

## Informed Consent for Psychotherapy Assessment

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and policies. Please read it carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you have. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

### ASSESSMENT SERVICES

I am a licensed clinical psychologist with a doctoral degree in clinical psychology, and I provide a range of psychotherapy services including assessment, psychotherapy and consultation. Psychological assessment is a process where your needs, goals, challenges, and symptoms are identified; personal histories are documented; resources and treatments are identified, and documentation of results and needs is provided. There are many different methods I may use to evaluate your history and current needs, goals, experiences, and symptoms and primarily involve questions and conversation.

Assessment can often involve asking very detailed questions about your life, history, experiences, and challenges. Many different systems have requirements for the types of questions that are asked, or the information included in different types of reports and letters. Sometimes, these questions can lead to uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, and overwhelm. I will always strive to include only relevant questions and information, and will interact with systems to include you as a whole person and advocate for you to receive services and resources that best meet your specific needs and experiences. At the conclusion of the assessment, we can review the experience and address any thoughts or feelings that arise from the process.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

I strive to protect the confidentiality and privacy of everybody I work with. For evaluation processes, documentation is often provided to affirm and describe findings and recommendations. Information provided in any documentation will always be focused on the goals of assessment and only relevant information will be included. At times, it may be useful for me to speak to other providers or individuals in the course of the evaluation and I will only speak to others with your written permission. In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychologist is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. However, there are a few exceptions.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me 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 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 client'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 client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I am required to take protective actions, which may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If a client threatens to harm themselves, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for them or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. If an individual discloses that they have accessed, streamed, or downloaded material where a child is engaged in an obscene sexual act, I am obligated to report this to authorities.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about our therapy process and plans. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. 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.

I work with another therapist, Tim Lewis, Psy.D., as a back-up. If a situation was to arise where I was ill, or unable to attend an appointment and contact you directly, this person may contact you to inform you of the change and next steps in re-scheduling an appointment. To preserve your confidentiality, he will be provided only with your contact information and first name. In the case of an emergency, Dr. Lewis may have limited access to your information for the sole purpose of maintaining your confidentiality and preserving any documentation or records on your behalf. All attempts will be made to discuss any disclosures with you beforehand, though given the unexpected nature of health crisis' and other emergencies, I cannot guarantee such notice will be given. I can offer contact information for Dr. Lewis if I am away for an extended period of time. He will be able to offer assistance and support if you are experiencing a crisis or concern while I am away.

Additionally, I work with a billing person, Beth Jonasson, to make sure that all of my records accurately reflect what has been paid. Beth has access to your name, and if you use insurance, your address and diagnosis so she can accurately track billing matters. She does not have access to your records or any personal information.

Divergent Worlds Psychotherapy and Consulting is my private practice. Some record keeping and payment tools used by the practice may include limited demographic details about you, such as your name. While other associates may work with me in my practice, all of your information will be confidential and we significantly limit access to shared information.

If you have any questions about any of these confidentiality matters you are welcome to ask for more information, or about ways that this might impact you.

## MEETINGS

Assessment times are usually between 50 minutes to two hours, depending on the specific evaluation conducted. Timeline will be discussed as our meeting schedule is confirmed. Most

assessments can be completed in one session, and sometimes 1-3 sessions are needed to identify the process and provide complete documentation.

Once an assessment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 48 hours [2 days] advance notice of cancellation. If you are paying for services through an insurance company, cancelled sessions are not covered by insurance plans in most situations. You will be expected to pay for the full contracted rate if you have not cancelled in the 48 hour period.

## FEES

Full fees for evaluation, intake interview, and individual 50-minute therapy sessions are based on my sliding scale rates. I may also charge a portion of this fee for other professional services you may require (such as telephone conversations which last longer than 15 minutes, meetings or consultations that you have requested with other professionals, etc.). In unusual circumstances, you may become involved in litigation wherein you request or require my participation. You will be expected to pay for such professional time even if I am compelled to testify by another party. You will be expected to pay for each session at the time that it is held. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when these services are requested.

