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## **INFORMATION, AUTHORIZATION, & CONSENT TO TREATMENT**

I am very pleased that you have selected me to be your psychotherapist, and I am sincerely looking forward to assisting you. This document is designed to inform you about what you can expect from me regarding confidentiality, emergencies, and several other details regarding your treatment. Although providing this document is part of an ethical obligation to my profession, more importantly, it is part of my commitment to you to keep you fully informed of every part of your therapeutic experience. Please know that your relationship with me is a collaborative one, and I welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding your course of therapy at any time.

### Background Information

The following information regarding my educational background and experience as a therapist is an ethical requirement of my profession. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

I have a MA.Ed from the University of Sarasota in Mental Health Counseling and a Bachelors Degree in Psychology from the University of South Florida. I have been a therapist for almost 20 years. I am certified in Yoga, Hypnotherapy, and Family Herbalism. I am a National Certified Counselor and a Licensed Professional Counselor.

### Theoretical Views & Client Participation

It is my belief that as people become more aware and accepting of themselves, they are more capable of finding a sense of peace and contentment in their lives. However, self-awareness and self-acceptance are goals that may take a long time to achieve. Some clients need only a few sessions to achieve these goals, whereas others may require months or even years of therapy. As a client, you are in complete control, and you may end your relationship with me at any point.

In order for therapy to be most successful, it is important for you to take an active role. This means working on the things you and I talk about both during and between sessions. This also means avoiding any mind-altering substances like alcohol or non-prescription drugs for at least eight hours prior to your therapy sessions. Generally, the more of yourself you are willing to invest, the greater the return.

Furthermore, it is my policy to only see clients who I believe have the capacity to resolve their own problems with my assistance. It is my intention to empower you in your growth process to the degree that you are capable of facing life's challenges in the future without me. I also don't believe in creating dependency or prolonging therapy if the therapeutic intervention does not seem to be helping. If this is the case, I will direct you to other resources that will be of assistance to you. Your personal development is my number one priority. I encourage you to let me know if you feel that transferring to another therapist is necessary at any time. My goal is to facilitate healing and growth, and I am very committed to helping you in whatever way seems to produce maximum benefit.

### Confidentiality & Records

Your communications with me will become part of a clinical record of treatment, and it is referred to as Protected Health Information (PHI). Your PHI will be kept in a file stored in a locked cabinet in my home office. Additionally, I will always keep everything you say to me completely confidential, with the following exceptions: (1) you direct me to tell someone else and you sign a "Release of Information" form; (2) I determine that you are a danger to yourself or to others; (3) you report information about the abuse of a child, an elderly person, or a disabled individual who may require protection; or (4) I am ordered by a judge to disclose information. In the latter case, my license does provide me with the ability to uphold what is legally termed "privileged communication." Privileged communication is your right as a client to have a confidential relationship with a therapist. The state of Georgia has a very good track record in respecting this legal right. If for some unusual reason a judge were to order the disclosure of your private information, this order can be appealed. I cannot guarantee that the appeal will be sustained, but I will do everything in my power to keep what you say confidential.

Please note that in couple's counseling, I do not agree to keep secrets. Information revealed in any context may be discussed with either partner.

### Interaction with the legal system

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree that I will not involve or engage my therapist in any legal issues or litigation in which I am a party to at any time either during my counseling or after counseling terminates. This would include any interaction with the court system, attorneys, guardian ad litem, psychological evaluators, alcohol and drug evaluations or any other contact with the legal system. In the event that I wish to have a copy of my file and I execute a proper signed release, my therapist will provide me with a summary of my record and I will be responsible for charges in producing that record. If I believe it necessary to subpoena my therapist to testify at a deposition or a hearing with a court order, I would be responsible for her expert witness fees in the amount of \$1000 for half a day to be paid five days in advance of any court appearance or deposition. Any additional time she spends over 4 hrs. (1/2 day) would be billed at the rate of \$300. per hour including travel time. I understand that if I subpoena my therapist, she may elect not to speak with my attorney and a subpoena may result in my therapist withdrawing as my counselor.

**Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_**

### Structure and Cost of Sessions

I agree to provide psychotherapy for the fee of \$130. per 55 minute session, unless otherwise negotiated by you or your insurance carrier. Doing psychotherapy by telephone is not ideal, and needing to talk to me between sessions may indicate that you need extra support. If this is the case, you and I will need to explore adding sessions or developing other resources you have available to help you. Telephone calls that exceed 15 minutes in duration will be billed at \$2.00 per minute. The fee for each session will be due at the conclusion of the session. Cash, personal checks, credit cards +(fee of \$3.50) or Pay Pal Payments are acceptable for payment, and I will provide you with a receipt of payment. The receipt of payment may also be used as a statement for insurance if applicable to you. Please note that there is a \$25 fee for any returned checks.

