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PRACTICE POLICIES - Last Updated 5/9/2016

#### APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Please remember to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance. You will be responsible for the half of the billed fee if cancellation is less than 24 hours. If you do not show to your appointment, you will be responsible for the full amount of the billed fee.

The standard meeting time for therapy is 45 minutes. It is up to you, however, to determine the length of time of your sessions. Requests to change the timing of the session needs to be discussed with the therapist in order for time to be scheduled in advance.

A \$10.00 service charge will be charged for any checks returned for any reason for special handling.

Cancellations and re-scheduled session will be subject to a 50% charge if NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time.

#### INCLEMENT WEATHER

If you feel uncomfortable driving in the rain, snow, ice, or other inclement weather and you are currently coming to my home office for visits, please call me to make arrangements for a home visit. Your therapist will continue to attend home visits in inclement weather, unless weather conditions are severe enough that driving conditions are unsafe. In such a case, we will work with you to make sure your appointment is rescheduled in a timely fashion. Please keep in mind that we will have to prioritize the needs of clients who are experiencing safety issues or may be in crisis. If you have not heard otherwise, please anticipate that we will be keeping our appointment.

#### PAYMENT

Payment is due at the time that services are rendered, unless you have discussed another payment arrangement with your therapist prior to your appointment. Please note that unresolved balances will be placed in collections and may adversely affect your credit.

#### MANDATED REPORTING

Please note that as mandated reporters, we are required by law to report to certain agencies which include but are not limited to Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Safe Act and the Justice Center.”

New York State Child Protective Services obligates social workers “to report instances of suspected child abuse or maltreatment only when they are presented with reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment.” You may or may not be informed of a reported incident.

New York State Adult Protective Services obligates social workers to report “signs of abuse taking place are unexplained injuries, sudden decrease of financial resources, and sudden changes in mood or behavior” for “an impaired adult, age 18 or over, who may be dependent on someone else for basic needs.” You may or may not be informed of a reported incident.

The New York State Safe Act obligates Licensed Clinical Social Workers to report a client or someone who has access to firearms or who is considering purchasing firearms presents as “likely to engage in conduct that would result in serious harm to self or others.”

The New York State Justice Center mandates reporting abuse of vulnerable persons which include “individuals with special needs who are receiving supports or services at state operated, licensed and certified facilities and programs.” These individuals are covered under “the ‘Protection of People with Special Needs Act’ [which] created new safeguards for people with special needs who are served by state operated, licensed or certified facilities and programs. These standards and practices have been implemented to protect individuals in state care against abuse, neglect or other conduct that would jeopardize their health, safety and welfare.”

#### ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

No services will be rendered to clients who attend therapy impaired or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This includes but is not limited to licit (prescribed or over the counter) or illicit substances that may impact the effectiveness of the therapeutic interaction. Clients who appear to be severely impaired may be sent by ambulance to a local Emergency Department at the discretion of the provider. For clients who are not severely impaired, the provider will contact an emergency contact to arrange transportation from the provider’s office in an effort to discourage impaired driving. For parents who attend their child’s appointment impaired, 911 and Child Protective Services may be contacted in addition to an emergency contact.

#### TELEPHONE ACCESSIBILITY

If you need to contact your provider between sessions, please leave a message on our voice mail or feel free to utilize email. We are often not immediately available due to the nature of our business; however we will attempt to return your call within 24 hours. Please note that face- to-face sessions are highly preferable to phone sessions. However, in the event that you are out of town, sick or need additional support, phone or Skype sessions are available. If a true emergency situation arises, please call 911 or any local emergency room.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATION

Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, our therapists do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when you meet with your therapist.

#### ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

We cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages. If you prefer to communicate via email or text messaging for issues regarding scheduling or cancellations, we will do so. While we try to return messages in a timely manner, we cannot guarantee immediate response and request that you do not use these methods of communication to discuss therapeutic content and/or request assistance for emergencies.

Effective therapy is often facilitated when the therapist gathers within a session or a series of sessions, a multitude of observations, information, and experiences about the client. Therapists may make clinical assessments, diagnosis, and interventions based not only on direct verbal or auditory communications, written reports, and third person consultations, but also from direct visual and olfactory observations, information, and experiences. When using information technology in therapy services, potential risks include, but are not limited to the therapist’s inability to make visual and olfactory observations of clinically or therapeutically potentially relevant issues such as: your physical condition including deformities, apparent height and weight, body type, attractiveness relative to social and cultural norms or standards, gait and motor coordination, posture, work speed, any noteworthy mannerism or gestures, physical or medical conditions including bruises or injuries, basic grooming and hygiene including appropriateness of dress, eye contact (including any changes in the previously listed issues), sex, chronological and apparent age, ethnicity, facial and body language, and congruence of language and facial or bodily expression. Potential consequences thus include the therapist not being aware of what he or she would consider important information, that you may not recognize as significant to present verbally the therapist.

#### MINORS

If you are a minor, your parents may be legally entitled to some information about your therapy. Your therapist will discuss with you and your parents what information is appropriate for them to receive and which issues are more appropriately kept confidential.

#### TERMINATION

Ending relationships can be difficult. Therefore, it is important to have a termination process in order to achieve some closure. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the treatment. We may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you and a termination process if we determine that the therapy is not being effectively used and/or if you are in default on payment. We will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the

reasons and purpose of terminating. If therapy is terminated for any reason or you request another therapist, we will provide you with a list of qualified psychotherapists to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source.

Should you fail to schedule an appointment for three consecutive weeks, unless other arrangements have been made in advance, for legal and ethical reasons, we must consider the professional relationship discontinued.

BY CLICKING ON THE CHECKBOX BELOW I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.