



SERVICES AGREEMENT

Welcome to Tampa Counseling and Wellness. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and your therapist.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the particular problem you bring to treatment, the consistency of attendance, and the amount of effort put forth in your work with your therapist. There are many different methods that may be used to deal with the problem you hope to address. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things you discuss with your therapist both during sessions and outside of sessions.

Psychotherapy can have many benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, and loss. Make sure to discuss these feelings with your therapist in order to effectively manage your ability to cope with these negative feelings and experiences. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have significant benefits for people who engage in treatment. Therapy often leads to finding solutions to specific problems, personal growth, better relationships, and significant reduction in feelings of distress. While there are no guarantees to what *you* will experience, most clients report having benefitted greatly from therapy.

Your first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. Your therapist will normally conduct an evaluation that can last from one to three sessions. We ask clients to commit to at least three sessions before deciding if the therapist, or therapy in general, is for them. During this time, you and your therapist can decide if they are the right fit to help you achieve your treatment goals. By the end of this evaluation, your therapist will be able to offer you some first impressions of the problem, how therapy session will proceed and a treatment plan you both will follow. You should evaluate this information along with your own feelings of whether you are comfortable working with your therapist. If you have questions about any part of this process, you should discuss them with your therapist whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, we will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional through a referral process.

MEETINGS AND MISSED OR CANCELED APPOINTMENTS

Therapy sessions are typically scheduled between 45 and 60-minutes per week at a time that both you and your therapist will agree on. Some sessions may be longer based on your needs and the frequency of sessions may also vary. Some clients benefit from weekly sessions while others may benefit from bi-weekly or monthly sessions. Discuss this with your therapist early in treatment so you have a clear understanding of the rationale for frequency of sessions. Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to attend the session unless you provide notice of cancellation 24 hours prior to your appointment. A fee in the amount of \$50.00 will be assessed for missed appointments and/or late cancellations if notice is not given 24 hours prior to the session. Your therapist may be willing to negotiate this fee based on the cost of your individual sessions. We understand that there are instances where emergencies may arise. However, in these situations, your therapist has full discretion whether to charge the fee or not. Your therapist will handle missed appointments/late cancellations on a case by case basis and there is no guarantee that your particular situation will warrant a waiving of the fees.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Professional fees vary between therapist. Session fees may also vary depending on the day, time, and type of your appointments. Make sure to discuss these fees with your therapist prior to beginning treatment. In addition to charges for sessions, your therapist may also charge fees for other professional services they

provide. Other services include 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 them. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require your therapist's participation, you will be expected to pay for their time, even if called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, a charge of \$300 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding will be assessed.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless you and your therapist agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage, which requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, your therapist may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan. If your account 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 involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its 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. Therapist utilize varying forms to accept payment such as cash, credit card, personal checks, and mobile payment applications.

CREDIT CARD AUTHORIZATION

I have provided my therapist with my current credit card number and authorize him or her to keep my signature on file, and to charge my credit card account for any outstanding balances, missed appointments, and services rendered when applicable. I understand that my credit card will only be charged when other arrangements have not been made and payment has not been received within thirty (30) days. I give my therapist consent to charge this credit card when applicable. In the unlikely event that I would dispute these charges, I agree not to take action with my credit card issuer without first contacting and speaking with my therapist to resolve the payment concern. A copy of the front and back of my credit card will be made and kept in my confidential client file. I consent to provide updated credit card information if this card should expire or be cancelled.

Cardholder Name: _____
Credit Card Type: _____ Card Number: _____
Expiration Date: _____ CVV# (3 Digit Security Code): _____ Billing Zip Code: _____
Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. We will provide you with whatever assistance we can in helping you receive benefits; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. We can provide you with information based on our experience with other clients and try to help you understanding the information you receive from your insurance company but this should not replace policies or information provided by your insurance provider.

Managed Health Care plans such as HMOs and PPOs 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 certain number of sessions. It is important to understand that while a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some clients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits have ended. Some managed-care plans will not allow us to provide services to you once your benefits have ended. If this is the case, we will do our best to find another provider who will help you continue your therapy.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require that we provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes we have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record. 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. Your therapist can provide you with a copy of any reports they submit, if you request it.

Not all therapist accept insurance or participate in health insurance panels. Some therapist may provide “out-of-network” services. In these instances, they can provide you with a receipt of payment which you may then use to file a claim for out-of- network benefits. However, your therapist is not required to file the claims for out-of-network services in place of the client. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for services yourself to avoid the issues described above.

<p>I choose <u>NOT</u> to utilize my insurance coverage at this time. _____ INITIALS</p> <p>- OR -</p> <p>I choose to utilize insurance and will submit receipts of payment to my insurance provider. _____ INITIALS</p>

CONTACTING

There are times when your therapist may not be immediately available by telephone, email, or phone messaging. If you are unable to reach your therapist and feel that you have an emergent situation, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room. Please note that we are strictly outpatient providers and therefore do not provide emergency/crisis services to clients. An emergency/crisis situation is one that requires immediate attention and/or is life threatening. If you have a life-threatening emergency, please contact 911 or the County Crisis Line at 211 for 24-hour assistance or go to the nearest emergency room. Make sure to discuss with your therapist their preferred form of contact and specific contact policies as these vary between therapist. When they are unavailable, their telephone should be answered by a confidential voicemail. However, other forms of contact such as email, text messages, or other messaging methods may not be confidential and any information relayed cannot be protected. In order to ensure confidentiality and protect your privacy, clinical services will not be provided through email, text messaging, or other messaging methods.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of our profession require that we keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or your therapist can prepare a summary instead. Because these are professional records, the information within can be misinterpreted and/or can be disconcerting to the lay readers. If you wish to see your records, we recommend that you review them with your therapist so that the information can be provided with some context. Clients may be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

MINORS

If you are under 18 years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents/guardians the right to examine your treatment records. It is our policy to request an agreement from parents that they consent to give up access to your records. If they agree, your therapist will provide them only with general information about your work together, unless your therapist feels there is a risk that you may seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, your therapist will notify them with those concern. Your therapist can also provide them with a summary of your treatment when it is complete. Before giving

parents/guardians any information, your provider will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do their best to handle any objections you may have.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communication between a client and therapist is protected by law. We 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 your therapist 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. 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 the client. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you do not object, we will not tell you about these consultations unless we feel 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 you discuss any questions or concerns with your therapist.

TERMINATION OF SERVICES

In most cases, therapy sessions with your therapist will finish because you have successfully met your goals and addressed the concerns that originally brought you to therapy. However, if you are considering ending services early, please discuss this with your therapist so that they can plan accordingly or address any concerns you may have. Consistent attendance and participation at sessions increases the success you will have in therapy and will allow for shorter treatment. Therefore, repeated cancellations and/or missed appointments, in the absence of an emergency, may result in termination of services. As addressed above, unless alternative arrangements have been made, failure to pay fees may also result in termination of services. If, at any time, termination is discussed due to the above reasons, every effort will be made to provide referrals to other appropriate providers to ensure continuity of care. Likewise, if a client and/or legal guardian chooses to discontinue therapy services, alternative mental health referrals will be provided.

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

Client Signature

Date

Printed Name

Legal Guardian Signature (if client under age 18)

Date

Printed Name