

NAME:

Date:

CONTRACTUAL INFORMED CONSENT TO TREATMENT

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully. Please bring any questions to our next meeting to discuss. If you do not bring questions to me during the first few sessions I will assume you have none.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES: Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. There are different methods I may use to deal with the issues you bring. My main method is EMDR, Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing – and I suggest that you research this method (you can go to elisagottheil.com for more information on EMDR). Also, please view the UTube video by emdria.org on what is EMDR. I work from a psychodynamic conceptualization of cases, with cognitive behavioral strategies, and hypnotherapy as necessary and only upon agreement. Also, I utilize a somatic experiencing strategy along with EMDR.

Psychotherapy calls for an active effort on your part. Therapy happens at home. This means that in order for the therapy to be successful, you will have to work on those things we explore during sessions, outside the sessions. Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. In session you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress.

Our first session will help us determine if we are a good match, and you and I should use the first three sessions to decide if we are a good fit. Also, during that time I may come to conclude that you would be better served by another treatment psychologist with other skills than mine. I will give you referrals to other networks of practitioners or particular practitioners, whom I believe would be better suited to help you.

During our first few sessions I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should consider the level of your commitment.

MEETINGS - CANCELLATION FEES – COPAY: Sessions are 50 minutes long. We may decide to schedule one or more sessions a week, you decide what is best for you. Cancellations with more than 24 hours do not have a fee. Cancellations within 24 hours of your appointment, carry a fee is \$110 unless I can reschedule your appointment for another time the same week, via text to 805-319-9970. Also, please do not leave any other information on text, other than scheduling or billing related information.

I do not hold standing appointments. At the end of each session we will confirm the next appointment. Frequent cancellations will result in termination of treatment. My assumption will be that there are physical issues or other priorities that keep you from having the ability, time, or the commitment to pursue treatment with me.

FEES and INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT: My hourly fee is \$250.00. Please refer to the bottom of this document for a listing of my fees. If we meet more than 50 minutes, I will charge accordingly. Please know that you may have mental health coverage, and still have to pay for copays, coinsurance, and patient responsibility. Find out if your deductible has been met. Unpaid fees by your insurance company are your responsibility.

I am a provider with MediCare, Medical (Santa Barbara), and several other medical Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) medical insurance companies. If you are covered by MediCare or Medical (Santa Barbara) I will send the billing and be paid directly by them. If you are covered by a PPO medical insurance I will send you a bill statement for my fee – a SuperBill as it is called – for you to present to your insurance company and recover what they may allow. It is important that you understand your medical insurance benefits before we engage in treatment.

Unpaid bills can be sent to a collection agency to secure payment of fees in arrears and its costs will be included in the claim. Please call your plan administrator number on the back of your card for questions you may have about coverage, copay, coinsurance, and overall patient responsibility.

You should also be aware that insurance companies require that I provide them with your clinical diagnosis. In audit cases, they will request the file (treatment plans, progress notes). This information will become part of the insurance company files. You understand that, by using your insurance, you authorize me to release such information to your insurance company. I will try to keep that information limited to the minimum necessary.

CONTACTING ME: I am never immediately available by telephone but I will return your call at my earliest possible time, within 24 hours, during weekdays, from Monday to Thursday, or on the next Monday. This is the main reason why I do not work with patients who may experience frequent crisis situations that would prompt my services. I will not return calls after Thursdays. The next time I will return calls will be Monday. My landline 805-308-4568 is answered by confidential voice mail, that I monitor daily. In emergencies, please call 911 or go to your nearest hospital. Texting me at 805-319-9970 is the way to manage rescheduling and billing issues. Please do not leave any other personal information on text or email since these systems are not confidential. For clinical issues, issues related to the work we do in session, please call me and I will schedule another session. Do not email or text for clinical issues. If I will be unavailable for more than one month I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, for you to schedule with, if necessary.

CONFIDENTIALITY: In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist is protected by HIPPA law, which I have provided you a copy of, and I 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 me from providing any information about your treatment. In some legal proceedings, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it, and I must comply with that court order.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect you or 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 or has been abused, I am required to make a report to the appropriate state agency. If I believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another or to self I am required to inform the police or seeking hospitalization for the patient.

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 by not using your name, or not revealing information about you that would make your identity clear. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. Ordinarily, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I believe that it is important to our work together.

Although this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality is intended to inform you about potential issues that could arise, 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 and provide clarification. However, if you need specific clarification or advice I am unable to provide, formal legal advice may be needed, as the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex and I am not an attorney.

RATES: \$250 per 50-minute session, in person; \$125 per 30-minute online telehealth. \$250 per 50-minute consultation for training, \$110 for EMDR consultation, and supervision of students or interns; \$55 for 30 minutes. \$250 per letter or report writing for court systems, Probation, sober living housing, or rental administration, and per 50-minute Skype or WhatsApp consultation on FASD. \$250 per hour for any court related matters such as appearances, hearings, or depositions. This fee applies to time spent traveling to the indicated site.

QUESTIONS?
