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Counseling Philosophy

I approach counseling from a multi-theoretical standpoint that stems from the understanding of human and relationship development. That's a fancy way of saying I intend to help my clients to reach their goals through methods suited to the client. Sometimes we can't see what's in our way...we just know something needs to change in order to feel better. Change is scary and sometimes multi-layered. What does this mean? It could mean we focus on identifying the "why" behind certain behaviors or issues. It could mean we work to identify (and hopefully replace) some ways of thinking that are getting in the way of what you actually want in life. I believe our past experiences often serve as a roadmap to understanding the present and that the counseling process can help us to better understand ourselves and our world. Because of my beliefs in the importance of family dynamics and its impact on us as individuals during our initial meeting I may inquire about your family of origin and your close relationships in order to assist in painting a full picture of who you are and what your world looks like. It is my intention to help my clients through the process of change with an open and kind heart, free from judgment.

The Counseling Process

I am passionate about the counseling process. This process is different for everyone. You and I will work jointly to create a treatment plan that addresses your specific concerns. We will clearly define goals and treatment outcomes. We will regularly review these goals and the treatment plans set forth to ensure we are working towards an end you desire. The treatment plan, the goals, and any other aspect of the counseling process can be amended at any time during treatment. At any point during the counseling process you may obtain a second opinion. It is the responsibility of the client to choose the most suitable counseling provider and the client may terminate services at any time.

It is my duty to provide a standard of care related to your goals and if at any time you wish to discuss the level of care you are receiving I would be happy to discuss your concerns.

The nature of counseling often brings up sensitive topics. Counseling can be painful and resurrect unpleasant feelings. It is important to realize this prior to beginning counseling. Difficult and sensitive topics will be discussed. If and when we enter into these types of discussions, you can discontinue the conversation whenever you feel it necessary. It is also important to realize that as we work in counseling we tend to grow and change as individuals, which might have an effect on your social and personal relationships. As this happens, I invite you to discuss with me the nature of those changes so that we might work together on understanding that part of the process and identify coping mechanisms to allow for this change.

Counseling Relationship

The nature of the counseling relationship will at all times be a professional one and at no time will it be acceptable or permissible to engage in a sexually intimate relationship. It is also my standard to not engage in any personal relationships (i.e. friendships) with my clients outside of the counseling environment. Although, connecting with my clients is critical and beneficial for the counseling process, maintaining a dual relationship can be catastrophic and I value the work you are trying to do too much to jeopardize it.

Testing, Evaluation, & Reports

Formal Evaluations: In the event that the nature of our relationship is centered on a formal evaluation for the purpose of custody disputes, employment, education, or other it is important to recognize the limitations of our relationship in relation to counseling. As an evaluator my job is purely objective and I may use any information obtained during the evaluation in my report and that the opinion will be handed over to a third party. When acting as an evaluator my position does not allow me to counsel. I will transfer the report in a secure manner.

Informal Evaluations: At the onset of our counseling relationship it will be necessary for me to assess the situation(s) for which you are seeking counseling in order to identify a proper treatment plan. This assessment is considered collaborative, meaning you and I will work together during this process and during the goal setting and treatment planning process. While initially this process can seem daunting and possibly irrelevant, this assessment is crucial to finding the most suitable method of treatment.

Appointments & Cancellations

It is expected that all appointments be kept; however, sometimes circumstances beyond our control occur. I request you provide 24-hours of notice be given for appointment cancellations. If less than twenty-four (24) hours of notice is given, the client assumes the full fee for that appointment missed (\$95.00). If twenty-four (24) hours or more are given, no fee will be assessed for that appointment. If multiple appointments are cancelled, even in the appropriate cancellation time period, I may choose to inquire if there is any reason beyond the necessary scheduling conflicts that are contributing to the cancellations in an attempt to identify an undisclosed issue within our counseling relationship.

Fees

Individual Sessions

Initial Interview & Assessment: \$160.00

Ongoing Appointments: \$95.00

Couple/Marriage/Dyad

Initial Interview & Assessment: \$160.00

Ongoing Appointments: \$125.00

Family (3 or more)

Initial Interview & Assessment: \$160.00

Ongoing Appointments: \$125.00

Group Counseling

Per Session: \$15.00 per person

Court Appearance Rates:

Hourly Rate for Court Appearance and/or Testimony: \$95.00

Report Writing Rates:

Hourly Rate: \$95.00

Alternatives to Counseling

Choosing to attend counseling is a decision I hope you do not take lightly. While I believe strongly in the power of counseling to bring clarity, understanding, and personal growth to individuals looking to better their lives and their relationships, I recognize there are many avenues to attain the same goal. Those alternatives will be left to you to decide if you so choose to terminate our relationship and/or your involvement with the counseling process overall. Every individual has the right to search for and identify the method of therapy that works for them

as long as they are doing no harm to themselves or others. Such things as traditional medicine, homeopathic and non-traditional methods of treatment, and other approaches can be investigated and may provide you what you are looking for.

