



MN Mental Health Consulting  
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### **INFORMED CONSENT**

Welcome to MN Mental Health Consulting. This document (the Agreement) contains important information about professional services and business policies.

### **THERAPEUTIC SERVICES**

As a client in therapy, you have certain rights and responsibilities that are important for you to know about. As your therapist, I also have corresponding responsibilities to you. Therapy has both benefits and risks. Risks sometimes include experiencing uncomfortable feelings, such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness. Therapy often requires discussing unpleasant aspects of your life. However, therapy has been shown to have benefits for individuals who undertake it. Therapy often leads to a significant reduction in feelings of distress, increased satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, greater personal awareness and insight, increased skills for managing stress, and resolutions to specific problems. But, there are no guarantees about what will happen. In order to be most successful, you will have to work on things that we discuss outside of sessions.

The first session will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some initial impressions of what our work may include. We will discuss your treatment goals and create a personalized, initial treatment plan. You should evaluate this information as well as your own assessment about whether you feel comfortable working with me. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise.

You have the right to ask questions about anything that happens in therapy. You can ask me about my training for working with your concerns, and can request that I refer you to someone else if you decide I'm not the right therapist for you. You are free to leave therapy at any time.

As part of outpatient mental health services, all clients will receive a diagnosis. The Board of Marriage and Family Therapy requires a diagnosis as do most insurance companies. Diagnoses are technical terms that describe the nature of your problems. Your diagnosis will be discussed with you. Please feel free to ask additional questions about your diagnosis at any time in the therapeutic process.

### **APPOINTMENTS**

I will usually schedule one 45 to 50 minute session per week at a time we agree on. The time scheduled for your appointment is assigned to you and you alone. In addition, you are responsible for coming to your session on time and at the time scheduled. If you are late, your appointment will still need to end on time.

### **PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

I am required to keep appropriate records of the services that I provide. Although psychotherapy often includes discussions of sensitive and private information, normally very brief records are kept noting that you have been here, what was done in session, and a general mention of the topics discussed. You have the right to a copy of your file at any time. You have the right to request that a copy of your file be made available to any other health care provider at your written request. Your records are maintained in a secure location in the office.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The confidentiality of all communications between a client and a mental health provider is generally protected by law and I, as your therapist, cannot and will not tell anyone else what you have discussed or even that you are in therapy without your written permission. In most situations, I can only release information about your treatment to others if you sign a written Authorization form that meets certain legal requirements imposed by HIPAA. With the exception of certain specific situations described below, you have the right to confidentiality of your therapy.

You, on the other hand, may request that information is shared with whomever you choose and you may revoke that permission in writing at any time.

There are, however, several exceptions in which I am legally bound to take action even though that requires revealing some information about a client's treatment. If at all possible, I will make every attempt to inform you when these will have to be put into effect. The legal exceptions to confidentiality include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. If there is good reason to believe you are threatening serious bodily harm to yourself or others. If I believe a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I may be required to take protective actions, which may include notifying the potential victim, notifying the police, or seeking appropriate hospitalization. If a client threatens harm to him/herself or another, I may be required to seek hospitalization for the client.
2. If there is good reason to suspect, or evidence of, abuse and/or neglect toward children, the elderly or disabled persons. In such a situation, I am required by law to file a report with the appropriate state agency.
3. In response to a court order or where otherwise required by law.

Finally, there are times when I find it beneficial to consult with colleagues as part of my practice for mutual professional consultation. Your name and unique identifying characteristics will not be disclosed. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

**The next is not a legal exception to your confidentiality. However, it is a policy you should be aware of if you are in couples therapy with me.**

If you and your partner decide to have some individual sessions as part of the couples therapy, what you say in those individual sessions will be considered to be a part of the couples therapy, and can and probably will be discussed in our joint sessions. *Do not tell me anything you wish kept secret from your partner.* I will remind you of this policy before beginning such individual sessions.

#### **Electronic Communication and Social Media**

MN Mental Health Consulting prohibits therapists from connecting with clients via social media (ie: Facebook, LinkedIN, etc.). MN Mental Health Consulting advises clients that they consider who may have access to their email before emailing their therapist. Therapy will not be provided over email. The electronic recording of sessions via tape recorder, cell phone or other media device is expressly prohibited.

#### **OTHER RIGHTS**

If you are unhappy with what is happening in therapy, I hope you'll talk with me so that I can respond to your concerns. Such criticism will be taken seriously and with care and respect. You may also request that I refer you to another therapist and are free to end therapy at any time. You have the right to considerate, safe, and respectful care, without discrimination as to race, ethnicity, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or source of payment. You have the right to ask questions about any aspect of the therapy and about my specific training and experience.