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Office Policies & Informed Consent Agreement for Services – Intensive Couples Sessions

Welcome to My Best Relationship Psychological Services, PLLC. Thank you for your interest in an Intensive Couples Weekend. Please read this form carefully and ask your therapist any questions that you have. Once signed, this will represent an agreement between you and My Best Relationship Psychological Services, PLLC.

Benefits and risks of participation in Intensive Couples Session

Participation in couples therapy can result in numerous benefits, including, but not limited to, reduced stress and anxiety, improved interpersonal relationships, increased self-confidence, increased comfort and satisfaction in various arenas of your life, and the resolution of the problems that bring you to therapy in the first place. Most importantly, couples therapy will likely help you improve your relationship. Working towards these benefits requires effort on your part, and psychotherapy will be most effective with your active involvement, honesty and openness. In order to change, you must be willing to change, both during our sessions and in the world, and this can often be a challenging process. Although psychotherapy can be rewarding, it sometimes involves talking about unpleasant aspects of your life, which can bring up all kinds of uncomfortable feelings, such as anxiety, anger, sadness and disappointment. Psychotherapy may result in decisions about making changes that were not originally intended, and sometimes a decision that you might view as positive might not seem positive to someone close to you. There are no guarantees of exactly what you will experience as a result of being in therapy.

Intensives are called “intensive” because they are just that – intense. They are only appropriate for people who are ready to make big changes quickly and who are willing to take risks with each other. Intensives can be painful and challenging, but can also result in transformations in your relationship.

Screening

Prior to officially reserving your spot for an intensive, you will complete a screening process, which includes completing a packet of information for your therapist to review and a 30-minute phone consultation with each of you separately. This will give your therapist an opportunity to make sure that you are appropriate for the intensive and to take initial steps to plan for your time with each other. To get the most out of the screening process, please complete the intake forms with as much detail as possible. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Confidentiality

Generally, the law protects the privacy of all communications between client and psychotherapist. Confidentiality is taken very seriously and information to others can only be released with a client's permission and authorization *in writing*, unless ordered by a court of law, or in the following circumstances, in which case a therapist has a duty to report to the appropriate authorities:

- A therapist has reason to believe that a client is in danger of harming himself/herself – the therapist will do what is needed to protect the client which may involve involuntary hospitalization if the therapist feels there is an imminent risk of suicide.
- A therapist has reason to believe that a client is in danger of harming someone else – the therapist may have a duty to warn to prevent such harm from taking place.
- A therapist has reasonable suspicion of child abuse – therapists are mandated reporters of child abuse, regardless of who the child is and his/her relationship with the client.

Amendment to Policy: March 15, 2013 – NY State SAFE ACT

As of March 15, 2013, New York State has a new law around the issue of gun control that impacts mental health providers:

WHEN A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL CURRENTLY PROVIDING TREATMENT SERVICES TO A PERSON DETERMINES, IN THE EXERCISE OF REASONABLE PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT, THAT SUCH PERSON IS LIKELY TO ENGAGE IN CONDUCT THAT WOULD RESULT IN SERIOUS HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS, HE OR SHE SHALL BE REQUIRED TO REPORT, AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE, TO THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

(persons who are reported can then be cross checked by appropriate personnel to determine whether they have legal access to firearms)

Confidentiality of email, cell phone and fax communication

It is very important to be aware that email and cell phone communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people, therefore, the confidentiality of such communication can be compromised. Please notify us at the beginning of treatment if you want to avoid or limit in any way the use of any or all of the above mentioned communication devices.

Contacting us: Email/Text/Other communication

Email is used for scheduling purposes only; please do not email for any reason related to your situation other than for scheduling purposes. If you wish to reach us between sessions, please call. If your therapist is unavailable at the time of your call, please leave a message and your therapist will return your call as soon as possible.

Cancellation policy

Because your Intensive session is specifically reserved for you, we have a strict cancellation policy. There is a \$500 non-refundable deposit to reserve the dates of the session. The remaining balance is fully refundable with greater than 2 week's notice cancellation; is 50% refundable with between 1-2 weeks notice cancellation; and is non-refundable if we are given less than a week's notice of a cancellation. Please note, if you qualify for a refund of any kind and pay with a credit card, you will be responsible for any transaction fees associated with making a payment via credit card.

Client-Therapist privilege

Client-therapist privilege results from the special relationship of the client and therapist from a legal perspective. If My Best Relationship Psychological Services, PLLC, receives a subpoena, we will assert this privilege until otherwise instructed by you, in writing. Please be aware that you may be giving up this privilege if you make your mental or emotional condition an issue in a legal proceeding.

Insurance

Insurance does not cover couples therapy or intensive sessions for couples. We do not accept insurance for this service.

Litigation

To maintain the integrity of psychotherapy, we do not voluntarily communicate with an attorney regarding your treatment in any litigation or custody dispute in which you become involved. It is agreed that should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you nor your attorney, nor anyone else acting on your behalf, will call on me to testify in court or any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested.

Dual Relationships

Psychotherapy never involves sexual, business, friendship or any other dual relationships that could impair your therapist's objectivity, clinical judgment or therapeutic effectiveness, or could be exploitative in nature. Please feel free to bring up any questions that you may have about this.

Working with minors (people under the age of 18 years)

If you are under 18 years of age, we will need your parents' or legal guardian's written permission to treat you, along with proof of guardianship.

Consultation

Therapists regularly consult with other professionals in the field when it is felt that doing so will help the psychotherapy. During such consultations, clients' identifying information, including specifics of his/her situation, is never revealed.

In the case of an emergency

If you are experiencing an emergency and you cannot reach your therapist, you can call the Mental Health Help line: (212) 222-7666; the NYC Crisis Intervention Line: (212) 219-5599; (800) LIFENET; the Police (911); or you can proceed to the nearest hospital emergency room.

Results to expect & what to do after our work is done

Intensive sessions often result in great positive change in relationships. Even so, many people do not seek help until their relationship is in dire straits. For this reason, an intensive weekend may not be all that is needed to create and maintain positive changes. We therefore strongly advise and sometimes require couples to have an EFT trained couples therapist lined up after our work is over. We can help you with this regardless of where you live.

We do not have a money-back guarantee of any kind because we cannot make any promises that we will save your relationship. Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy has an excellent track record and we are extremely confident that you will leave our Intensive Session with a greater understanding of yourself, your partner and your relationship, and you will likely experience tremendous improvements. Even so, we cannot guarantee that we will help you save your relationship. You should also realize that this process may help you become clearer about your situation and may result in making a decision to go your separate ways, despite our goal to help you stay together.

Thank you for giving this notice careful attention. It is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have, and it is important for you to understand and feel comfortable agreeing to the terms of this contract. Please bring up any questions that you have.

Acknowledgement

Your signatures below indicate that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during your professional relationship with your therapist at My Best Relationship Psychological Services, PLLC.

I understand and agree to the information in this informed consent form, including the office policies.

Printed name

signature

date

Printed name

signature

date