

AGREEMENT TO SERVICES AND BUSINESS POLICIES

Welcome to The New Leaf. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, I am happy to discuss them with you. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

As a licensed psychologist I provide psychotherapeutic services, including psychotherapy and assessment services, to adolescents and adults through individual and group psychotherapy. I utilize a variety of approaches including cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness, acceptance and commitment therapy, cognitive processing therapy. Every individual and situation is unique and requires an individualized approach to treatment.

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and client, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits, but also has potential risks. It may be painful to approach thoughts and feelings that you have tried to avoid for a long time. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, or frustration. Making changes in your life, your beliefs, or behaviors can be uncomfortable and scary at times. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, increased self-understanding, reductions in feelings of distress, and an improvement in quality of life. Unfortunately, there are no guarantees of what you will experience. Because of this, it is important that you carefully evaluate whether these potential risks outweigh the potential benefits of participating in therapy.

Our first two to three sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include. Together we will identify your specific goals for therapy and will develop a treatment plan to follow. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the

therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures or any other aspect of therapy, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If you have doubts about working with me, I will be happy to help you find another therapist.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

I have a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and am a licensed psychologist in Washington state (#PY60272993). I obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology at Northern Arizona University. I went on to earn my master's and doctoral degrees in clinical/counseling/school psychology at Utah State University. I completed my internship at the VA San Diego Healthcare System and the University of California at San Diego. I then completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the VA San Diego Healthcare System and UCSD. After my training was complete, I obtained my license as a psychologist in CA and accepted a position at the San Diego VA hospital, as well as an adjunct faculty position at UCSD. I worked in the PTSD and Women's Health clinics, and the Mental Health clinic at the VA hospital. I worked on several research projects examining various treatments for anxiety and PTSD. I also supervised psychology interns. I have published research in several peer reviewed journals. I have specialized training and experience in treating anxiety, depression, PTSD and other trauma related problems, eating disorders, and problems related to stress management. Most of my interventions are rooted in cognitive-behavioral and mindfulness based therapies.

SESSIONS

I normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 4 sessions. During this time, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, I will usually schedule one 50-minute session (one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or less frequent. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

The fee for the initial intake session is \$200. The 50 minute session fee is \$160. My fee for 90 minute individual sessions is \$220. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge \$160 per hour for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 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 me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. I reserve the right to increase my fees, but will give you advance notice if this were to happen.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You are responsible for paying for each session upon arrival at my office at the beginning of your session. I accept cash and credit cards (with a \$5 fee) as payment. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

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. However, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. I do not currently accept health insurance. Payment is due at the time of service. I have found that working independently from insurance providers allows clients more flexibility and freedom to choose who they see for psychotherapy without the constraints of having to seek treatment "in network." I encourage you to contact your insurance provider directly, as many clients are able to get reimbursed for their treatment. Although I am willing to help in any way that I can to assist with this process, it is ultimately up to you to make arrangements with your provider to reimburse you directly. Please be aware that insurance will not pay for missed appointments, and that complete payment for services rendered and missed appointments is your responsibility. Monthly receipts are available to all clients, and are used by many to receive reimbursement for my out of network psychotherapy services.

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am usually in my office on Fridays between 8am and 6pm, I will not answer the phone when I am with a client. When I am unavailable, you may leave me a message on my confidential voice-mail that I monitor frequently. I will make every effort to return your call within 24 hours, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary. If you are experiencing an emergency and are unable to reach me or feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, contact 911 or the Crisis Clinic at (206) 461-3222. If you believe that you can't keep yourself safe, please call 911, or go to the nearest hospital emergency room and request to talk to the psychologist or psychiatrist on call.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or I can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent responding to information requests.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET POLICY

This section outlines my office policies with regard to the use of social media and the Internet, and specifically how I conduct myself on the Internet as a mental health professional and how you can expect me to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet.

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, etc.). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship.

Please do not use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me. These sites are not secure and I may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with me in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with me this way could compromise your confidentiality. It may also create the possibility that these exchanges become a part of your legal medical record and will need to be documented and archived in your chart. If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone.

I have a professional Facebook page and professional Pinterest account. You are welcome to voluntarily like, follow, and view The New Leaf on these sites. However, please remember that “liking” or commenting on such pages may compromise your confidentiality if others see that you have “liked” or commented on something from The New Leaf.

If you elect to communicate with me by email at some point in our work together, please be aware that email is not completely confidential. Please do not email me content related to your therapy sessions, as email is not completely secure. If you choose to communicate with me by email, be aware that all emails are retained in the logs of your and my Internet service providers. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet service provider. You should also know that any emails I receive from you and any responses that I send to you become part of your legal record.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS A THERAPY CLIENT

You are responsible for coming to your session on time and at the time we have scheduled. Sessions last for 45 to 50 minutes. If you are late, we will end on time and not run over into the next person's session. If you miss a session without cancelling, or cancel with less than 24 hours notice, you must pay for that session prior to your next scheduled session. If you no-show for two sessions in a row and do not respond to my attempts to reschedule your appointment, I will assume that you have dropped out of therapy and will make the space available to another individual.

COMPLAINTS

If you are not happy with any aspect of therapy, I hope that you will talk about it with me so that I can address your concerns. I take such feedback seriously, and with great care and respect. If you believe I have been unwilling to listen and respond, or that I have behaved unethically, you can make a complaint to the Examining Board of Psychology at (360) 236-4910 or by writing them at P.O. Box 47869, Olympia, WA 98504-7869.
