

John W. Bakaly, Ph.D.
130 S. Euclid Ave., Suite 8
Pasadena, CA 91101
(626)793-6925
Fax: (626) 793-6899
License #: PSY12862

PSYCHOLOGIST-CLIENT SERVICES AGREEMENT

This document (the Agreement) 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 new federal law that provides new privacy protections and new patient rights with regard to the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) used for the purpose of treatment, payment, and health care operations. HIPAA requires that I provide you with a Notice of Privacy Practices (the Notice) for use and disclosure of PHI for treatment, payment and health care operations. The Notice, which is attached to this Agreement, explains HIPAA and its application to your personal health information in greater detail. Your signature acknowledges that I provided you with this information and represents an agreement between us. We can discuss any questions you have about the procedures during the session.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

During the sessions I will very clearly explain the process of psychotherapy I practice based on the theoretical models in which I have been trained to aid you in dealing with the issues that you hope to address. Psychotherapy calls for a very active effort on your part and entails benefits and risks. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you by referring you to other mental health professionals for a second opinion.

MEETINGS

During the initial sessions, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services that you need in order to meet your treatment goals. I usually schedule one 45-minute session per week 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 24 hours advance notice of cancellation. It is important to note that insurance companies do not provide reimbursement for cancelled or missed sessions. You will be responsible for the full contracted amount of the session. If I can fill the scheduled time, you will not be charged for the sessions

PROFESSIONAL FEES

My hourly fee is \$140. I am also a provider for several insurance companies and have agreed to accept fees at a contracted and lower rate. Please refer to the Insurance Reimbursement section on this form if you will be using insurance to pay for a portion of the fees.

In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this \$140 for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 5 minutes, consulting with other professionals with your permission, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for all of my professional time, including preparation and transportation costs, even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$250 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

CONTACTING ME

My telephone is answered by a voice mail service that I check frequently. I will make every effort to return your call within the next business day. **If you are experiencing an emergency please call 911 or contact your family physician or go to the nearest emergency room immediately and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call.** If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will let you know well in advance of my scheduled absence.

LIMITS ON CONFIDENTIALITY

The law protects the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychologist. In most situations, I can only release information about your treatment to others if you sign a written Authorization form that meets certain legal requirements imposed by state law and/or HIPAA. But, there are some situations where I am permitted or required to disclose information without either your consent or Authorization:

- I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other health and mental health professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my patient. The other professionals are also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together. I will note all consultations in your Clinical Record.
- Disclosures required by health insurers or to collect overdue fees are discussed elsewhere in this Agreement.
- If a patient threatens to harm himself/herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her, or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.
- If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about the professional services that I have provided you and/or the records thereof, such information is protected by psychologist-patient privilege law. I cannot provide any information without your (or your legally-appointed representative's) written authorization, a court order, or compulsory process (a subpoena) or discovery request from another party to the court proceeding where that party has given you proper notice (when required) has stated valid legal grounds for obtaining PHI, and I do not have grounds for objecting under state law (or you have instructed me not to object). If you are involved in or contemplating litigation, you should consult with your attorney to determine whether a court would be likely to order me to disclose information.
- If a government agency is requesting the information for health oversight activities pursuant to their legal authority, I may be required to provide it for them.
- If a patient files a complaint or lawsuit against me, I may disclose relevant information regarding that patient in order to defend myself.
- If a patient files a worker's compensation claim, I must, upon appropriate request, disclose information relevant to the claimant's condition, to the patient's employer.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take actions, which I believe are necessary to attempt to protect others from harm and I may have to reveal some information about a patient's treatment. These situations are unusual in my practice and are described below.

- If I have knowledge of a child under 18 or I reasonably suspect that a child under 18 that I have observed has been the victim of child abuse or neglect, the law requires that I file a

report with the appropriate governmental agency, usually the county welfare department. I also may make a report if I know or reasonably suspect that mental suffering has been inflicted upon a child or that his or her emotional well being is endangered in any other way (other than physical or sexual abuse, or neglect). Once such a report is filed, I may be required to provide additional information.

