

## OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT FOR A MINOR

Prior to beginning treatment, it is important for you to understand my approach to child therapy and agree to some rules about your child's confidentiality during the course of his/her treatment. The information herein is in addition to the information contained in the Patient-Therapist Agreement. Under HIPAA and the APA Ethics Code, I am legally and ethical responsible to provide you with informed consent. As we go forward, I will try to remind you of important issues as they arise.

One risk of child therapy involves disagreement among parents and/or disagreement between parents and therapist regarding the best interests of the child. If such disagreements occur, I will strive to listen carefully so that I can understand your perspectives and fully explain my perspective. We can resolve such disagreements or we can agree to disagree, so long as this enables your child's therapeutic progress. Ultimately, you will decide whether therapy will continue. If either of you decides that therapy should end, I will honor that decision, however I ask that you allow me the option of having a few closing sessions to appropriately end the treatment relationship.

Therapy is most effective when a trusting relationship exists between the psychologist and the patient. Privacy is especially important in securing and maintaining that trust. One goal of treatment is to promote a stronger and better relationship between children and their parents. However, it is often necessary for children to develop a "zone of privacy" whereby they feel free to discuss personal matters with greater freedom. This is particularly true for adolescents who are naturally developing a greater sense of independence and autonomy. By signing this agreement, you will be waiving your right of access to your child's treatment records.

It is my policy to provide you with general information about treatment status. I will raise issues that may impact your child either inside or outside the home. If it is necessary to refer your child to another mental health professional with more specialized skills, I will share that information with you. I will not share with you what your child has disclosed to me without your child's consent. I will tell you if your child does not attend sessions. At the end of your child's treatment, I will provide you with a treatment summary that will describe what issues were discussed, what progress was made, and what areas are likely to require intervention in the future.

If your child is an adolescent, it is possible that he/she will reveal sensitive information regarding sexual contact, alcohol and drug use, or other potentially problematic behaviors. Sometimes these behaviors are within the range of normal adolescent experimentation, but at other times they may require parental intervention. We must carefully and directly discuss your feelings and opinions

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regarding acceptable behavior. If I ever believe that your child is at serious risk of harming him/herself or another, I will inform you.

Although my responsibility to your child may require my involvement in conflicts between the two of you, I need your agreement that my involvement will be strictly limited to that which will benefit your child. This means, among other things, that you will treat anything that is said in session with me as confidential. Neither of you will attempt to gain advantage in any legal proceeding between the two of you from my involvement with your children. In particular, I need your agreement that in any such proceedings, neither of you will ask me to testify in court, whether in person, or by affidavit. You also agree to instruct your attorneys not to subpoena me or to refer in any court filing to anything I have said or done.

Note that such agreement may not prevent a judge from requiring my testimony, even though I will work to prevent such an event. If I am required to testify, I am ethically bound not to give my opinion about either parent's custody or visitation suitability. If the court appoints a custody evaluator, guardian ad litem, or parenting coordinator, I will provide information as needed (if appropriate releases are signed or a court order is provided), but I will not make any recommendation about the final decision. Furthermore, if I am required to appear as a witness, the party responsible for my participation agrees to reimburse me at the rate of \$350.00 per hour for time spent traveling, preparing reports, testifying, being in attendance, and any other case-related costs.

## **FEES**

### **Psychotherapy**

My hourly fee for psychotherapy is \$150. The initial appointment is \$200. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, and preparation of records or treatment summaries. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$350.00 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

### **Psychological and Psychoeducational Assessment**

My hourly fee for psychological and psychoeducational testing is \$200. This fee is applied to all work completed through the testing process including the intake interview, administration of assessments, report writing, and the feedback session. I ask that you keep a credit card on file so that I may charge you as services are rendered. After each testing session, you will be charged for the work that was done on that day. The final balance is due when the final report is delivered to you.

## **INSURANCE PATIENTS**

I will bill your insurance company and collect a copay at the time of each visit. I have a 24-hour cancellation policy. If you do not cancel within the 24 hours, you will be charged a session fee as determined by your insurance company's rate of reimbursement. If you have not met your in-network deductible, you will be required to pay out-of-pocket until your deductible is met. The fee will be based on your insurance company's rate of reimbursement, or what they will pay for your sessions after the deductible is met.

## **CONTACTING ME**

I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am usually in my office between 9 AM and 5 PM, I probably will not answer the phone when I am with a patient. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by a voice mail that I monitor frequently. I 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 me of some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist/psychiatrist on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist is protected by law, and I can only release information about my work with your child to others with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your child's treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your child's emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a patient's treatment. For example, if I believe that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is being abused, I must file a report with the appropriate state agency.

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

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These situations have rarely occurred in my practice. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you and your child before taking any action.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I 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 next meeting. I 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 I am not an attorney.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Guardian if Applicable

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Parent or Guardian only  
if the patient is under 18 years old

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date