I accept payment via cash, check, or credit card. I will always aim to ensure that any payment is done as securely as possible. For payments using credit or debit cards, I use Ivypay. Ivypay is a secure, HIPAA compliant service that will allow you to pay for sessions with a credit card any time after our sessions. I will enter in our session and you will receive a text message notice from "Ivy" then you complete the transaction. After updating your information, it is securely stored so that we can keep a credit card on file and sessions will be paid automatically at the end of each meeting. If you ever need to change your card, an update can be sent to you. We can choose to use it regularly, or only for covering sessions if we can't cover them in the moment.

If you have a health benefits policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I will provide you with whatever assistance possible to facilitate your receipt of the benefits to which you are entitled, however you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of the fee. If you have insurance, carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services and call your insurer if you have any questions. Managed health care plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require advance authorization before they will provide reimbursement for mental health services, including assessments.

Please be aware that most insurance agreements require you to authorize me to provide a clinical diagnosis, and sometimes additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or in rare cases, a copy of the entire record. This information will become part of the insurance company's files, and in all likelihood, some of it will be computerized. All insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, but once it is in their hands, I have no control over what your insurer will do with the information. In some cases, the insurer may share the information with a national medical information data bank. The Medical Information Bureau (MIB) is a central database of medical information shared by insurance companies. The MIB does not have a file on everyone. But if you have an MIB file, you will want to be sure it is

correct. You can obtain a copy for free once a year by calling (866) 692-6901 (TTY for the hearing impaired (866) 346-3642) or by visiting the company's web site at [www.mib.com/html/request\\_your\\_record.html](http://www.mib.com/html/request_your_record.html).

It is best to discuss all the information about your insurance coverage with me, so you can decide what can be accomplished within the parameters of the benefits available to you and what will happen if the insurance benefits run out before you are ready to end treatment. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for counseling services yourself if you prefer to avoid involving your insurer.

## CONTACTING ME

You can contact me using telephone or email services. While I will do my best to quickly answer phone calls and email whenever possible, I will not respond when I am with a client. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail that I monitor frequently. I will make every effort to return your contact on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you have contact and scheduling preferences, please inform me of the best way to contact you and 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 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.

## PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless I believe that seeing them would be emotionally difficult, in which case I will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice. I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. You may be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent in preparing information requests.

## COLLABORATION

It may feel useful at times to include other people in your assessment process: partners, family, friends, or other providers. Other people are welcome to attend and offer you support in your evaluation process. If others attend to support you, I will often meet with you and them together, and then meet with you separately, and sometimes meet with them separately as well with your consent.

## 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. It is my policy to request an agreement from parents that they give up access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless I feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, I will notify them of my concern. I will also provide them with a summary of your treatment when it is complete. Before giving them any

information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections you may have with what I am prepared to discuss.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

Psychological symptoms often have a strong correlation with physical illnesses and symptoms. At times, some medical conditions require a medical differential diagnosis to determine symptom etiology. Sometimes, prescription and non-prescription medications can have significant side effects that may be important for us to consider. I appreciate full disclosure of all medicines and drug intake so we can create a full picture of what is happening with you, along with options for treatment and support.

I may suggest that it could be helpful to speak with a health care provider to address symptoms that appear to be impacting you. Health care systems can be difficult and overwhelming to navigate or access. As part of our assessment process, I am available to coordinate with any member of your health care team when relevant and necessary, and can support you in connecting to care when I am able. I may also talk with you about signing a release of information so that I can coordinate services with your providers and support you in all of your health care needs. I will not coordinate with other health care providers, or ask you about doing so, without explicit purpose and consent from all involved.

## ENDING ASSESSMENT

Following the completion of our assessment, I will provide written documentation as needed, including reports and letters. This documentation will remain available to you, and I am happy to re-issue your letter in the future if needed. If an addendum or update is needed, I typically offer a follow up phone call or meeting to review recent history and changes. I remain available to update documentation in most situations without additional fees. After documentation has been provided, I consider our process closed, and you can reach out to me with future questions or requests if you have them. If you would like to proceed with psychotherapy with me, we will separately initiate that process after closing our assessment relationship.

Please feel free to ask any questions that you might have. I look forward to working with you.

Our agreed upon fee will be based on Dr. Robbins' sliding scale or insurance policy rate. I understand and agree to Dr Robbins' 48 hour cancellation fee, and that I will be charged the full session fee for late cancellations or missed sessions.

By entering my name here, I formally indicate I understand all of the above notifications and policies.