

Borum & Associates, LLC

Counseling Services Contract and Informed Consent

Welcome to our practice. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our first meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Counseling Services

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

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits such as improved relationships, finding solutions to specific problems, and experiencing significant reductions in feelings of distress. However, there are no guarantees as to what you will experience.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, we 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 your therapist. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about our procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, we will be happy to refer you to another mental health professional for a second opinion.

Meetings

We normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 1 to 2 sessions. During this time, you and your therapist can both decide if your therapist is the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, we will usually schedule one 50-minute session per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more or less frequent. Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation, unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. We provide reminder notifications of your appointment in the form of text message forty-eight hours prior to your appointment. At the time of the notification you will be provided ample opportunity to cancel or

request to reschedule the appointment without penalty. **Fees for missed appointments will be charged to your account using the payment source on record.**

Professional Fees

Private Pay fees are as follows:

- *Florida State Registered Mental Health Interns:* \$125 for the initial intake assessment and \$100 for each 50-minute session.
- *Licensed Clinicians:* \$150 for the initial intake assessment and \$125 for each 50-minute session.
- *Couples Therapy:* \$175 for the initial intake assessment and \$150 for each 50-minute session.

We require a \$25.00 deposit in the form of a debit or credit card for the first appointment. An hourly rate of \$125.00 is charged for other professional services you may need, though we will break down the hourly cost if we work for periods of less than one hour. Other professional services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of us. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require our participation, you will be expected to pay for our professional time even if we are called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, we charge \$500.00 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding with an initial deposit of \$3,000.00.

Billing and Payment

You are expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise or unless you have Employee Assistance benefits. Self-pay clients are patients without insurance, with high deductibles, or who choose not to use their insurance are responsible for the total cost of care at the time of service. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, we may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan. Patients without insurance, with high deductibles, or who choose not to use their insurance may request payment plans using automatic payments that can be made weekly, biweekly, or monthly according to your needs. We offer a resource for financing our services at a zero % interest rate. If you are interested in this option, please ask your therapist about it. We reserve the right to adjust our payment policy at any time and will notify you of the changes. Such changes may include our session rates and our rates for other services, as well as late/cancelled and no-show fees, and the manner in which we collect such rates and fees.

If your account becomes past due and has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, we have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may include a collection agency or small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information we release regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services

provided, and the amount due. In order to avoid this type of situation you may be required to secure your future appointments with a deposit equal to the session rate by using your payment source on record.

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Insurance Reimbursement

In order to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate your available resources for payment of treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it usually provides some coverage for mental health treatment. Due to the nature of health insurance and the inability to insure that the insurance will pay for your services, **we will not be billing your insurance.** We will provide you with A Super Bill to submit to your insurance company and if you are eligible, the insurance company will reimburse you the contracted rate allowed for your therapist. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers before your first appointment. You will be responsible for all charges not covered by your insurance company.

You should carefully read your insurance coverage information describing your mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Of course, we will provide you with whatever information we can based on our experience and we will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. However, due to the nature of health insurance, it is often difficult for us to determine benefits.

Insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex and it is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. Plans often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a designated number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some clients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. Some managed-care plans will not allow us to provide services to you once your benefits end. If this is the case, we will refer you to another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy, unless you decide to pay privately without the expectation of reimbursement.

Most insurance companies require you to authorize us to provide a clinical diagnosis, which will be submitted with the Super Bill. Sometimes we have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, we have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank.

Contacting Us

We are often not immediately available by telephone. While we are usually in our office between 9 AM and 5 PM, we will not answer the phone when we are with clients. When we are unavailable, our telephone is answered by our receptionist or by voice mail. We will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform us of times when you will be available. Due to the limited privacy of text messages, we will not normally respond by text message, but will rather contact you by phone or secured email. If you are unable to reach us and feel that you can't wait for a return call, contact your family physician, the nearest emergency room, or contact the crisis hotline at (863) 519-3744. If your therapist will be unavailable for an extended time, we will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

Registered Interns

Occasionally we will employ Registered Licensed Mental Health Counselor Interns. These individuals are Masters level counselors or social workers under supervision as they earn their full license. Often times the fees for registered interns can be set at a lower fee rate as they work towards their license. Registered interns are required to have a licensed professional on the premises when providing services in a private practice and are required to review their cases with their supervisor. As a result, if you are being treated by a registered intern, your case information may, and most likely will, be shared with the supervisor. The supervisor will maintain the same level of confidentiality as your therapist. By signing this agreement you agree to these terms.

Professional Records

We are required to keep records of the professional services we provide. These records contain information that can be misunderstood by someone who is not a mental health professional. Therefore, it is our general policy that patients may not review them. However, we will provide, at your request, a treatment summary unless we believe that to do so would be emotionally damaging. If that is the case, we will be happy to send the summary to another mental health professional who is working with you. You should be aware that this will be treated in the same manner as any other professional (clinical) service and you will be billed accordingly.

Minors

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. We will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless we feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, we will notify them of our concerns. Before giving them any information, we will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do our best to handle any objections you may have with what we are prepared to discuss. Confidentiality In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a therapist is protected by law, and we can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. But there are

a few exceptions. In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent us from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order our testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it. There are some situations in which we are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if we have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. For example, if we believe that a child, elderly person, or disabled person, is being abused, we must file a report with the appropriate state agency.

If we believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, we are required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm himself/herself, we may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

These situations have rarely occurred in our practice. If a similar situation occurs, we will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action. We may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, we make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of our client. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, we will not tell you about these consultations unless we feel that it is important to our work together.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at our first meeting. We will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and we are not attorneys.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this Informed Consent document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

Missed Appointment Policy

Twenty-four-hour notice is required for the cancellation of an appointment. Appointments cancelled with less than 24-hour notice will be charged our full fee. The charge will be applied to your credit card on file unless you request to use an alternative method of payment.

Client Name: (Please Print): _____

Client Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____