Your Rights as a Client

- You have the right to be informed about the counseling process, therapeutic techniques, and services offered.
- You have the right to know your counselor's credentials, education, work experience, and professional certification(s) and/or licensure(s).
- You have the right to request a second opinion at any time.
- You have the right to request a copy of the *ACA & AAMFT Code of Ethics*.
- You have the right to have all information you share in the confidential setting of counseling to remain confidential and be informed of any state's laws that limit that confidentiality.
- You have the right to request a copy of your records at any time in writing, but your request may be refused if it would cause harm to you.
- You have the right to refuse any treatment recommendation.
- You have the right to terminate treatment at any time.

Your Responsibilities as a Client

- Make and keep appointments.
- Provide at least 24 hours of notice when appointment can't be kept.
- Pay your fees according to the pre-established schedule.
- Help plan your goals for treatment.
- Follow through with goals identified and/or set.
- Communicate any confusion or need for clarification on therapeutic techniques as they arise.

My Responsibilities as Counselor

- Inform you of my qualifications and the counseling process.
- Respect your privacy. I will only solicit private information from you when it is necessary to the counseling process.
- Confidentiality. I uphold *ACA Code of Ethics* confidentiality requirements. You can expect confidentiality will be broken if I believe you to be of harm to yourself or others and in cases where a child or a vulnerable adult is in danger. Confidentiality can also be broken if I am court-ordered to do so; however, until such an order is in place I will do my best to uphold the confidentiality of your information.

Privacy, Privileged Communication, and Confidentiality

A complete description of the procedures of record keeping and disclosure of personal information is available for your review and you have a right to see that document prior to signing this informed consent if you should so desire. My practices and policies may change during the course of treatment and if you should want to see a revised copy, it will be made available to you. The legal definitions of the above terms are listed below.

Definition of Privacy

The right of a person to decide what information will be shared or withheld from others.

Definition of Privileged Communication

A legal term meaning you, the client, are protected from having the confidential communication with me, your counselor, disclosed in a court without a court order issued by a judge.

Definition of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is critical to the counseling relationship. Without confidentiality, the ability to fully disclose and process with me is next to impossible. Your personal information may be used and disclosed in order to provide treatment in the below special considerations:

Limitations of Confidentiality

- Pursuant to the Patriot Act, in a situation of national security as dictated by a government official.
- Where there is reasonable suspicion of abuse to minor children or to the elderly
- When the client presents a serious and foreseeable danger to him/herself or to others
- In case of a law enforcement emergency
- When I am ordered to do so by a judge in a court of law

In the event of guardianship, conservatorship, and hospitalization proceedings I may be required to break confidentiality. In the event you, the client, take civil action against me for any reason, confidentiality will be broken. Any proceedings related to the welfare of a child, civil or criminal, may require me to break confidentiality.

You may request that I amend the method of which I disclose your personal information and I will take that request and consider it. After my decision I will communicate that decision and explain the action taken or whether I have declined.

Dissatisfaction with Services

I encourage open dialogue about your treatment all throughout the counseling process. If at some point you become dissatisfied with treatment, I also encourage you to communicate that to me so that we can make amendments where necessary or abandon particular treatments and seek out more suitable ones, whether that is under my care or the care of another counselor. If you believe my conduct to be unethical, contact the appropriate state licensing board in order to form an official complaint.

If you agree to the above listed terms, please sign below. This form will be kept in your file for the period of seven (7) years in order to comply with HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, 2003) Regulations. You have the right to revoke your consent at any time. That request must be done in writing. I will honor that request up to the point where I have taken action based on prior written consent.

Please be advised that these issues have been brought to your attention in compliance with Idaho Code 54-3410a. Additionally, licensure by the State of Idaho does not imply endorsement of this counselor by the State. You may contact my supervisor as listed in this document should you have any questions about me or wish to file a complaint against me. Forms will be provided for official complaints to be filed.

Client Signature: _____ **Date:** _____