- If I observe or have knowledge of an incident that reasonably appears to be physical abuse, abandonment, abduction, isolation, financial abuse or neglect of an elder or dependent adult, or if an elder or dependent adult credibly reports that he or she has experienced behavior including an act or omission constituting physical abuse, abandonment, abduction, isolation, financial abuse, or neglect, or reasonably suspects that abuse, the law requires that I report to the appropriate government agency. Once such a report is filed, I may be required to provide additional information.
- If a patient or a patient's family member communicate that the patient poses a serious threat of physical violence against an identifiable victim, I must take protective actions, including notifying the potential victim and contacting the police. I may also seek hospitalization of the patient, or contact others who can assist in protecting the victim.
- If I have reasonable cause to believe that the patient is in such mental or emotional condition as to be dangerous to him or herself, I may be obligated to take protective action, including seeking hospitalization or contacting family members or others who can help provide protection.

If such a situation arises, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action and I will limit my disclosure to what is necessary.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have now or in the future. The laws governing confidentiality can be quite complex, and I am not an attorney. In situations where specific advice is required, formal legal advice may be needed.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

You should be aware that, pursuant to HIPAA, I keep Protected Health Information about you in two sets of professional records. One set constitutes your Clinical Record. It includes information about your reasons for seeking therapy, a description of the ways in which your problem impacts

on your life, your diagnosis, the goals that we set for treatment, your progress towards those goals, your medical and social history, your treatment history, any past treatment records that I receive from other providers, reports of any professional consultations, your billing records, and any reports that have been sent to anyone, including reports to your insurance carrier. Except in unusual circumstances in that disclosure would physically endanger you and/or others or makes reference to another person (unless such other person is a health care provider), you may examine and/or receive a copy of your Clinical Record, if you request it in writing. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. For this reason, I recommend that you initially review them in my presence, or have them forwarded to another mental health professional so you can discuss the contents. The exceptions to this policy are contained in the attached Notice Form. If I refuse your request for access to your Clinical Records, you have a right of review (except for information supplied to me confidentially by others) which I will discuss with you upon request.

In addition, I also keep a set of Psychotherapy Notes. These notes are for my own use and are designed to assist me in providing you with the best treatment. While the contents of Psychotherapy Notes vary from client to client, they can include the contents of our conversations, my analysis of those conversations, and how they impact on your therapy. They also contain particularly sensitive information that you may reveal to me that is not required to be included in your Clinical Record. They also include information from others provided to me confidentially. These Psychotherapy Notes are kept separate from your Clinical Record. Your Psychotherapy Notes are available to you, unless I determine that there is a substantial risk of significant adverse or detrimental consequences to you. Additionally, your psychotherapy notes cannot be sent to anyone else, including insurance companies without your written, signed Authorization.

PATIENT RIGHTS

HIPAA provides you with several new or expanded rights with regard to your Clinical Records and disclosures of protected health information. These rights include requesting that I amend your record; requesting restrictions on what information from your Clinical Records is disclosed to others; requesting an accounting of most disclosures of protected health information that you have neither consented to nor authorized; determining the location to which protected information disclosures are sent; having any complaints you make about my policies and procedures recorded

in your records; and the right to a paper copy of this Agreement, the attached Notice form, and my privacy policies and procedures. I am happy to discuss any of these rights with you.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time of treatment, unless we agree otherwise. If you will be using insurance and I am a contracted provider for that company, you will be required to pay the co-pay amount at the time of treatment. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested.

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

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

If you have a health insurance policy, you are responsible for receiving the pre-authorization for psychotherapy benefits and insuring that your health plan will pay for these services, even if your insurance company lists me as a provider. I will fill out the standard HICFA insurance forms and provide you with whatever assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled, including using the insurance company's website to obtain information; **however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my contracted fees.** It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers at the time of treatment.

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, I will provide you with whatever information I can based on my experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, I will be willing to call the company on your behalf.

You should also be aware that your contract with your health insurance company requires that I provide it with information relevant to the services that I provide to you. I am required to provide

a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I am required to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of your entire Clinical Record. Before I can disclose this information, both you and I must receive a written notification from the insurer stating what they are requesting, why they are requesting it, how long it will be kept and what will be done with the information when they are finished with it. In such situations, I will make every effort to release only the minimum information about you that is necessary for the purpose requested. This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. By signing this Agreement, you agree that I can provide requested information to your carrier.

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 your sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described.

YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT AND AGREE TO ITS TERMS AND ALSO SERVES AS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE HIPAA NOTICE FORM DESCRIBED ABOVE.

Signature

Date