

PFP CONSULTING

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Informed Consent for Psychotherapy Services

Psychotherapy is a collaborative relationship that works, in part, because of clearly defined rights and responsibilities held by both patient and therapist. It is important to know, before commencing with psychotherapy, what your rights and responsibilities are as a consumer as well as what my rights and responsibilities are as a provider of psychotherapy services. It is also important to know what kind of situations may limit these rights and responsibilities. The following is designed to educate you about these issues.

Psychotherapist Responsibilities To You The Patient

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is one of the cornerstones of effective psychotherapy treatment. One of the reasons it works is that people feel safe, secure, and confident that what they talk about in therapy stays in therapy. I will make every effort to ensure that information about your case is kept confidential. You should be aware, however, that there are certain legal and ethical requirements that specify conditions under which it may be necessary to for me to discuss your case with other professionals. Such situations include:

- a. If I believe that there is a danger that you may harm yourself or others or that you are incapable of taking care of yourself.**
- b. If I become aware of your involvement in the abuse of children, elderly, or disabled persons.**
- c. If I am ordered by a court to release your records. This sometimes happens when patients are plaintiffs in lawsuits and psychological records are subpoenaed as part of that process.**
- d. If your insurance company requests records in order to verify the services received and determine compensation.**
- e. As part of a supervision process, I may discuss your case with another professional.**

Record Keeping

I keep psychotherapy notes as a record of our work together. These notes document that you have been here, the topics that we talk about, any interventions that have been used, your response/my response to the session, and treatment plan or any other considerations that may be helpful to your work with me. I maintain your records in a secure location that can not be accessed by anyone other than me.

Diagnosis

Diagnoses are technical terms that speak to your problem(s). These terms describe conditions, syndromes, and personality disorders. All diagnoses come from the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM-V). I have a copy of it and would be glad to share any information pertaining to your diagnosis. Your diagnosis is really short hand for a set of behaviors, feelings, and thoughts that describes what you are struggling with. In order to receive reimbursement for psychotherapy claims, the insurance company requires that a diagnosis is given. This information becomes a part of your record with them. While they are generally very good about protecting your information, particularly with the new HIPPA laws in place to protect medical information, I can not control or be responsible for it.

Additional Rights

You have the right to question and refuse anything I say or do. I do not have social or sexual relationships with patients or former patients of mine. Not only would that be a breach of ethical and legal guidelines, but it would potentially be an abuse of my role as a therapist in your life. In essence then, once you are a patient you will always be seen as a patient of mine, even if you are no longer in therapy with me. It is important, to me and the therapeutic process, that the framework of therapy be preserved and not contaminated by these other factors.

It is important to note that psychotherapy does have risks. Trying to deal with difficult emotions, thoughts, and behaviors can be very upsetting. Changing your behavior, altering your beliefs, facing realities of your life can sometimes be disruptive to the relationships in your life. You may find, as therapy progresses, strong feelings develop within the context of the therapeutic relationship. This is not uncommon and is something to be talked about and worked through. Sometimes people feel worse before they feel better. Sometimes people feel worse and do not really feel any better. Should this be happening, it is important to talk to me about it. It is important to consider these risks before entering into therapy and decide whether or not you feel the potential rewards outweigh any possible risks. Most people, who enter therapy, find that it is helpful.

Length of therapy is usually decided by the nature of your problem, what you and I think is appropriate, and what is realistic depending on your financial situation. You are usually the one that decides when therapy is over. My hope is that you end therapy because you have reached your goals and obtained what you wanted out of therapy. There are, however, several exceptions to this right. I have the right to end therapy for the following reasons:

- 1. I believe that the therapy is not helping you and you would be better served by a referral to another practitioner or treatment modality.**
- 2. If you do violence to, threaten either verbally or physically, or harass myself, my office, or my family in anyway, I reserve the right to terminate unilaterally and immediately from treatment. If I terminate you from therapy, I will give you some names of other practitioners, but can not guarantee that they accept you for therapy.**

You have the right to know when I will be away from the office for a period of time. I will inform you of this well in advance. If I am away and you are in need of help, please call CPEP at 315-448-6555. Or go to the nearest emergency room of a local hospital for assistance.

