

THE THERAPY PROCESS

CLIENT NAME: _____

NATURE OF COUNSELING SERVICES

Psychotherapy is the process where mental health distresses and disorders are assessed, prevented, evaluated, and treated. There are a variety of techniques that can be utilized to deal with the problem(s) that brought you to therapy. These services are generally unlike any services you may receive from a physician in that they require your active participation and cooperation.

Psychotherapy has both benefits and risks. Possible risks include the experience of uncomfortable feelings (such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness, or helplessness) or the recall of unpleasant events in your life. Potential benefits include significant reduction in feelings of distress, better relationships, better problem-solving and coping skills, and resolutions of specific problems. Given the nature of psychotherapy, it is difficult to predict what exactly will happen, but we will do our best to make sure you will be able to handle the risks and experience at least some of the benefits. However, psychotherapy remains an inexact science and no guarantees can be made regarding outcomes.

PROCEDURES

Therapy usually starts with an evaluation. It is our practice to conduct an evaluation that lasts up to 2 sessions. This evaluation begins with an intake interview. By the end of the evaluation, we will offer you an initial impression of what therapy will involve, should you decide to continue. If you have questions about any of the procedures recommended, feel free to discuss these openly.

We will usually schedule one 45-minute session per week at a mutually agreed upon time (under some special circumstances sessions may be longer or more frequent). This appointment will be reserved for you on a regular basis and is considered a standing appointment (i.e., if you miss one week, you will still have the same appointment time the next week). The overall length of psychotherapy (in weeks or months) is generally difficult to predict but is something we can discuss when the initial treatment plan is reviewed with you after the evaluation.

FEES AND REIMBURSEMENT

Evaluation & Intake Interview appointments are \$150 for a 60-75 minute session. The fee for individual 60-minute therapy is \$125 per session. BASICS also charges special fees for other professional services you may require (such as telephone conversations which last longer than 10 minutes, meetings or consultations that you have requested with other professionals. etc.).

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In order to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources are available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health benefits policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment when a licensed professional provides such treatment. We will provide you with whatever assistance possible to facilitate your receipt of the benefits to which you are entitled, including completing insurance forms as appropriate. However, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of the fee.

Carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services and call your insurer if you have any questions. We will provide you with whatever information we have based on our experience and will be happy to try to help you understand the information you receive from your carrier. The escalation of the cost of health care has resulted in an increasing level of complexity about insurance benefits that often makes it difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. Managed health care plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require advance authorization before they will provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often oriented towards a short-term treatment approach designed to resolve specific problems that are interfering with level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek additional approval after a certain number of sessions. Although a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, many clients feel that more services are necessary after the insurance benefits expire. Some managed care plans will not allow us to provide reimbursed services to you once your benefits are no longer available. If this is the case, we will do our best to find another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy.

Please be aware that most insurance agreements require you to authorize us to provide a clinical diagnosis, and sometimes additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or in rare cases, a copy of the entire record. This information will become part of the insurance company's files, and in all likelihood, some of it will be computerized. All insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, but once it is in their hands, we have no control over what your insurer will do with the information. In some cases, the insurer may share the information with a national medical information data bank. The Medical Information Bureau (MIB) is a central database of medical information shared by insurance companies. The MIB does not have a file on everyone. But if you have an MIB file, you will want to be sure it is correct. You can obtain a copy for free once a year by calling (866) 692-6901 (TTY for the hearing impaired (866) 346-3642) or by visiting the company's web site at www.mib.com/html/request_your_record.html.

It is best to discuss all the information about your insurance coverage with your clinician, so you can decide what can be accomplished within the parameters of the benefits available to you and what will happen if the insurance benefits run out before you are ready to end treatment. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for counseling services yourself if you prefer to avoid involving your insurer.

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CONTACT HOURS

Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 7:00 pm. Some evening group therapy hours are available. We are generally not available for telephone services but you can cancel and reschedule sessions by calling (301) 420-1972 and leaving a message on the confidential answering service.

If you need to reschedule an appointment, we will make every effort to return your call on the same day, with the exception of calls made after-hours or on weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please leave some times when you will be available.

If you have an emergency please call the Emergency Room at your nearest hospital, or dial 9-1-1.

Please note that BASICS does not have emergency services or facilities.

RECORD-KEEPING PROCEDURES

Both law and the standards of the counseling profession require that we keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of these records, unless we believe that seeing them would be emotionally damaging to you. If this is the case, we will be happy to provide your records to an appropriate mental health professional of your choice. Although you are entitled to receive a copy of your records if you wish to see them, we may prefer to prepare an appropriate summary instead. Because client records are professional documents, they can be misinterpreted and can be upsetting. If you insist on seeing your records, it is best to review them with your therapist to discuss their content.

Clients will be charged an appropriate fee for any preparation time that is required to comply with an informal request for record review. If you are under 18 years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents with the right to examine your treatment records. It is policy to request an agreement from parents that they consent to give up access to your records. If they agree, we will provide your parents only general information on how your treatment is proceeding unless there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or another person. In such instances, we may be required by law to notify your parents of our concern. Parents of minors also can request to be provided with a summary of their child's treatment when it is complete. Before giving your parents any information, we will discuss this matter with you and will do the best we can to resolve any objections you may have about what will be discussed.

The State of Maryland requires that we keep your records for 7 (seven) years after termination of counseling services and for minors, 7 (seven) years after the minor turns 18 (eighteen).

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CLIENT SIGNATURE AGREEMENT PAGE

SIGNATURES VERIFYING TREATMENT

Your signature below indicates that you have read the documents in the document entitled, "The Therapy Process", that you have understood it, and that you agree to abide by its terms as long as you are a BASICS Group Practice, LLC client.

Client Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature (If Client Under 18 Years)

Date

Clinician Signature

Date



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