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Informed Consent and Agreement to Counselling Services

This form reviews:

- What you can expect from counselling;
- Fee information;
- Rights and responsibilities of clients, and your therapist;
- Limits of confidentiality

Please read through the information below and contact your therapist if you have any questions or concerns.

Your therapist will review this form with you, and if you consent to proceeding with counselling within the noted framework, you can complete and submit this form at that time.

Competency

All members of our counselling group are registered with their regulatory Colleges, and have at least a Master's degree in social work or counselling. All clinicians regularly participate in continuing education opportunities, and only practice within the areas in which they have knowledge and experience.

The Counselling Process

Counselling is a partnership between the client and the therapist. Clients bring their expertise and knowledge about their lives, and the therapist brings her/his experience and clinical knowledge. Together, clients and therapists collaborate to address concerns and challenges. Having the opportunity to reflect and review can often result in meaningful changes.

The therapeutic relationship between clients and therapists is a vital part of the process. It is essential that you feel comfortable working with your therapist as the strength of the therapeutic relationship plays a large role in positive outcomes. If you ever feel as though the 'fit' isn't right for you, please bring your concerns forward. Your therapist will explore ways to adjust the approach, or will help connect you with another counsellor who may be a better match.

Risks and Benefits to Counselling

Therapy can be beneficial in a variety of ways. It can improve your self-esteem, your relationships, and your overall well-being.

Talking about your challenges may be emotionally distressing before you see improvements in your day-to-day life. Your therapist will offer support through this process. It is important for you to weigh the benefits and risks of engaging in counselling - both at the beginning and throughout the process.

Length of Therapy

Counselling can be both short, and long-term. The number of sessions is based on your priorities and the types of issues you would like to work on. Meetings can occur on whatever schedule you choose - weekly, biweekly, monthly, or even just as needed. Appointments are scheduled for 60 minutes. Please be on time for your session as the 60 minutes are reserved for you. Note that appointment times will not be extended if you are late.

Ending Counselling

You have the right to end counselling at any time. It may be useful, however, to speak with your therapist about the reasons you have decided to end the therapeutic relationship as there may be the opportunity to conclude a relationship in a healthy way. Having this discussion can help to identify possible reasons that you are not reaching your goal or why the therapy wasn't helpful. Based on your needs and wishes, your therapist can help you explore other possible treatment methods, connect you with another counsellor who may be able to offer a different perspective, or help you plan to take a break or end counselling all together.

Cancellation Policy

Advise your counsellor at least 24 hours in advance if a session needs to be rescheduled or cancelled. Full session fees may be applied if appropriate notice is not provided.

Fees

The standard rate for a one hour session is \$150.00. Fees are payable at the end of each session. Payments are currently being accepted via e-transfer (sent to info@juliavalley.ca).

Cancellations are to be made with at least 24 hours notice. It is recognized that life happens and it is not always possible to provide 24 hours notice. Please contact your therapist as soon as you determine that you need to cancel and arrangements may be made. No-shows may be billed for the full regular cost of a session.

Receipts are available for those with extended health benefits (for social work/ psychotherapy services). Psychotherapy services can be claimed on your income taxes.

If the fee is a barrier, please contact us to discuss your situation.

We are pleased to offer a no-cost 'meet-and-greet' phone call to help you decide if you would like to work with us.

Client Records

A written summary of each counselling session is completed, and are stored in a locked filing cabinet. Records are kept for a ten year period, after which time they will be shredded. In the case of an unexpected closure of the therapy practice, records will be kept by another therapist, and maintained as above.

Technology

Please be aware that communication via technology (i.e. email, text messages, video chats) may not be secure. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed so please keep this in mind when using these methods to communicate.

Limits of Confidentiality

In general, discussions held with your therapist are considered to be confidential. Verbal and written reports about a client cannot be shared with another individual without written consent of the client. Information will not be released without a signed Consent to Disclose Information form.

There are, however, specific legal limitations to confidentiality which include:

Duty to Warn/Protect

~ If a client discloses a plan for suicide or a plan to harm another person, the counsellor is required to notify police of the intent and any relevant details.

Court Order

~ Counsellors are required to release a client's records when a court order has been issued.

Abuse of a Minor or a Vulnerable Adult

~ If a client suggests that a Minor or a Vulnerable Adult is experiencing abuse, has recently been abused, or is in danger of abuse, the counsellor is required to report this information to the Children's Aid Society (or equivalent) and police.

~ If a client reports that she is pregnant and is using controlled substances which may be harmful to the fetus, the counsellor is required to disclose this information to the Children's Aid Society (or equivalent).

Confidentiality for Joint Sessions

In joint sessions (i.e. couple's counselling, family therapy, meetings between friends, group therapy), the relationship between the parties - and not each individual - is considered *the treatment unit*. This means that, if there is a request for copies of the treatment records, I will seek the authorization of all parties in the *treatment unit* before confidential information is released to a third party.

If individual counselling is also needed, support will be offered to connect with another therapist to do this individual work.

Peer Supervision

As a part of the therapist's practice, consultation with other counsellors may occur to review treatment issues. In these cases, the same limits to confidentiality previously outlined, and care will be taken to not include names or identifying information.

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied by the service that you have received from your therapist, you are encouraged to address these concerns directly with your service provider. Your feedback is always welcomed.

If you believe that your therapist has engaged in unethical or inappropriate behaviour, complaints can be made to the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.

Acknowledgment

By identifying your name and the date, you are confirming that you have read through, and understand, the above information. If you have any questions or concern, please speak with your therapist.

Please save the document and email it back to us - info@juliavalley.ca

Name

Date