Psychological Services of Alaska

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OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT

Welcome to my clinical practice. Please read this document carefully; it contains important information about both your and my rights and responsibilities. If you have any questions, I'm happy to discuss them with you. When you sign this document, it becomes an agreement between the both of us.

Assessment Services

Because people request assessments for a number of reasons, with a varying number of people (individually, with a partner, or with a family), and with a variety of goals, the assessment process can look very different from client to client. Successful assessments require active participation on the part of both the client and the therapist.

Participating in an assessment can have benefits and risks. Since it often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings. You may also learn information about yourself or others and in retrospect, regret this awareness. Psychological assessment is helpful for many people, but there are no guarantees that it will be helpful for any given person.

Psychological assessment includes several interviews and the use of psychometric tests to learn about a person or people. The assessment activities are guided by a specific set of referral questions, which are clarified at the beginning of the assessment process. The client is always the author of the questions being addressed, and thus the assessment is intended to be driven by the client's goals.

Couples Assessment

In a couple's assessment, the objective is to evaluate three entities: each person and the co-created relationship. Thus, there are two clients who participate in one integrated, comprehensive assessment procedure. There are two charts, billing records, etc.; the therapist's time will be billed sequentially to one partner at a time, preventing "double billing."

After initial paperwork and insurance verification has been completed (see the Insurance Reimbursement section below) the couple's assessment begins with an initial meeting to clarify referral questions and begin gathering information. Both members of the couple are present for this initial meeting. Subsequent meetings are with each person individually and are devoted to further understanding the individual's experience through psychological testing and interviews. The final meetings are with both members of the couple, and are intended to communicate and experiment with the information gained through the assessment process. See the separate document *Couples Therapeutic Assessment: Frequently Asked Questions* for more information about the assessment process.

The assessments I offer are provided consistent with the tradition of therapeutic assessments. They are qualitatively different than assessments performed for other purposes, including forensic assessments, and thus are not clinically valid in those settings. Each member of the couple will receive a written report documenting the integrated assessment process, findings, and recommendations.

Confidentiality

Privacy of information is a central component of psychological services. In general, what's discussed in the context of an assessment is strictly confidential. There are exceptions, however, that you need to be aware of:

- If I believe that a client is seriously in danger of hurting himself/herself or someone else, I am legally required to break confidentiality to maintain safety. This may involve contacting the potential victim.
- If I believe someone who can't protect themselves (a child, elder, disabled person, etc.) has been hurt, I am legally required to break confidentiality.
- I often staff cases with other mental health professionals in an effort to provide a high quality of service. I also occasionally refer to my time with clients when involved in teaching activities with other therapists or therapists in training. When I share information with other professionals in this manner, I make every effort to change all information which might be used to identify the client.
- If you ask me to share information with a third party, I may do so. This most often occurs when I coordinate with an insurance company or another professional.
- I am permitted to release limited information to secure payment if debt collection becomes necessary.
- There are other rare exceptions to confidentiality; if you're concerned about this issue, please bring it up with me.

Since a couple's assessment is an integration of two psychological assessments, each party must be willing to provide a release of information allowing the results of their assessment activities to be shared with their partner.

Fees

My normal rate for assessment activity is $225.00 per hour for the initial clinical interviews. Psychological test scoring, interpretation, and report writing are $200.00 per hour. The fee for individual and family therapy sessions is $185.00 each. Some sessions will be 45 minutes in length, others will be 90 minutes; the 90 minute sessions will be billed as two sessions. I do not charge a fee for test administration (typically using survey instruments) that does not directly involve my presence. The total billed charge under the above schedule is $3130.00; in the event that an assessment requires more billable time than this, I will notify you prior to providing the service.

I ask that if you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment, you do so 24 working hours in advance; this lets me and others make use of the time. Please know that I do charge the full amount of the session for appointments canceled, or not attended, with less than 24 hours notice.

Billing and Payments

Full payment is expected at the time of service unless other arrangements have been made. Most clients choose to keep a credit card on file to make recurring payments; this is an option but not a requirement. You may also pay with a check or cash.

If your account has not been paid for over 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is required, such costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, the amount due, and history of nonpayment.

Insurance Reimbursement

I'm happy to provide a "superbill", a receipt containing the information necessary for a client to file a claim with their insurance carrier, but I don't bill insurance. Unfortunately the resources of time and expense required of a single practitioner to engage in insurance billing and tracking makes this service impractical. Clients are encouraged to call the number on the back of their card to inquire about benefits and whether preauthorization is required under their plan. To make this inquiry efficient, you may consider asking about “mental health benefits including service codes 90791, 90834 and 96101”, which are the codes used during the assessment. I’m happy to fill out preauthorization paperwork required by the insurance company for payment, but it is the clients’ responsibility to track these requirements and present the paperwork to the therapist.

Contacting Me

Since I spend much of the business day in sessions with clients, I am not often available immediately. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered either by our receptionist or a voicemail. If I’m in the office, I attempt to return phone calls the day they are left though this is not always possible. Please know that I don’t return phone calls during days that I am not in the office. If you are not able to reach me and you feel that you can’t wait for me to return your call, please reach out to one or more of the following:

Your general practitioner
The crisis help line (563-3200)
The nearest hospital emergency room:
Providence (907) 212-3111
Regional (907) 264-1224

Professional Records

I will keep records which document your treatment in my office. Clients are entitled to know the information in these records if they wish. Because a Couple’s Therapeutic Assessment serves the purpose of assessing each individual, then assimilating the information into an assessment of the couple’s dynamic, it’s imperative to the process that each person agree to have their private health information shared with their partner. To reflect this, each member of the couple is asked to sign a release of information giving the assessor permission to share psychological information with their partner. The document generated at the end of the assessment will include psychological information pertaining to both members of the couple’s relationship.

The above document is intended to respect your right to be informed about the process in which you are about to engage. Please let me know if you have any lingering questions or concerns. Thank you.

I have read the above document thoroughly and have received a copy.

________________________________ ________________________________

Client name Client signature

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Date