**New Client Information**

Thank you for choosing our agency for your therapy needs. Our providers are qualified licensed mental health professionals that provide skilled and diverse services for individuals and families. Our primary goal is to provide services that are individually customized for you. We endeavor to put you, the client, first. We strive to ensure quality care for each client. In addition, you can be assured that your privacy is kept in the highest confidence according to state & federal laws.

**Client Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is at the core of the relationship between a client and a therapist. Trust in this confidential relationship is recognized to be important to effective therapy. Therapists have responsibility to protect the privacy of the information a client shares. However, there are limits to confidentiality as noted below. Please read the following information carefully and bring up any questions you may have.

I. Licensed Therapists are Mandated Reporters

Please be aware that in certain situations, therapists are required by Minnesota law to disclose information that is shared with them in confidential settings. These exceptions to confidentiality include the following:

* Client threat of harm to self or another person.
* Client engagement in irresponsible sexual activity while HIV positive.
* Client use of drugs or alcohol irresponsibly while pregnant.
* Client is physically or sexually abusing a child or vulnerable adult.
* When a client is under age 18 and the therapist deems it is in the best interests of the client to share information.
* An order by the court system to share information.
* Requests for information from the client’s insurance company.
* A complaint to the licensing board requires submission of the client file to the board.

 II. Consultation

To provide clients with the best possible professional services, ongoing consultation with other licensed mental health professionals is encouraged and does take place. Client confidentiality is protected within these settings.

III. Confidentiality with Couples

A “no secrets” policy when working with couples in therapy is the policy of this therapy office. This means that if you or your partner participate in individual sessions as part of couple therapy or communicate independently with the therapist, any information disclosed will be considered to be a part of couple therapy and may be discussed in joint sessions. Secrets between partners is not encouraged. However, please do not disclose any information to the therapist that you wish to keep from your partner. When entering marriage counseling, you agree at the start of treatment that if you eventually decide to divorce, neither party will request testimony from the therapist. In doing so, you will be releasing personal information to be publicly displayed in a court room and/or court record.

IV. Release of Information

There may be times that communicating or consulting with another person or organization about your situation may help to coordinate your care. Before this can be done, you must give you permission by signing an authorization form.

V. Communication

Please be aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed when communicating by email or text. Likewise, confidentiality when communicating by phone cannot be guaranteed because of caller ID. In order to maintain confidentiality, the therapist will not initiate contact or acknowledge the existence of a relationship when encountering each other in public settings or on social media.

VI. Third Party Payment

When a third-party is involved in payment for services, i.e. a church or EAP service, the therapist does not have control over payment processing by the third-party and cannot assure clients of the confidentiality on the part of the third-party payor. Employees of the third-party and of contracted organizations of the third party will have access to some of your information as set forth in the agreement between you and the third party.

VII. Payment by Check or Credit Card

Payments made by check or credit card will result in identifying information appearing on your statements.

**Client Rights & Responsibilities**

Consumers of therapy services offered by licensed therapists in the State of Minnesota have the right:

1. to expect that a therapist has met the minimal qualifications of training and experience required by state law;
2. to examine public records maintained by the licensing board which contain the credentials of the therapist;
3. to obtain a copy of the code of ethics from the State Register and Public Documents Division, Department of Administration, 117 University Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55155;
4. to report complaints to the appropriate licensing board governing the therapist.
5. to be informed of the cost of professional services before receiving the services;
6. to privacy as defined by rule and law;
7. to be free from being the object of discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, or another unlawful category;
8. to have access to their records as provided in Minnesota Statutes, section 144.292;
9. to be free from exploitation for the benefit or advantage of a therapist.

**Additional Client Rights**

Clients also have the right:

1. to give informed consent
2. to make independent decisions
3. to receive prompt and reasonable responses to questions
4. to refuse to disclose information, although this refusal may compromise the benefits of therapy
5. to terminate therapy
6. to know about the process of therapy (see Important to Therapy page)

**Client Responsibilities**

Clients are responsible:

1. to ask questions for clarification and to correct misunderstandings
2. to express concerns
3. to be honest with the therapist
4. to be respectful to the therapist’s person and property
5. to actively work and invest effort during and between therapy sessions
6. to make full and timely payments
7. to come to appointments on time and as scheduled
8. to give 24 hours notice of cancellation of appointments

**Important Information about the Process of Therapy**

*Therapy can be helpful.* Most of us could benefit from therapy at one time or another during our lives. All of us need a little help once in awhile.

*Therapy takes courage.* It takes courage to reflect on various aspects of life and to intentionally choose to work on making changes. This is commendable.

*Therapy can be rewarding.* Many find therapy to be a supportive, gratifying, even enjoyable process that enhances personal life situations.

*Therapy is an investment.* A decision to participate in therapy is a decision to invest in yourself, your relationships, and your life situation. This process will involve a commitment of time and energy as well as emotional, intellectual, and financial resources. Actively working during and between therapy sessions is necessary to receive the maximum returns on these investments.

*Therapy has potential benefits.* Some of the generally recognized benefits of therapy include:

* Increased insight about self, relationships, life situations
* Addressing specific life concerns and problems
* Development of ways to better manage stress
* Reduction of stress which is related to better health
* Improved relationship interactions
* Greater life satisfaction

*Therapy has potential risks.* Therapy is usually about change, and with change comes a degree of risk. Reflecting about and modifying perspectives, thoughts, or ways of acting and responding can be difficult and can sometimes even be unsettling to present relationships. Some uncomfortable feelings that may be experienced include regret, sadness, shame, guilt, anger, and anxiety. Some situations may seem to get worse before they get better. This is a perception experienced by many during therapy. However, for many, the benefits outweigh the risks.

*Therapy uses various approaches.* In order to find what is most helpful, approaches will be personalized with you depending on your specific situation and goals. Approaches may include the following:

* Dialogue—collaboratively talking about your story and the concerns connected to your story
* Exploring meanings—talking about possible meanings of your story
* Cognitive reframing—viewing your story from different perspectives
* Mindful awareness—becoming more attentive and thoughtfully responsive to situations
* Self-monitoring activities—becoming consciously aware of what you think, do, feel
* Reclaiming a silenced voice—increasing ability to assertively represent yourself and your views
* Visualization—thinking about and seeing positive, desirable events in your mind’s eye
* Journaling/Logging—writing about your thoughts, emotions, reflections, insights, questions
* EMDR—Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing or Brainspotting— widely accepted treatment approaches used for reprocessing the memories of disturbing or traumatic events

If an approach has specific risks attached, your therapist will discuss the risks and benefits with you.

*Therapy offers no guarantees.* Because each client and each situation is different, experiences and outcomes of therapy will vary. There are no guarantees about how you will experience or respond to therapy or about the outcomes of therapy for your personal situation.