve the risk of remembering unpleasant events and arouse intense emotions of anxiety, sadness, anger, and depression. In addition, while there is general consensus in outcome research that most people are helped when they are matched with the right therapist, there is no guarantee that this therapy will lead to the desired results. To be successful, psychotherapy requires a very active effort on your part. In order to be most successful, you will have to work on issues we talk about both during our sessions and at home. The first several sessions will involve an evaluation and development of a treatment plan to address your needs.

Meetings and Professional Fees

Therapy usually involves weekly sessions that are 45 minutes in duration but may be longer or more frequent. Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation. In addition, if you fail to come to a scheduled appointment, you will be expected to pay my hourly fee in full. My fee is \$260 per session and will be raised \$5 - \$10 each year on June 1st. You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held. Checks are to be made out to Christopher Fulton, Ph.D. Therapy expenses are your responsibility regardless of insurance coverage. I am not on any insurance panels and do not bill insurance companies. If you would like an insurance invoice, it can be provided to you via e-mail at the end of each month. I will not provide any information directly to your insurance company. If your insurance company needs any forms to be completed, please mail or bring them in and they will be completed and returned to you. In addition to weekly appointments, it is my practice to charge my fee on a prorated basis for other professional services you may require such as report writing, telephone conversations which last longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings or consultation with other professional which you have authorized, preparations of records or treatment summaries, or the time required to perform any other service which you may request of me. If you become involved in litigation which requires my participation, you will be expected to pay for the professional time required even if I am compelled to testify by another party. In the event of non-payment, a collection agency or small claims court may be utilized, and you will be responsible for reasonable collection fees. In most cases, the only information which I release about a client's treatment would be the client's name, the nature of the services provided, and the amount due.

Contacting Me

I am typically not immediately available by telephone. While I am usually in my office between 9AM and 6PM, I will not answer the phone when I am with a client. I am often available to receive and make phone calls between 8:00AM and 9:00AM, 12:00PM and 1:30PM as well as 6:00PM and 6:30PM. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail which I check during these hours. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you communicate with me via email, please understand the risks associated with using email, such as: email can be intercepted, altered, forwarded or used without authorization or detection, email can be used as evidence in court, email may be read by my office staff and email may not be secure and the confidentiality of such communication may be breached by a third part. Thus, you should not use email for communication regarding sensitive therapeutic information or regarding matters that need a more immediate response. If you are difficult to reach, please leave some times when you will be available. If you cannot reach me, and you feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, you should call your family physician or 911. If you are feeling suicidal or a family member is threatening violence or suicide, you need to call 911. The police are well trained to handle situations ranging from suicidal individuals to out-of-control teens. Additional numbers that may be helpful include: California Youth Crises Line (800) 843-5200, Child Abuse Hotline (800) 540-4000, Domestic Violence Hotline (323) 681-2626, Elder Abuse Hotline (800) 992-1660 and Suicide Prevention Center (310) 391-1253. If I am unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a trusted colleague whom you can contact if necessary.

Confidentiality

Within certain limits, information revealed by you during therapy will be kept strictly confidential and will not be revealed to any person or agency without your written permission. Because I work within a group practice, consultation may occur with professionals within this practice. In addition, billing information may be accessed by administrative assistants and/or accountants. Tape recording of any part of the therapy sessions may not occur without your written permission. There are times that I conduct sessions using telehealth (e.g. Skype, Facetime). Please know that when this occurs, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed given the nature of the communication. There are certain situations in which, as a psychologist, I am required by law to reveal information obtained during therapy to other persons or agencies. These situations are as follows: 1) if you are a threat of grave bodily harm or death to another person, 2) if I become aware of a situation of neglect or harm of a minor, 3) if a court of law issues a legitimate subpoena, 4) if I become aware that an elderly person is being physically harmed, and/or 5) you are a court-referred client. If I believe there is risk of you harming someone else or self-inflicting harm, I am not mandated, but have an ethical responsibility to give this information to appropriate persons in order to obtain the best care for you or those you may harm. These situations have rarely arisen in my practice. Should such a situation occur, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action. Although the parent of a minor is the “holder of privilege,” disclosing the content of sessions with minors to parents tends to undermine therapy. Reporting to parents is kept to general progress/issues or if the minor is involved in dangerous or harmful activities.

Your signature acknowledges that you have read and understand the above explanations regarding informed consent, confidentiality, and patient responsibilities. You agree to enter a psychotherapy relationship under the terms outlined above.

Patient’s Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature (parent’s if patient is a minor): _____