

The Ross Center

Therapist–Client Services Agreement

The Ross Center is committed to providing holistic, professional, and up-to-date services to individuals who recognize the importance and inter-relatedness of spirit, mind, and body. Please discuss any questions or concerns with your therapist after reading through this *Agreement*.

I. COUNSELING SERVICES

As with any healthcare field, mental health professionals work within a specific “scope of practice.” A clinician's understanding of healing affects his or her choice of graduate and post-graduate training.

The process of psychotherapy can be difficult to describe. Unlike some other healthcare services where the patient* is a passive recipient, therapy requires active participation on your part and often involves readings or other assignments to be completed between sessions. A client’s motivation for change and the therapeutic relationship are crucial factors in successful treatment; it is therefore important that you feel comfortable with the therapist you select and are committed to the work involved.

Psychotherapy has some risks in addition to the many benefits. It is not meant to be a short-term solution, and you may not always feel better when you leave a session. The greater sense of awareness gained as a result of counseling usually prompts change that might not be welcomed by others. Your therapist can help you understand and best respond to these adjustments as you progress.

Although you may terminate treatment at any time, it is recommended that this be discussed in advance with your provider. Your therapist may also terminate treatment if s/he determines it to be necessary or in the best interest of the client or him/herself. Any such termination will be discussed with you, and referrals to other providers will be offered.

II. APPOINTMENTS

Appointments are based on the 50-minute clinical hour. In the event that you are *less than 20* minutes late for a scheduled appointment, you will be seen for the remainder of the time allotted. If you are *more than 20* minutes late, it will be treated as a missed appointment.

A 12-hour notice from your scheduled appointment time is required for all cancelled or rescheduled appointments. This must be done by phone/voicemail with your therapist. Otherwise, you will be charged the full cost of your reserved time.

Please keep in mind that insurance companies typically do not provide reimbursement for cancelled or missed sessions, so clients using such benefits would be responsible for the full cost of the appointment.

III. LIMITS ON CONFIDENTIALITY

Communication between a client and psychotherapist is considered confidential and protected under law. However, there are some situations where your therapist is permitted or even required to disclose information without either your consent or authorization. Every effort will be made to discuss this with you prior to action being taken, and the disclosure of such information will be limited to only what is necessary. These exceptions to confidentiality are outlined in the *HIPAA Notice* available on The Ross Center's website (www.nashvillecounseling.org) and displayed in the waiting room. Please discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about confidentiality with your therapist.

IV. CLINICAL RECORDS

You should be aware that, under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), your Ross Center therapist is required to keep Protected Health Information (PHI) about you in a Clinical Record for up to ten (10) years. The "Patient Rights" section of the *HIPAA Notice* explains how you may request a copy of your PHI and the limitations and exceptions involved.

* The terms "patient" and "client" may be used interchangeably.

V. MINORS AND PARENTS

Ross Center therapists specialize in treating adults and children; they will work with minors in the context of family therapy and individual psychotherapy for a child. In many cases steps will be taken to work with the parents or legal guardians to best coordinate treatment. Depending on the age of the child, this communication may require his or her consent unless otherwise permitted in the aforementioned *HIPAA Notice*.

VI. PROFESSIONAL FEES

The Ross Center's standard fee is \$110 per clinical hour. Many people cannot afford the privilege of psychotherapy, as it is an investment of time, energy, and money. Potential clients are encouraged to make the work a priority by budgeting their finances and schedules accordingly.

If you do not have (or do not wish to use) insurance benefits, partial scholarship funds are available based on need and circumstances. These funds are limited, and proof of income is required for any clients who wish to apply for a reduced fee. This rate is set by your therapist at the first session and is subject to adjustment based on changes to any of the above factors.

Forensic Psychology is a specialty area within the field of behavioral science due to the many complications associated with legal matters. The Ross Center therapists do not work within this area of practice, and therefore clients who intend to involve their provider in such issues are advised to seek out a specialist. Should your Ross Center therapist be drawn into legal proceedings on your behalf, an adjusted rate of \$200 per hour will be required for any preparation and attendance.

VII. BILLING AND PAYMENTS

Payment is due at the beginning of each session. Cash or checks are both acceptable methods of payment. For those paying with checks, please have them written out prior to your session to avoid the unnecessary use of your time. There will be an additional \$20 fee for returned checks.

The Ross Center reserves the right to refer unpaid past due balances to third parties for collection. In the event that any past due balance is placed with a third party, you agree to pay any costs of such collection including agency fees, legal/attorney fees, and court costs.

VIII. INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

Mari Alexander, MA. LPC MHSP is an in-network provider for most major insurance networks. If you would like to utilize your insurance benefits, she can obtain authorizations from your carrier for treatment and file your claims. **Patients are responsible for the payment of any fees not covered by their insurance.**

Should your Ross Center therapist not be listed as a provider with a particular insurance company, s/he can help you file for any "out-of-network" benefits you may have. Mental health coverage and limitations may differ from your medical coverage, so you are encouraged to contact

your plan administrator with any questions.

It is very important to understand that most health insurance will only pay for services considered medically necessary. This means that your therapist would be required to diagnose you with a mental illness that then becomes part of your permanent medical record; this could impair your ability to obtain certain jobs, life insurance, or other opportunities. Some patients may be unable to use their insurance benefits to pay for treatment, for example, if s/he does not meet the criteria for a diagnosis. Please discuss any questions or concerns you may have about medical necessity or exemptions with your therapist.

IX. EMERGENCIES

The Ross Center is not equipped to handle mental health crises. If you experience a psychiatric emergency and find that you cannot guarantee your safety or the safety of others, the Crisis Center can be reached between the hours of 2 P.M. and midnight at **(615) 244-7444**. Otherwise, dial 911 or go to your nearest Emergency Room.

900 Glendale Lane, Nashville, TN 37204 www.NashvilleCounseling.org