Please know that you can ask me questions about anything at any time. I am always open to talking about the process of therapy, the rationale behind what I am doing, and discussing any appropriate alternatives to treatment. If you feel that things are not working out between us, you have the right to tell me and request a referral to another practitioner. If you have any problem with something that I have done, I hope that you will talk to me about it and that we can resolve the issue to your satisfaction. If this is not the case, you are free to contact the New York State Department of Education and file a compliant.

**Office of the Professions
Professional Misconduct and Discipline**

**The Compliant Hot Line
1-800-442-8106**

Or

Email: conduct@mail.nysed.gov

Training and approach to Psychotherapy

I received both my doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision (1988) and my masters' degree in Counseling and Guidance (1984) from Syracuse University. I have been an adjunct professor within the counseling program, teaching a variety of masters' and doctoral courses, since 1989. I have received 18 years of weekly clinical supervision. And have provided supervision services to others over the same time period.

At the time that I received my Ph.D., counselors were not licensed in the State of New York. In an effort to demonstrate and differentiate my competence, I looked outside of the State for validation of my qualifications. I was certified as, and continue to be, a clinical mental health counselor in 1991 and a nationally certified counselor in 1993 by the Board for Certified Counselors.

On January 1, 2005, after many years of legislative effort, the New York State Board for Mental Health Practitioners, through the Education Law, finally established four new mental health professions in New York State. These professions; creative arts therapy, marriage and family therapy, mental health counseling, and psychoanalysis will now be regulated by the State. After going through the application process, I was granted a license to practice mental health counseling in the State of New York on January 4, 2006.

My approach to psychotherapy is eclectic in nature. This means that I have integrated several theoretical paradigms in my work. The most significant contributions come from humanistic psychologies, family systems therapies, and psychodynamic therapies. What does this mean?

From humanistic therapies, I draw on the nature of what it means to be a human being and the inherent struggles we all face in living an authentic life. It is hard to be responsibility and accountable for our own lives. From family systems therapies, I draw on the power of our families of origin and the influence it has on our present day lives. From psychodynamic/psychoanalytic theories, I draw on the concepts of the unconscious mind, instinctual drives, defenses, internalized object relations, and character structure.

Simply put, I believe in both nature and nurture. We are born with certain genetic constitutions and grow up in environments that either nurture or thwart our natural inclinations. Therapy is a process that helps people in understanding the nature of their struggles and, hopefully, leads to better harmony by facing our obstacles to greater mental health.

Your responsibilities as a psychotherapy patient

1. You are responsible for keeping your scheduled appointments. Sessions last for approximately 50 to 55 minutes. If you miss a session without canceling or canceling within 24 hours notice, you will be billed for the session and are required to pay for it at the next session.

11. You are responsible for paying for your session weekly unless we have made other arrangements. My fee per session is \$180.00. If we decide to meet for a longer period of time, I will bill you on a prorated basis for the time. Emergency phone calls, of less than 15 minutes, will not be billed. The exception to this is if you develop a pattern of calling outside of your session. You will then be billed for my time. I typically will increase my fee every two years and will I will let you know when an increase is coming.

111. I am not willing to have patients run a bill with me. I have found that it is not good for you, for me, or for our working relationship. If you fail to pay for two consecutive sessions, we will discontinue therapy until you are caught up with your payments.

Patient Consent for Psychotherapy

I have read the above consent statement and understand what I am entering into. If I have any questions related to this, I have asked Dr. Pickett. I agree to pay the \$180.00 fee per session. I understand my rights and responsibilities as a patient, and my therapist responsibilities to me. I agree to undertake psychotherapy services with Paul F. Pickett, Ph.D., L.M.H.C. I know that I can terminate at anytime for any reason. I know that I have the right to refuse any requests or suggestions made by Dr. Pickett that I deem not to be suitable to me. While I understand that Dr. Pickett has knowledge and experience in this field, I recognize that I am the final authority of what I want to incorporate into my life from this psychotherapy experience.

Signed _____

Date _____