### Cancellation Policy

**In the event that you are unable to keep an appointment, you must notify me at least 24 hours in advance. My time is as valuable as yours so please understand if such advance notice is not received, you will be financially responsible for \$80.00 for the session you missed. Please note that insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions; that will be your responsibility.**

### In Case of an Emergency

My practice is considered to be an outpatient facility, and I am set up to accommodate individuals who are reasonably safe and resourceful. I do not carry a beeper nor am I available at all times. If at any time this does not feel like sufficient support, please inform me, and we can discuss additional resources or transfer your case to a therapist or clinic with 24-hour availability. Generally, I will return phone calls within 24-48 hours. If you have a mental health emergency, I encourage you not to wait for a call back, but to do one or more of the following:

- **Call Ridgeview Institute at 770.434.4567 or Peachford Hospital at 770.454.5589.**
- **Call 911.**
- **Go to your nearest emergency room.**

### Professional Relationship

Psychotherapy is a professional service I will provide to you. Because of the nature of therapy, your relationship with me has to be different from most relationships. It may differ in how long it lasts, the objectives, or the topics discussed. It must also be limited to only the relationship of therapist and client. If you and I were to interact in any other ways, you would then have a "dual relationship," which could prove to be harmful to you in the long run and is, therefore, unethical in the mental health profession. Dual relationships can set up conflicts between the therapist's interests and the client's interests, and then the client's (your) interests might not be put first. In order to offer all of my clients the best care, my judgment needs to be unselfish and purely focused on your needs. This is why your relationship with me must remain professional in nature.

Additionally, there are important differences between therapy and friendship. Friends may see your position only from their personal viewpoints and experiences. Friends may want to find quick and easy solutions to your problems so that they can feel helpful. These short-term solutions may not be in your long-term best interest. Friends do not usually follow up on their advice to see whether it was useful. They may *need* to have you do what they advise. A therapist offers you choices and helps you choose what is best for you. A therapist helps you learn how to solve problems better and make better decisions. A therapist's responses to your situation are based on tested theories and methods of change.

You should also know that therapists are required to keep the identity of their clients secret. As much as I would like to, for your confidentiality I will not address you in public unless you speak to me first. I also must decline any invitation to attend gatherings with your family or friends. Lastly, when your therapy is completed, I will not be able to be a friend to you like your other friends. In sum, it is my duty to always maintain a professional role. Please note that these guidelines are not meant to be discourteous in any way, they are strictly for your long-term protection.

Statement Regarding Ethics, Client Welfare & Safety

I assure you that my services will be rendered in a professional manner consistent with the ethical standards of the American Counseling Association and/or the National Board of Certified Counselors. If at any time you feel that I am not performing in an ethical or professional manner, I ask that you please let me know immediately. If we are unable to resolve your concern, I will provide you with information to contact the Georgia professional licensing board that governs my profession.

Text Messaging and Email: Texting is not confidential. Please keep texts limited to quick scheduling questions or arrival information. I prefer email for correspondence to not compromise your confidentiality. If you choose not to utilize email, please discuss this with me. Please do not bring up detailed therapeutic content via email to prevent compromising your confidentiality.

Please print, date, and sign your name below indicating that you have read and understand the contents of this form, you agree to the policies of your relationship with me as your therapist, and you are authorizing me to begin treatment with you.

**Insurance Payment Agreement**

I authorize Tanya Kuschnitzky to bill my insurance company on my behalf for the sessions/services she has rendered. I understand that if my insurance company denies the claims after 60 days from claim submission, that I will be held responsible for the full amount and will pay Tanya Kuschnitzky directly.

In the event that your insurance carrier requests a refund from Tanya Kuschnitzky for your services, you will be responsible for the full amount of that refund to Tanya Kuschnitzky.

**Client Name (Please Print)**

**Date**

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**Client Signature**

**If Applicable:**

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**Parent's or Legal Guardian's Name (Please Print)**

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**Date**

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**Parent's or Legal Guardian's Signature**

My signature below indicates that I have discussed this form with you and have answered any questions you have regarding this information.

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**Therapist's Signature**

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**Date**