



### Informed Consent for Psychotherapy Assessment

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and policies. Please read it carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you have. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

#### ASSESSMENT SERVICES

I am a licensed clinical psychologist with a doctoral degree in clinical psychology, and I provide a range of psychotherapy services including assessment, psychotherapy and consultation. Psychological assessment is a process where your needs, goals, challenges, and symptoms are identified; personal histories are documented; resources and treatments are identified, and documentation of results and needs is provided. Documentation may include a single page summary, completion of specific forms, or a longer report depending on the experiences or processes being assessed and documented. There are many different methods I may use to evaluate your history and current needs, goals, experiences, and symptoms. This typically involves questions, conversation, and collaboration with others when appropriate. Assessment can often involve asking very detailed questions about your life, history, experiences, and challenges. Many different systems have requirements for the types of questions that are asked, or the information included in different types of reports and letters.

Sometimes, these questions can lead to uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, and overwhelm. I will always strive to include only relevant questions and information, and will interact with systems to include you as a whole person and advocate for you to receive services and resources that best meet your specific needs and experiences. At the conclusion of the assessment, we can review the experience and address any thoughts or feelings that arise from the process.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

I strive to protect the confidentiality and privacy of everybody I work with. For evaluation processes, documentation is often provided to affirm and describe findings and recommendations. Information provided in any documentation will always be focused on the goals of assessment and only relevant information will be included. It will be given to you directly, unless we sign a release for it to be provided directly to other agencies.

At times, it may be useful for me to speak to other providers or individuals in the course of the evaluation and I will only speak to others with your written permission.

In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychologist is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. However, there are a few exceptions.

If these exceptions occur, I will contact the specific entity required, and I will aim to keep you informed about the process whenever possible:

- If you describe abuse towards a child, elderly person, or disabled person
- If you describe thoughts of engaging in serious bodily harm towards another
- If you discuss engaging in or considering acts of serious harm or death aimed at yourself
- If you disclose that you or others have accessed, streamed, or downloaded material where a child is engaged in an obscene sexual act

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment.

In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional state is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if deemed necessary.

Sometimes we might discuss activities that are defined by our systems as illegal or might be deemed by some as high risk, such as use of substances, or sex work. I will always adhere to the above confidentiality policies and will not disclose any information you share unless required by law. In those events, I will limit my discussion of any activities that challenge our systems unless you consent to me doing so and we have a good reason for these disclosures.

Some content that you may want to discuss may conflict with mandated reporting requirements. I encourage you to ask questions or address subject matter so that we can decide together how to proceed in a way that offers the most care, safety, and structure possible around the subject or scenario. I realize this can be risky and stressful, and remain available to addressing the conflicts so that you receive support while the requirements are recognized.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about our therapy process and plans. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. The consultant is 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.

I work with another therapist, Tim Lewis, Psy.D., as a covered therapist. If I am ill or unable to attend an appointment and contact you directly, he may contact you to inform you of the change and next steps in re-scheduling. In the case of an emergency, Dr. Lewis may have limited access to your information for the sole purpose of maintaining your confidentiality and preserving any records on your behalf. He will be able to offer assistance and support if you are experiencing a crisis or concern and I am unavailable.

I also work with a virtual assistant, Kyra Mingus, to assist with administrative tasks like updating bookkeeping and managing accounts. Kyra has access to your name, and if you receive superbills, may have access to your address and diagnosis. She does not have access to your records or any other personal information.

Additionally, I work with a billing person, Beth Jonasson, to make sure that all of my records accurately reflect what has been paid. Beth has access to your name, and if you use insurance, your address and diagnosis so she can accurately track billing matters. She does not have access to your records or any personal information.

Divergent Worlds Psychotherapy and Consulting is my private practice. Some record keeping and payment tools used by the practice may include limited demographic details about you, such as your name. While other associates may work with me in my practice, all of your information will be

confidential and we significantly limit access to shared information. If you have any questions about any of these confidentiality matters you are welcome to ask for more information, or about ways that this might impact you.

## MEETINGS

Assessment times are usually between 50 minutes to two hours, depending on the specific evaluation conducted. Timeline will be discussed as our meeting schedule is confirmed. Most assessments can be completed in one session, and sometimes 1-3 sessions are needed to provide complete documentation and process anything that arises during the assessment process.

Once an assessment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 48 hours [2 days] advance notice of cancellation.

If you are paying for services through an insurance company, cancelled sessions are not covered by insurance plans in most situations. You will be expected to pay for the full contracted rate if you have not cancelled in the 48 hour period.

