

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 client's rights and about the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) for purposes of treatment, payment and health care operations. It is very important that you understand them and when you sign this document, it will also professional represent an agreement between us. We can discuss any questions you have when you sign them or at any time in the future. .

GOALS OF COUNSELING: As a licensed professional counselor, I am someone who is interested in you and what brings you to counseling. There may be many long term and short-term goals for the counseling relationship. Some long-term goals may be to improve the quality of your life or develop healthier relationships. Other goals may be short-term and more immediate such as decreasing anxiety and depressive symptoms or decreasing/ changing unwanted behaviors. Whatever the goals are for counseling, it is my role to listen, to seek to understand your situation and perspective and give you important feedback. It is your responsibility to share with me your life situation, the ways in which you deal with your problem and your thoughts and feelings surrounding the issue. The goals for counseling are determined by you and I may make suggestions on how to reach those goals.

RISKS/BENEFITS OF COUNSELING: Counseling has both risk and benefits and is an intensely personal process, which may bring unpleasant memories or uncomfortable emotions to the surface as they are explored. Sometimes clients can make strides toward their goals, only to face setbacks from time to time. Progress may happen slowly. The expectation is that counseling will be helpful, but there are no guarantees that counseling will be the best way to meet your desired goals.

There are many benefits to counseling. Counseling can help you develop better coping skills, make behavioral changes, reduce problematic symptoms, improve the quality of your life, develop insights and many other advantages. However, your consistent effort in attending counseling sessions combined with a commitment to the therapeutic process can increase the probability of a desired outcome. To create the most success, you will need to work on things we discuss outside of our sessions.

TREATMENT PROCEDURES/ASSESSMENT PROCESS :Our first three sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs and your reasons for pursuing counseling. By the end of this time, I will be able to offer you some first impressions and what our work will include and a treatment to follow if you decide to continue with therapy. We will reevaluate your goals periodically. Counseling will end when we agree that your goals have been satisfactorily addressed or if there is another reason you wish to end counseling. You have the right to terminate counseling at any time.

LITIGATION LIMITATIONS :The therapeutic process involves full disclosure to many sensitive issues, which are strictly confidential. It is agreed that should there be any legal procedures (such as, but not limited to divorce, custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.) that neither you or your attorney will not call Ellen Schrier, MS, LPC to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy notes be requested.

LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY: I am committed to protecting the privacy of our communication and your clinical records and follow standards to protect the privacy of your personal information. All information is private and no information concerning you will be released without your written consent as you may choose to have me speak with your physician or another therapist. The following are some exceptions to confidentiality as required by law or in order to provide you with services.

- Information you and/or your child reports about child or elder abuse that I am obligated to report to the Department of Children and Family Services.
- When you sign a release of information to have specific information shared.
- If you provide information that informs me that you are in danger of harming yourself or others (suicidal or homicidal intentions or plans). I am required to warn the intended victim and report this information to legal authorities.
- **COUPLES COUNSELING**: Some information disclosed in an individual session during the course of couples counseling may be relevant to proper treatment of the couple. I agree that Ellen Schrier, MS, LPC is free to exercise clinical judgment in releasing such information to the other spouse. I will not release records to any party unless I am authorized in writing to do so by all of adults who were part of treatment unless required to do so by law or a valid court order.
- **CONSULTATION**: I may consult with other licensed professionals either in supervision or another capacity regarding my clients when doing so will improve the outcome for the client. The client's name or any other identifying information is not disclosed and will remain anonymous.
- **EMAIL and TEXT COMMUNICATION**: It may be useful during the course of treatment to communicate by email, text message or other electronic methods of communication. Please be informed that these methods, in their typical form are not confidential means of communication. Due to the possibility that unauthorized persons may attempt to discover your personal information, I will take every precaution to safeguard your information, but cannot guarantee that unauthorized access to electronic communications could not occur. Please be advised to take precautions with regard to authorized or unauthorized access to any technology used in communicating information. Be aware of any friends, family members, significant others or coworkers who may have access to your computer, phone or other technology used to communicate counseling information. Please limit your

- email and text communications to cancellations or change in appointment times. I do not accept invitations from current or former clients via social networking sites such as LinkedIn or Facebook

- **FEES. APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS**

Counseling requires a commitment of time, money and energy. I ask that you participate faithfully in your scheduled appointments. A therapy hour for individual and couples counseling is approximately 50-60 minutes starting at once a week and changing in frequency depending on your situation. My fee for a 50-60 minute session is \$180.00. I accept cash, credit card or check.

- If you need to reschedule, I request that you give me 24-48 hours notice. As doctors see patients in 15 minute intervals, therapists need to reserve an hour appointment for you.. Since I hold a spot for you, it will be unavailable to another client. If you cancel less than 24 hours in advance of your session time or do not show up for your appointment (except in the case of an emergency that we both agree on as such), you will be billed a \$95 late fee.

I agree to the above limits of confidentiality and understand their meanings and ramifications.

_____ Signature _____ Date
_____ Signature _____ Date