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STATEMENT OF SERVICES/NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

I provide counseling services that include assessment, evaluation, diagnosis, and direct psychotherapy treatment in accordance with professional standards of practice. These standards of practice include providing each client with information concerning several aspects of the counseling process and the counseling relationship.

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and client, and the particular problems you are experiencing. There are many different methods that I may use to deal with the problems 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.

Risks and Benefits of Therapy

Psychotherapy has been shown to be effective for the improvement and resolution of personal problems. The process of psychotherapy, however, does involve risks on the part of the client. Change, and the processes involved in creating positive change, can at times be difficult and unsettling.

Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. While every attempt will be made to prepare each client for this, each client must make the decision to enter into this process with a clear understanding of these risks.

On the other hand, while there are no guarantees, psychotherapy has also been shown to have many benefits. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress.

Provision of Services

Our first few sessions will involve an assessment of your needs (usually 1-4 sessions). By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, you may want to set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

During the evaluation period, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, I will usually schedule one 60-minute session per week at a time we that we agree. We may decide to change the frequency of sessions according to your needs.

The length of the course of psychotherapy can vary depending upon the severity of the problems presented, and the ability of each client to utilize therapeutic approaches.

There are boundaries in the nature of our relationship. This means that I am your therapist and we have a professional relationship. I will not crossover to a relationship of any other kind with you, nor can I accept gifts from you.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of your records is covered under state and federal law under the health Insurance Portability Act (HIPPA).

I will not release information about your treatment unless you give me written permission to do so or unless I am required to do so by law. The law requires that I take action if you are of danger to yourself or another person. This generally means that others may be involved when necessary to protect you and others if you are suicidal, intend to harm another person, or are unable to provide self-care at a level necessary for basic survival. Georgia law also requires that recent or current child abuse or neglect be reported when there is a reasonable suspicion of its existence.

If I am seeing you for couples therapy, I do not keep secrets between you.

Your insurance company has access to your records. For other sources, I will only release this information if you sign a Release of Information form giving me specific instructions about how you want it to be released.

I use a cell phone to make contact with you. This and other electronic forms of communications have security risks.

Professional Fees

My hourly fee is \$160 per 60-minute session. I sometimes charge for other services you may need such as report writing, telephone conversations lasting more than 10 minutes, consulting other professionals with your permission, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other services you request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, I will refer you to an appropriate provider since I am unable to appear in court proceedings or provide legal consultation as a clinical social worker.

You will be expected to pay me at the time of the session by cash, check or PayPal unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage that requires another arrangement. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

Insurance

Where a professional relationship exists between me and your insurance carrier, you will be expected to pay the co-insurance amount designated under the policies of the insurance carrier unless your deductible has not been met. In the case of the latter, you will be required to pay the appropriate amount as required by your insurance company. Claims will be filed by me. Where a professional relationship does not exist with the client's insurance company, you will be expected to pay the full amount for each psychotherapy session.

Contacting Me

Due to my work schedule, I am often not immediately available by telephone. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays unless your call is of an urgent nature. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of times when you will be available.

When I am out of town, I still check my voice mail and will make contact with you as stated above. I will have another therapist available if you have to meet in person.

If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, there are some resources available to you. The Georgia Crises and Access Line at 800-715-4225 is available 24/7 for your support. If your treatment needs might require hospitalization, I please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room for immediate help. With your permission, I will communicate with the treatment source to provide information about you that will assist them in providing appropriate treatment services.

Appointment Cancellation

Your appointment times are reserved for you. If you cancel last minute, you may prevent someone else from being able to use your time slot.

Missed appointments will be billed at my session rate of \$160 unless canceled at least *24 hours* in advance of your appointment time regardless of whether or not you use insurance (insurance companies will not pay for missed sessions). I understand that there may be an occasional emergency that interferes with your notifying me within the 24 hour window of time and I will take these circumstances into account.

Your Rights

You have the right to expect competent psychotherapy in accordance with accepted professional standards. You have the right to request information about any aspect of treatment, including but not limited to assessment results, treatment techniques utilized, course and direction of treatment. You also have the right to provide feedback to me about where treatment is being successful and unsuccessful, and to terminate treatment at any time.

Your Responsibilities

You are responsible for engaging in the therapeutic process in ways that further treatment progress, making available to the provider such information as is needed to provide effective treatment, and participating in directing the course and direction of treatment.