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New Client Welcome and Information

Welcome to my practice! Let me give you some information about my practice. It is important to me that you know how we will work together. After you read this information, we can discuss how these issues apply to your own situation. Please read and mark any parts that you might have questions about and we will discuss it at our next session together. When you feel clear about all the information, I will ask you to sign it and I will see that you get a copy if you would like one.

About Psychotherapy

It is important that you feel comfortable with your therapist. When you feel this way, your therapy is more likely to be helpful to you. In my therapy practice, I use a variety of approaches and methods. My goal is to meet the individual needs of each client. Each individual will have an individualized treatment plan with goals and objectives. You will be asked to participate in setting your treatment goals and objectives. I treat teens, adults, couples, families and groups. Some of the methods I may use are problem-solving/solutions, insight into patterns of behavior, support, education, homework assignments and non-verbal expressive methods such as art, play, storytelling, dream exploration and writing.

Therapy is a partnership between us and you will be asked to define the problem areas and agree to how we will work together. Therapy requires your active involvement and participation. From time to time we may want to review our work together and modify our treatment goals together. You may be asked to explore and practice new ways of thinking about your feelings and behaviors. You may learn new skills or ways of viewing different areas in your life. You may have to work on some of the important relationships in your life. All of these things will call for a commitment from you. Change can be an uncomfortable and sometimes a frustrating process. I would ask, that if some of that frustration become directed at me, that we have a chance to talk about it and find resolution. Unfortunately, there are no "Magic Pills".

You have a right to know about my professional background. It is acceptable and encouraged that you ask about my training, experience and credentials. I can also talk to you about any professional affiliations and/or certifications I have. Any questions regarding my professional life are welcome at any time.

What to Expect From Our Relationship

As a professional, I will use my best knowledge, experience and skills to assist you. This includes following the standards set by the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, of which I am a member in good standing. There are limits on the relationship between a therapist and a client, and I will abide by these limits in your best interests.

First, I am a trained psychotherapist. I am not trained, or allowed to give you advice about law, medicine, finance or any other profession. I will be glad to give you a referral if you have questions in these areas. Secondly, I can only be your therapist. I am not allowed to have any other role in your life. I cannot be a close friend, socialize or do business with you. Even if you invite me, I cannot attend your family gatherings, such as parties or weddings. If we meet outside the office, I may not say hello or talk to you very much, but of course you are welcome to say hello to me if you would like to. Thirdly, I must follow federal and state laws as well as my professional code to do my best to keep the information you give me confidential. Let me say more about confidentiality.

About Confidentiality

I will treat all the information you give to me with great care. I will not tell anyone what you reveal to me or share your records with anyone without your written consent. There are some legal exceptions that I will mention here. I am legally required to share information regarding suspected child or elder abuse, clients who may harm themselves or others or to comply with a court order. If any of these situations arise, I will do my best to include you in the process.

Your file will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. If any of your file needs to be shared with another professional, I will ask you to sign a release. There is a charge for copying your file information. I will let you know what the charge is before I copy your file. After closing our therapy, I will keep your file in a safe place for 10 years. After that, your file will be shredded. If you are being seen in group, couple or family therapy, I am not allowed to release your file information without the written consent from all the adults that were present in the sessions.

About Our Appointments

Our appointments will usually be for 50 minutes. Longer appointment times may be arranged prior to the appointment time. It is helpful to schedule our sessions together at a regular time. This time will be reserved for you. This appointment and being on time is a commitment to our work together. Please try not to miss sessions if you can possibly help it, as this delays the progress of our work together. If you must cancel, please give me as much notice as possible. If you start to miss a lot of sessions, or do not show up without prior cancellation, we will need to discuss your commitment to therapy. You may lose your regular convenient appointment time or your treatment with me may end. If you will be late to your appointment, please call me and let me know, so that I can be at my office when you arrive. There is a fee applied for unattended or sessions that are cancelled later than 24 hours before the session time. The late cancellation fee is \$30, the fee for a missed appointment is \$50. Therapy usually happens on a weekly basis. Sometimes, after a period of time we may move to a less frequent basis. Eventually therapy comes to an end. There is an important process of closing our time together. Stopping therapy should not be done casually, although either of us can decide to end it if we believe that is in your best interest. I would request that we have at least one session to review our work together.

If You Need to Contact Me

I cannot be available to you at all times. Although, I may be in my office, I may be with a client and unable to take your call. You may leave a message on my answering service. The number I give you will call into my home office. I ask that you not call late at night or too early in the morning. You are welcome to call for a quick check-in between sessions (approx. 5 minutes). Please do not abuse this privilege by calling in the middle of the night or too frequently. If it becomes a problem, I will discuss it with you. I generally return calls daily. When I am on vacation, I will give you the number of another therapist covering for me. If you have an emergency or crisis, you or a family member should call 911 or Placer County 24 hour Access Team at 530-886-5401

Complaint Procedures

My intention is to provide you with the highest professional services. Problems can arise in therapeutic relationships, 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. I will make every effort to hear your complaints and seek to find a solution with you. If you feel that I, or any other therapist, has treated you unfairly, or has broken a professional rule, please tell me. In my practice, I do not discriminate against clients because of factors of age, sex, marital/family status, race, color, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, and place of residence, veteran status, physical disability, health status, or sexual orientation. It is my intention to advance and support the values of equal opportunity, human dignity, and cultural diversity.

The Benefits and Risks of Therapy

Please weigh the benefits and risks when making any treatment decisions. In therapy, there is a risk that clients, for a period of time, will have uncomfortable levels of sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness, helplessness, or other negative feelings. Clients may recall unpleasant memories. These feelings or memories may bother you at work or in school. In addition, some people in your community may mistakenly view anyone in therapy in negative ways. Also, clients in therapy may have problems with people important to them. Family secrets may be told. Therapy may disrupt a marital relationship and sometimes may even lead to a divorce. Sometimes, too, a client's problems may temporarily worsen after the beginning of treatment. Most of these risks are to be expected when people are making important changes in their lives. Finally, even with our best efforts, there is a risk that therapy may not work out well for you.

While you consider these risks, you should know also that the benefits of therapy have been shown in hundreds of well-designed research studies. 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. Clients' relationships and coping skills may improve greatly. They may get more satisfaction out of social and family relationships. Their personal goals and values may become clearer. They may grow in many directions-as persons, in their close relationships, in their work or schooling, and in the ability to enjoy their lives. If I think another treatment modality, or another therapeutic opinion might be helpful to you, I will discuss this with you and give you the appropriate referrals.

Consent to Treatment

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information. I have had all my questions answered about the treatment I will receive. I do hereby seek and consent to take part in treatment with the therapist named below. I understand that no promises have been made to me as to the results of treatment or of any procedures that may be provided by my therapist. I understand that I may stop treatment with this therapist at any time, but that I am responsible for payment for services that have been provided. My signature below shows that I understand and agree to treatment. If the treatment is for a child, I am the legal guardian and able to give my consent for their treatment.

Name of client/s _____

Signature of client/s (or parent/guardian) _____ Date _____

I, the therapist, have discussed the issues above with the client or guardian. My observations of this person's behavior and responses give me no reason to believe that this person is not fully competent to give informed and willing consent for treatment.

Signature of therapist _____ Date _____