

Skybound Counseling, LLC
Tyler James, MA, LPC
Informed Consent for Therapy Services

THERAPIST-CLIENT SERVICE AGREEMENT

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my 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. Psychotherapy can also be disruptive to your relationships. 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 50-55 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 need to cancel or reschedule a session, I ask that you provide me with 24 hours notice. If you miss a session without canceling, or cancel with less than 24 hour notice, my policy is to collect the full amount of your session [unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control]. 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. Our office is located at 400 Chisolm Place, Suite 114, Plano, TX 75075.

PROFESSIONAL FEES The standard fee for individual counseling sessions is \$100.00. You are responsible for paying at the time of your session unless prior arrangements have been made. I accept cash, check and credit card for payment. Any checks returned to my office are subject to an additional fee of up to \$25.00 to cover the bank fee that I incur. If you refuse to pay your debt, I reserve the right to use an attorney or collection agency to secure payment.

In addition to weekly appointments, it is my practice to charge this amount on a prorated basis (I will break down the hourly cost) for other professional services that you may require such as report writing, telephone conversations that last longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings or consultations which you have requested, or the time required to perform any other service which you

may request of me. If you anticipate becoming involved in a court case, I recommend that we discuss this fully before you waive your right to confidentiality. If your case requires my participation, you will be expected to pay for the professional time required even if another party compels me to testify.

INSURANCE Currently, I only accept BlueCross BlueShield PPO plans. If it is your intention to use this insurance, it is your responsibility to make sure you are aware the way your particular plan works. Some have large deductibles before they will begin covering your expenses, others have co-pays from the start, and others have percentages before or after deductibles. The way the use of insurance works in this practice will require you to provide a credit card to be put on file by Skybound Counseling, LLC. I will file the claim, within a few weeks BCBS will cover the cost of your session based on your plan, and I will charge the remainder of the cost of the session to your card kept on file. For example, let's say BCBS pays \$100 for your session; if they pay me \$70 of that, then that means you owe a \$30 co-pay. If they pay me \$0 of that, then that likely indicates you have a deductible that must be met before they will begin paying for your sessions, in which case I would charge the full \$100 to your card. I highly recommend contacting BCBS to find out how your plan works for its behavioral health benefits. If you wish to do out-of-network insurance, please check with your insurance provider to determine what your out-of-network mental health benefits consist of. Insurance will typically reimburse you for 50-80% of your session costs. At the end of each session, I will provide you with a detailed receipt to submit to your insurance provider. You should also be aware that if you plan to do insurance reimbursement, most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I have to provide additional information which may become part of the insurance company files. By signing this agreement, you agree that I can provide requested information to your carrier should you choose to be reimbursed by your insurance. Please be advised that full payment is due at the time of service.

CONFIDENTIALITY Your counselor will make every effort to keep your personal information private. If you wish to have information released, you will be required to sign a consent form before such information will be released. There

are some limitations to confidentiality to which you need to be aware. Your counselor may consult with a supervisor or other professional counselor in order to give you the best service. In the event that your counselor consults with another counselor, no identifying information such as your name would be released. Counselors are required by law to release information when the client poses a risk to themselves or others and in cases of suspected abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult (elderly or disabled). If your counselor receives a court order or subpoena, they may be required to release some information. In such a case, your counselor will consult with other professionals and limit the release to only what is necessary by law. Please be mindful when using technology during the counseling process. There are places on the intake forms where you can choose whether to communicate with your counselor via email, phone, voicemails etc. Please be aware that when communicating via these means, there is always a chance that unauthorized persons may attempt to discover your personal information. Please be advised to take precautions with regards to authorized or unauthorized access to any technology used during the counseling process. Your counselor will take every precaution to safeguard your information but cannot guarantee that unauthorized access to electronic communications could not occur.

RECORD KEEPING I am required to keep appropriate records of the psychological services that I provide. Records will be kept for at least 7 years but may be kept for longer. Records will be kept either electronically on a USB flash drive or in a paper file stored in a locked cabinet in the counselors offices. I 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 I receive from other providers, copies of records I send to others, and your billing records. These records will not be shared except with respect to the limits of confidentiality discussed in the confidentiality section and in cases where you have given written consent to exchange information. 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, I recommend that you initially review them with me, or have them forwarded to another mental health professional to discuss the contents. If I refuse your request for access to your records, you have a right to have my decision reviewed by another mental health professional, which I will discuss 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.

PARENTS & MINORS While privacy in therapy is crucial to successful progress, parental involvement can also be essential. It is my 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 I am often not immediately available by telephone. I do not answer my phone when I am with clients or otherwise unavailable. At these times, you may leave a message on my 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. Our number is 302-497-5023. If, for any number of unseen reasons, you do not hear from me or I am unable to reach you, and you feel you cannot wait for a return call or if you feel unable to keep yourself safe, please go to your local hospital or call 911. I will make every attempt to inform you in advance of planned absences.

OTHER RIGHTS If you are unhappy with what is happening in therapy, I hope you will talk with me so that I can respond to your concerns. Such comments will be taken seriously and handled with care and respect. You may also request that I 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 my specific training and experience. You have the right to expect that I 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. If entering therapy as a couple, both partners need to sign the line. If both parent signatures are available, both sign next to each other.

Signature of Patient(s) or Personal Representative(s)

Printed Name of Patient(s) or Personal Representative(s)

Date(s)