

Behavioral Health Enhancement Services
16055 Ventura Blvd. #717
Encino, CA 91436
(818) 501-5375

INFORMED CONSENT

OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT

Welcome to our practice. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the mental health professional and patient, and the particular problems you hope to address. There are many different methods we may use to deal with those problems. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Because therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But, there are no guarantees as to what you will experience.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, we will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions about whether you feel comfortable working with us. At the end of the evaluation, I will notify you if we believe that we are not the right therapists for you and, if so, we will give you referrals to other practitioners whom we believe are better suited to help you.

Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about our procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, we will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

MEETINGS

We normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 3 sessions. During this time, we can both decide if we are the best people to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If we agree to begin psychotherapy, we will usually schedule one 45-minute session (one appointment hour of 45 minutes duration) per week or as agreed, at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Once an appointment hour is

scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 48 hours advance notice of cancellation. If it is possible, we will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Our hourly fee is \$250 for a 45 to 50 minute session. However, for patients with insurance, we will charge contracted rates. If we meet more than the usual time, we will charge accordingly. In addition to weekly appointments, we charge this same hourly rate for other professional services you may need, though we will prorate the hourly cost if we work for periods of less than one hour. Other professional services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of us. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require our participation, you will be expected to pay for any professional time we spend on your legal matter, even if the request comes from another party. We charge \$400 per hour for professional services we are asked or required to perform in relation to your legal matter. We also charge a copying fee of \$.25 per page for records requests.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage that requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when such services are requested.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, we have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. In most collection situations, the only information we will release regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the dates, times, and nature of services provided, and the amount due.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance we can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of our fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Of course, we will provide you with whatever information we can based on my experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If necessary, we are willing to call the insurance company on your behalf to obtain clarification.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. "Managed Health Care" plans often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed

to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. Though a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require that we provide them with your clinical diagnosis. Sometimes we have to provide additional clinical information, such as treatment plans, progress notes or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, we have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. We will provide you with a copy of any records we submit, if you request it. *You understand that, by using your insurance, you authorize us to release such information to your insurance company. We will try to keep that information limited to the minimum necessary.*

Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end our sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above (unless prohibited by the insurance contract).

CONTACTING US

We are often not immediately available by telephone. We probably will not answer the phone when we are with a patient. When we are unavailable, our telephone is answered by an answering service voice mail that we monitor frequently. We will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform us of some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach us and feel that you cannot wait for us to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. If we will be unavailable for an extended time, we will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The use of various types of electronic communications is common in our society, and many individuals believe this is the preferred method of communication with others, whether their relationships are social or professional. Many of these common modes of communication, however, put your privacy at risk and can be inconsistent with the law and with the standards of my profession. Consequently, this policy has been prepared to assure the security and confidentiality of your treatment and to assure that it is consistent with ethics and the law. If you have any questions about this policy, please feel free to discuss this with us.

Email Communications

We use email communication and text messaging only with your permission and only for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. That means that email

exchanges and text messages with our office should be limited to things like setting and changing appointments, billing matters and other related issues. Please do not email us about clinical matters because email is not a secure way to contact us. If you need to discuss a clinical matter with us, please feel free to call us so we can discuss it on the phone or wait so we can discuss it during your therapy session. The telephone, face-to-face, or video conferencing context simply is much more secure as a mode of communication.

Websites

We have a website that you are free to access. We use it for professional reasons to provide information to others about us and our practice. You are welcome to access and review the information that we have on my website and, if you have questions about it, we should discuss this during your therapy sessions.

Web Searches

We understand that you might choose to gather information about us through a web search. In this day and age there is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the internet, much of which may actually be known to that person and some of which may be inaccurate or unknown. If you encounter any information about us through web searches, or in any other fashion for that matter, please discuss this with us during our time together so that we can deal with it and its potential impact on your treatment.

Recently it has become fashionable for clients to review their health care provider on various websites. Unfortunately, mental health professionals cannot respond to such comments and related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews of us or any professional with whom you are working, please share it with us so we can discuss it and its potential impact on your therapy. Please do not rate our work with you while we are in treatment together on any of these websites.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a mental health professional is protected by law, and we can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions. In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent us from providing any information about your treatment. In some legal proceedings, a judge may order our testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it, and we must comply with that court order.

There are some situations in which we are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if we have to reveal some information about a patient's treatment. For example, if we believe that a child, elderly person or disabled person, is being abused or has been abused, we may be required to make a report to the appropriate agency.

If we believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, we may be required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the

police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If the patient threatens to harm himself/herself, we may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. If a similar situation occurs in the course of our work together, we will attempt to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

We may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, we make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of our patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. Ordinarily, we will not tell you about these consultations unless we believe that it is important to our work together.

Although this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality is intended to inform you about potential issues that could arise, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at our next meeting. We will be happy to discuss these issues with you and provide clarification when possible. However, if you need specific clarification or advice we are unable to provide, formal legal advice may be needed, as the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex and we are not attorneys.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during your professional relationship with Behavioral Health Enhancement Services and Dr. Carl King.

PATIENT SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____