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Psychologist-Patient Services Agreement

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and ask me about anything that isn't clear to you. I will ask you to sign a separate statement indicating your understanding and agreement with these terms and conditions. You may revoke this agreement in writing at anytime.

Psychological Consultation and Treatment

Your first appointment with me will involve an evaluation of your needs. As part of this evaluation, I may ask you to complete some paper and pencil forms for the purpose of assessing psychological symptoms. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you my impressions about the problems you are having and what it will take to meet your treatment goals. During this time, we can also both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need to meet these goals. You should evaluate my impressions along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. If you have any questions about my impressions or recommendations, I encourage you to ask or discuss them with me. You are also welcome to invite a significant other, family member, or close friend to attend this initial consultation with you.

If we decide to continue working together in treatment, we will discuss a treatment plan and assess your progress as we proceed. If I feel that I am *not* the best person to help you, or that you are not a good match for the services I provide, I will let you know, and then help you find a provider who might be a better match.

My approach to treatment is called cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT is a collaborative process where I am working with you to help you learn skills for changing certain problematic behaviors and emotions. This process is most successful when we are able to develop an open and trusting professional relationship. You will most likely achieve your goals if you attend appointments and work hard between meetings to practice the skills I teach you. If you ever have any questions about the nature of the treatment, please don't hesitate to ask.

Confidentiality and Limits on Confidentiality

The confidentiality and privacy of all communications between you and me is of primary importance and is protected by law. ***I can only release information about our work to others with your***

written permission. There are some situations, unusual in my practice, in which I am legally obligated to take actions, which I believe are necessary to attempt to protect you or others from harm, and I may have to reveal some information about a patient's treatment. If such a situation were to arise, 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.

- If I have reasonable cause to believe that a **child under 18** known to me in my professional capacity may be an **abused child or a neglected child**, the law requires that I file a report with the local office of the Department of Children and Family Services, and possibly provide additional information.

- If I have reason to believe that an **adult over the age of 60** living in a domestic situation has been **abused or neglected** in the preceding 12 months, the law requires that I file a report with the agency designated to receive such reports by the Department of Aging. Once such a report is filed, I may be required to provide additional information.

- If you have made a **specific threat of violence against another person** or if I believe that you present a clear, imminent risk of serious physical harm to another, I may be required to disclose information in order to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking your hospitalization.

- If I believe that you present a **clear, imminent risk of serious physical or mental injury or death to yourself**, I may be required to disclose information in order to take protective actions. These actions may include seeking your hospitalization or contacting family members or others who can assist in protecting you.

There are other situations that also do not require 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 are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information concerning your diagnosis and treatment, such information is protected by the psychologist-patient privilege law. I cannot disclose any information without a **court order**. 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.

Professional Fees and Payment

Hourly fees and payment schedules are discussed when we arrange our initial appointment. Appointments lasting longer or shorter than a typical session (50 minutes) are charged on a prorated basis. I do not charge for routine telephone calls or emails, however, I may charge you for professional time requested of me above and beyond what is usually required (for example, telephone sessions lasting longer than 15 minutes). I will let you know ahead of time if this becomes an issue.

You are expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise. Most patients pay in cash or with a check at the end of the session (I am not able to accept a credit card for payment). Any returned checks will be charged a fee of \$35.00

Insurance Reimbursement

I have a small and very specialized practice (I specialize in the treatment of problems with OCD, anxiety, and stress) and do not accept insurance of any kind. I also cannot file for payment to be made to me. Your insurance company will probably classify me as an “out of network provider.” I am, however, happy to help you file for payment by providing any information requested. If you have insurance, most health care policies provide some coverage for psychological services. You should check with your insurance plan administrator to find out what they will reimburse to you and what information they need you to provide in order for you to get reimbursed. I will provide you with receipts that show what you paid, the dates of service, and the procedure and diagnosis codes.

Your health insurance company may require that I provide them with additional information in order for you to obtain reimbursement, such as treatment plans or summaries. I am happy to provide the information that is necessary for the purpose requested, and will do so upon your request.

Appointments and Cancellation Policy

Keeping regular appointments and staying on task is the key to successful change. Please keep appointments unless it is absolutely necessary to cancel or reschedule. I set aside time for you and carefully plan an agenda for each appointment. Therefore, in order to avoid being charged in full for a missed appointment, you should notify me within 24 hours in advance of the planned appointment.

Contacting Me

You are welcome to contact me by telephone at 919-843-8170 during business hours. If I do not answer, you can leave a confidential message on my secure voice mail, and unless my message states otherwise, I will generally return your call within a day. You can also contact me via e-mail at jon.abramowitz@gmail.com. I check e-mail often (unless you receive an “out-of-office” message stating otherwise) and will generally get back to you within a day. Please be aware that e-mail does not have the same security as voice mail. If I should be away for an extended period, I will have a colleague provide coverage. If you have an emergency and cannot reach me, you should do one of the following: (1) contact your family doctor or psychiatrist, (2) go to your local hospital emergency room, (3) call the Chapel Hill (or your local city/town) Crisis Intervention Unit at 968-2806, or (4) call 911 for fire and police emergency help.