



# Simplicity Counseling Services, PLLC

696-A North Spence Avenue, Goldsboro, NC 27534 \* (919) 330-4147

## **CLIENT SERVICE AGREEMENT**

Welcome to Simplicity Counseling Services, PLLC. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. It also contains summary information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law that provides privacy protections and patient rights about the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is very important that you understand them. When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between us. We can discuss any questions you have when you sign them or at any time in the future.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

Therapy is a relationship between people that works in part because of clearly defined rights and responsibilities held by each person. As a client in psychotherapy, you have certain rights and responsibilities that are important for you to understand. There are also legal limitations to those rights that you should be aware of. I, as your therapist, have corresponding responsibilities to you. These rights and responsibilities are described in the following sections.

Psychotherapy has both benefits and risks. Risks may include experiencing uncomfortable feelings, such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness, because the process of psychotherapy often requires discussing the unpleasant aspects of your life. However, psychotherapy has been shown to have benefits for individuals who undertake it. Therapy often leads to a significant reduction in feelings of distress, increased satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, greater personal awareness and insight, increased skills for managing stress and resolutions to specific problems. But, there are no guarantees about what will happen. Psychotherapy requires a very active effort on your part. In order to be most successful, you will have to work on things we discuss outside of sessions.

The first 2-4 sessions will involve a comprehensive evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some initial impressions of what our work might include. At that point, we will discuss your treatment goals and create an initial treatment plan. You should evaluate this information and make your own assessment about whether you feel comfortable working with me. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

### **APPOINTMENTS**

Appointments will ordinarily be 45-50 minutes in duration, once per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be more or less frequent as needed. The time scheduled for your appointment is assigned to you and you alone. If you are unable to make that appointment please let me know and if it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment. In addition, you are responsible for coming to your session on time; if you are late, your appointment will still need to end on time. Additionally, we require a 24hr notice to be given for cancellation or rescheduling of appointments unless there is an emergency/crisis preventing your attendance. A \$50.00 fee will be assessed without proper notice of cancellation.



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## **PROFESSIONAL FEES**

The standard fee for the initial intake is \$120.00 and each subsequent session is \$75.00. You are responsible for paying at the time of your session unless prior arrangements have been made. This office accepts cash, check, and credit card payments. Any checks returned to our office are subject to an additional fee of up to \$30.00 to cover the bank fee that we incur. If you refuse to pay your debt, we reserve the right to use an attorney or collection agency to secure payment.

## **INSURANCE**

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. With your permission we will assist you to the extent possible in filing claims and ascertaining information about your coverage, but you are responsible for knowing your coverage and for letting me know if/when your coverage changes.

You should be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize us to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. (Diagnoses are technical terms that describe the nature of your problems and whether they are short-term or long-term problems). 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. We will provide you with a copy of any report we submit, if you request it. By signing this Agreement, you agree that we can provide requested information to your carrier if you plan to pay with insurance.

In addition, if you plan to use your insurance, authorization from the insurance company may be required before they will cover therapy fees. If you did not obtain authorization and it is required, you may be responsible for full payment of the fee. Many policies leave a percentage of the fee (which is called co-insurance) or a flat dollar amount (referred to as a co-payment) to be covered by the patient. Either amount is to be paid at the time of the visit to Simplicity Counseling. In addition, some insurance companies also have a deductible, which is an out-of-pocket amount that must be paid by the patient before the insurance companies are willing to begin paying any amount for services. This will typically mean that you will be responsible to pay for initial sessions with me until your deductible has been met; the deductible amount may also need to be met at the start of each calendar year. Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can reasonably expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if coverage ends before you feel ready to end your sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for our services yourself to avoid the problems described above, unless prohibited by my provider contract.

If Simplicity Counseling Services, PLLC is not a participating provider for your insurance plan, we will supply you with a receipt of payment for services, which you can submit to your insurance company for reimbursement. Please note that not all insurance companies reimburse for out-of-network providers.



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## **PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

Simplicity Counseling Services, PLLC is required to keep appropriate records of the psychological services that we provide. Your records are maintained in a secure location in the office. Your therapist will keep brief records noting that you were here, your reasons for seeking therapy, the goals and progress we set for treatment, your diagnosis, topics we discussed, your medical, social, and treatment history, records we receive from other providers, copies of records we send to others, and your billing records. Except in unusual circumstances that involve danger to yourself, you have the right to a copy of your file. Because these are professional records, they may be misinterpreted and / or upsetting to untrained readers. For this reason, we recommend that you initially review them with me, or have them forwarded to another mental health professional to discuss the contents. If your therapist refuses your request for access to your records, you have a right to have their decision reviewed by another mental health professional, which will be discussed with you upon your request. You also have the right to request that a copy of your file be made available to any other health care provider at your written request.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Simplicity Counseling Services, PLLC policies about confidentiality, as well as other information about your privacy rights, are fully described in a separate document entitled Notice of Privacy Practices. You have been provided with a copy of that document and we have discussed those issues. Please remember that you may reopen the conversation at any time during our work together.

## **PARENTS & MINORS**

While privacy in therapy is crucial to successful progress, parental involvement can also be essential. It is our policy not to provide treatment to a child under age 13 unless s/he agrees that I can share whatever information I consider necessary with a parent. For children 14 and older, I request an agreement between the client and the parents allowing me to share general information about treatment progress and attendance, as well as a treatment summary upon completion of therapy. All other communication will require the child's agreement, unless I feel there is a safety concern (see also above section on Confidentiality for exceptions), in which case I will make every effort to notify the child of my intention to disclose information ahead of time and make every effort to handle any objections that are raised.

## **CONTACTING ME**

Our Therapists are often not immediately available by telephone. They do not answer their office or personal phone when with clients or otherwise unavailable. At these times, you may leave a message on their confidential voice mail and your call will be returned as soon as possible, but it may take a day or two for non-urgent matters. If, for any number of unseen reasons, you do not hear from someone or we are unable to reach you, and you feel you cannot wait for a return call or if you feel unable to keep yourself safe, go to your Local Hospital Emergency Room, or call 911 and ask to speak to the mental health worker on call. We will make every attempt to inform you in advance of planned absences, and provide you with the name and phone number of the mental health professional covering the office.



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## **OTHER RIGHTS**

If you are unhappy with what is happening in therapy, we hope you will talk with your therapist so that they can respond to your concerns. Such comments will be taken seriously and handled with care and respect. You may also request that we refer you to another therapist and are free to end therapy at any time. You have the right to considerate, safe and respectful care, without discrimination as to race, ethnicity, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or source of payment. You have the right to ask questions about any aspects of therapy and about your therapist's specific training and experience. You have the right to expect that our therapists will not have social or sexual relationships with clients or with former clients.

## **CONSENT TO PSYCHOTHERAPY**

Your signature below indicates that you have read this Agreement and the Notice of Privacy Practices and agree to their terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Patient or Personal Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Patient or Personal Representative

Date \_\_\_\_\_