

## **INFORMED CONSENT AND DISCLOSURE**

### **Counseling Approach & Philosophy**

The role of a counselor is to provide an environment of safety, trust, and mutual respect from which he/she and the client can cooperatively explore their world together. He/she will help the client to discover new perspectives and options from which they may choose to change their life situation according to the goals they establish. People become healthy and hopeful when they learn to balance their need for personal growth alongside of fulfilling their responsibility to others. Our counselors are motivated by a very simple philosophy: Everyone is a person of value, everyone has an issue they struggle with, and every problem has a solution.

### **Benefits & Risks of Therapy**

While the effects of counseling therapy have generally proven to be beneficial, there are some risks to consider. For example, some clients will experience uncomfortable feelings, and may, for a time, feel worse as they begin to work on sensitive areas of their lives or recall unpleasant memories. These feelings could possibly affect the client's life outside the counseling office. Others in the client's life may have a negative view of counseling which might create distance in their relationship. Any doubts or concerns the client has should be discussed prior to therapy, and if possible, should be alleviated in order to minimize the potential risks and maximize the benefits of therapy. Additionally, there may be options to counseling, such as support groups and/or self-help books, which may help to provide the results the client is seeking. Feel free to discuss any of these with the therapist.

### **Confidentiality**

All counseling therapy is confidential within the exceptions provided by law. The therapist is otherwise unwilling and unavailable to offer support or testimony in court or legal situations of any kind unless compelled by law. The therapist may consult with other professionals or supervisors on client issues, however, identifying details are kept strictly confidential, unless you sign a specific written release. While wireless telephone communication is reasonably private, it is not guaranteed to be absolutely secure. Because our business phone is cellular, you should be aware of this while discussing therapy related issues in detail on the phone. Any correspondence via e-mail or text is likewise not guaranteed to be absolutely private, so reasonable precautions are advised. Unavoidable dual relationships will be discussed in therapy to decide on a mutually satisfactory approach.

While the therapist strives to be confidential as much as possible, there are certain situations in which confidentiality will not be able to be maintained. (1.) When necessary, the therapist will share information with parents regarding a child's individual therapy sessions in order to help parents to meet the child's needs, promote positive behavior, and increase optimal benefit. (2.) The therapist will not keep secrets in therapy when more than one person is involved in treatment. When treating a couple or family in therapy, the therapist views the entire family unit as the client in therapy. (3.) The Client or authorized person for the client has signed Releases of Information to important individuals in the client's life that will allow the therapist to talk with others regarding the client. (4.) If the therapist has reason to believe that a child client, or another child whose identifying information has been given, has experienced or is at risk of experiencing physical abuse, sexual



abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation, the therapist is required by law to report this information to Child Protection

Services. (5.) The therapist is required by law to protect those who are the anticipated victims of physical harm or death. If anyone makes a claim that he or she plans to harm him/herself or another person, the therapist is required by law to take every step possible to protect these individuals from potential harm.

### **Discontinuation of Therapy**

While the majority of therapy experiences are positive and beneficial to both the client and the therapist, there are times when the therapy process is not proving to be beneficial for the client, and possibly harmful to the therapist. The therapist reserves the right to ask any client or family to leave therapy if they believe that the continuation of therapy services with this particular therapist is not beneficial to the client. A client as well can request termination of services or consideration of changing to another available therapist. A client automatically is terminated from therapeutic care if not seen in a six week time period.

### **Risks of Withdrawing from Therapy**

Therapy is a process. If the client chooses to leave therapy during the process and has not learned necessary coping skills, there is a risk of harm. It is best to discuss these feelings with the therapist so that so that together the therapist and client can decide what is in the best interests of the client at that time.

### **Consent for Treatment of a Minor**

If I am not the client, but I am signing as the authorized person for the client (guardian or parent), I hereby authorize the therapist and whomever they designate as their assistants to administer treatment of my child as necessary. An additional consent for treatment of a minor child will also be required.

### **Emergencies**

If you, or the client you are authorized to sign for, is in need of emergency psychological help at a time when a therapist is not available, it is your responsibility to call 911 or another support service.

**If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask.**

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Client name

My Signature below signifies that I have read and understand all the above. I have been given a copy of this Informed Consent as well as understand the policy can be found at [www.EngageServices.Net](http://www.EngageServices.Net).

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