If you are running more than 10 minutes late, please let me know via text, email, or phone call if you are able. If you are running late, we may need to reschedule the session, or start the assessment and schedule a second appointment to complete it. I will always try to use our time to complete as much of our assessment as we can.

## FEES

Full fees for evaluation and intake interview are based on my fee scale rates. I may also charge a portion of this fee for other professional services you may require (such as telephone conversations which last longer than 15 minutes, meetings with other professionals, etc.). In unusual circumstances, you may become involved in litigation wherein you request or require my participation. You will be expected to pay for such professional time even if I am compelled to testify by another party.

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time that it is held. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when these services are requested.

I accept payment via cash, check, or credit card. I will always aim to ensure that any payment is done as securely as possible. For credit card processing I use Ivypay. Ivypay is a secure, HIPAA compliant service that allows us to have a credit card on file and automatically charge for sessions after we meet. I will enter in our session and you will receive a text message notice from "Ivy" then you complete the transaction.

After we end our assessment time, I will delete any payment information you have provided.

## INSURANCE

Most insurance plans require you to authorize me to provide a clinical diagnosis, and sometimes additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or in rare cases, a copy of the entire record. This information will become part of the insurance company's record. All insurance companies aim to keep such information confidential, but once it is in their hands, I have no control over what your insurer will do with the information. In most situations I will use whatever diagnosis you have on record with your therapist, unless one of our goals is to assess that. If that isn't an option, we can discuss alternatives.

## CONTACTING ME

You can contact me using telephone, email, or text. I will do my best to quickly respond whenever possible, and I will make every effort to return your contact on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. Text is OK for schedule changes, and phone or email are preferred for more detailed contact. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to reply, contact your primary care provider, a friend, or a support line.

## PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless I believe that seeing them would be emotionally difficult, in which case I will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice. I may forward any records to your therapist if we deem that helpful.

## COLLABORATION

It may feel useful at times to include other people in your assessment process: partners, family, friends, or other providers. Other people are welcome to attend and offer you support in your evaluation process. If others attend to support you, I will often meet with you and them together, and then meet with you separately, and sometimes meet with them separately as well with your consent.

## DIAGNOSES

I can and do provide diagnoses for a range of experiences that have been documented and categorized in the DSM by the American Psychiatric Association. Diagnoses can carry useful treatment approaches and communicate information to others, along with their associated stigmas. There are also other labels or ideas based on evidence or experience that I may use or reference that are not included in the DSM currently. If we are documenting a diagnosis, we can discuss the ways that it might provide resources, create options to access treatment, and open up stigma. We can discuss other models of understanding symptoms if that feels useful for you.

Diagnoses can vary, and one provider's diagnosis may be different from another. This can be based on experience, bias, focus, and the relationships that we create. Diagnoses can also shift over time based on your circumstances, and the ways in which you and your body interact with them. If you have been given other diagnoses, I will review them and will include them if you feel they reflect you, and may change them if we feel they aren't currently applicable. I will always discuss a diagnosis with you before assigning one.

## MINORS

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is my policy to request an agreement from parents that they give up or minimize access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless I feel there is a high risk and sharing some details would assist you in accessing safety. Before giving them any information, I will discuss it with you, if possible, and do my best to address any objections you may have with what will be discussed.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

Psychological symptoms often have a strong correlation with physical illnesses and symptoms. At times, some medical conditions require a medical differential diagnosis to determine symptom etiology. Sometimes, prescription and non-prescription medications can have significant side effects that may be important for us to consider. I appreciate full disclosure off all medicines and drug intake so we can create a full picture of what is happening with you, along with options for treatment and support.

I may suggest that it could be helpful to speak with a health care provider to address symptoms that appear to be impacting you. Health care systems can be difficult and overwhelming to navigate or access. As part of our assessment process, I am available to coordinate with any member of your health care team when relevant and necessary, and can support you in connecting to care when I am able. I may also talk with you about signing a release of information so that I can coordinate services with your providers and support you in all of your health care needs. I will not coordinate with other health care providers, or ask you about doing so, without explicit purpose and consent from all involved.

#### ENDING ASSESSMENT

Following the completion of our assessment, I will provide written documentation as needed, including reports and letters. This documentation will remain available to you, and I am happy to re-issue your letter in the future if needed.

If an addendum or update is needed, I typically offer a follow up phone call or meeting to review recent history and changes. While I may be able to provide a re-issue without additional fees, I may charge a re-assessment fee, especially if additional documentation or assessment is required.

After documentation has been provided, I consider our process closed, and you can reach out to me with future questions or requests if you have them. If you would like to proceed with psychotherapy with me, we will separately initiate that process after closing our assessment relationship. Please feel free to ask any questions that you might have. I look forward to working with you.