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OUTPATIENT SERVICES AGREEMENT

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 you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It can be even more confusing when describing treatment with children. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the particular problems you and your child bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home. Although there are occasions when I may see you or your child individually, I have found that psychological treatment is most successful when conducted in a collaborative manner.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy involves discussing unpleasant aspects of one's life, you or your child may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have many benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees.

Our first session will involve a diagnostic interview to assess your needs. By the end of the session, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of my thoughts of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you and your child feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

At the end of the first session, we will decide together whether to proceed with psychotherapy or whether a more comprehensive psychological evaluation would be appropriate. Psychotherapy can include individual therapy, play therapy, family therapy, parent education, and collateral consultations with other professionals. A psychological evaluation includes a more thorough assessment of the issues and concerns you have and typically includes psychological testing. If

we determine that a psychological evaluation would be beneficial, a feedback interview to discuss the results will be scheduled and a written summary will be available at the conclusion of the evaluation.

TRAINING

B.A. in Psychology, University of South Florida, 1982

M.A. in Counseling Psychology, University of North Florida, 1986

Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, California School of Professional Psychology, 1996, Child and Family emphasis

Internships: Oakland Children's Hospital, Oakland, California

California Pacific Medical Center, San Francisco, California

Post-Doctoral: Care Center for Mental Health, Children's Services, Key West, Florida

MEETINGS

I normally conduct an initial treatment evaluation that will last from two to four sessions. During this time, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need. If psychotherapy is begun, I will usually schedule one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation. If we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control, charges may be waived. I will make every effort to reschedule the appointment.

If we decide to begin with an in-depth psychological evaluation, we will schedule the appointments as appropriate. Psychological testing often requires blocks of time and is usually scheduled in the morning or early afternoon when clients are less fatigued. Once an appointment is scheduled, the cancellation policy will apply. As psychological testing requires additional time in scoring, interpreting, and developing a written summary of the findings, an additional hour of service will be billed for every hour spent in testing.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

The first interview, referred to as the diagnostic interview by most insurance companies, is \$190.00. My hourly fee is \$140.00. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations longer than fifteen minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing other services you may request. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$175.00 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise or you have insurance coverage which requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal actions are necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a patient's treatment is name, the nature of services, and the amount due.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for my services. I will fill out forms and provide you with any assistance I can to help you receive the benefits to which you are entitled, however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

You should carefully read that section in your insurance coverage. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. I will provide you with any information requested by your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, I will be willing to call the company on your behalf.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly what coverage is available. Managed Health Care plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before providing reimbursement. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a client's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While much can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more after insurance benefits end.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I have to provide additional information such as treatment plans or summaries, or (in rare cases) copies of the entire record. This information will become part of the insurance company's files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. I will provide a copy of any report I submit, at your request.

Once we have all the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish and what will happen if your benefits run out before you feel ready to end

our sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself.

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am usually in my office between 9 AM and 5 PM Monday through Thursday, I will not answer the phone if I am with a patient. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voicemail. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day, with the exception of weekends and holidays. When I am not in the office, I check my voicemail regularly. Leave a message, and include some times when you will be available to take my callback. If you are unable to reach me and can't wait for a return call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. When I will be unavailable for an extended period, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or I can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted or upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss their contents. I am sometimes willing to conduct a review meeting without charge. Clients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

MINORS

The State of Washington requires children 13 and over to give consent for treatment. They can also seek treatment without parental consent. Nevertheless, if you are under eighteen years of age, be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is my policy to request an agreement from parents to waive access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them with only general information about our work together and a summary of your treatment when it is complete. As always, if I feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else, I must notify your parents of my concern. Before giving them any information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and address any objections you may have.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and psychologist is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which a child's emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a patient's treatment. For example, if you believe that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is being abused, I must file a report with

the appropriate state agency.

If I believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I am required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If the patient threatens to harm himself/herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

These situations have rarely occurred in my practice. If a similar concern occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, it is my intention to conceal the identity of my patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important.

While this summary of confidentiality should be helpful, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns at our next meeting. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you, but formal legal advice may be necessary because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex; I am not an attorney.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

Date _____

Child's Name _____

Child's Signature (if 13 or older) _____

Parent Name _____

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____

Shelley Mackaman Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist