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Information for Client

Welcome to our practice. We are an Outpatient Mental Health Clinic offering a range of counseling services. We serve adults, adolescents and children. We appreciate you giving us the opportunity to be of assistance to you. This brochure answers some questions clients often ask about therapy. We believe that our work will be most helpful to you when you have a clear idea of what we are trying to do.

This brochure talks about the following:

- √ What will be the goals of therapy?
- √ How long might therapy take?
- √ How much do our services cost?
- √ What are our methods of treatment?
- √ What are the risks and benefits of therapy?
- √ What are some other important concerns?

After you read this brochure, we can talk together about how these issues apply to you. This brochure is yours to keep. Please read all of it. Mark any parts that are not clear to you. Write down any questions you have, so we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you have read and fully understood this brochure, I will ask you to sign Consent to Treatment form at the end. Your therapist will sign it as well and you will be offered a copy.

About Psychotherapy Services

Psychotherapy is an interpersonal relationship used by a trained therapist to help a client learn to cope with many different life issues. To facilitate this, therapists help create a trusting and caring environment where the client can explore and express feelings, thoughts, experiences and behaviors.

Through many techniques, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy, a client learns appropriate, alternative behaviors and/or coping skills so as to engage with life and his/her relationships in a more productive way. Most of our clients have a session once a week, or more, for 3 or 4 months. After that, we meet less often for several more months. Therapy then usually comes to an end.

The process of ending therapy, called "termination," can be a very valuable part of our work. Stopping therapy should not be done casually, although either of us may decide to end it if we believe it is in your best interest. If you wish to stop therapy at any time, we ask that you agree now to meet then for at least one session to review our work together. We will review our goals, the work we have done, and any future work that needs to be done.

The Benefits and Risks of Therapy

As with any powerful treatment, therapy can have some risks as well as many benefits. You should consider both the risks and benefits when making any treatment decisions. Since most therapeutic processes involve the recall of unpleasant memories some clients may at the start of the process, experience uncomfortable levels of sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness, helplessness, or other negative feelings. These feelings or memories may surface anywhere, such as at work or in school. Also, therapy may affect some relationships as dysfunctional ones are let go, as you become more open to changes. Sometimes, too, a client's problems may temporarily worsen after the beginning of treatment. Most of these risks are to be expected when people are making any important changes in their lives. Finally, even with our best efforts, there is a risk that therapy may not work out well for you.

While you consider these risks, you should know also that the benefits of therapy have been shown by scientists in hundreds of well-designed research studies. People who are depressed may find their mood lifting. Others may no longer feel afraid, angry, or anxious. In therapy, people have a chance to talk things out fully until their feelings are relieved or the problems are solved. Clients' relationships and coping skills may improve greatly. They may get more satisfaction out of social and family relationships. Their personal goals and values may become clearer. They may grow in many directions-as persons, in their close relationships, in their work or schooling, and in the ability to enjoy their lives.

Finally, even with our best efforts, therapy may not work for everyone; therefore, we do not take on clients we do not think we can help. We will enter our relationship with optimism about our progress.

The Benefits and Risks of Teletherapy

Research indicates that teletherapy (videoconferencing, phone conferencing, or asynchronous conversation i.e. messaging) is just as effective as in-office therapy. Some advantages it has over in-person therapy include easier access to care and the convenience of meeting from the location of the client's choosing.

There are also potential risks to consider, regarding digital access to treatment. This includes interruptions, unauthorized access, and technical difficulties. Glitches can occur, and may be out of the control of the therapist, including video feed disconnection, image freezing, or audio cutting out. Treatment will discontinue if it is deemed that the client does not have the adequate means to access the teletherapy sessions, including poor internet connection, lack of privacy, or if the client otherwise would simply be more comfortable meeting in person. Assessment and consultation, as well as continued treatment, will also differ because the therapist is not in the same room as the client.

Technology "How To"

Most clients "opt-in" to receive invitations to sessions via email or text. If this is the case for you, you'll receive an email notification, either directly from your therapist or from the HIPAA compliant video software, Google Meet, to begin online sessions. We encourage clients to do a test log in prior to our appointment to make sure that everything is working well on your side. You can check that your mic, speakers, and video are working. The Google Meet troubleshooting team is fantastic so if you run into any trouble, just give them a call.

Consultations

If you wish for another professional's opinion at any time, or wish to talk with another therapist, we will help you find a qualified person and will provide him or her with the information needed.

If you could benefit from a treatment we cannot provide, we will help you find a referral. You have a right to ask us about such other treatments, their risks, and their benefits. Based on what we learn about the challenges you are facing, we may recommend a medical exam or use of medication. If we do this, we will fully discuss our reasons with you, so that you can decide what is best. If you are treated by another professional, we will coordinate our services with him or her and with your own medical doctor.

Exclusion from Legal Proceedings

If you ever become involved in a divorce or custody dispute, or any other legal matters (such as a lawsuit over injuries), we want you to understand and agree that we will not provide our records, evaluations, depositions, or testimony in court. There are several reasons for this: (1) We may not possess the professional skills to make decisions about issues besides those we deal with in therapy; (2) therapy often involves full disclosure of information that you might not want to have revealed in court; (3) if you are holding back information because of that fear, our work will not be as productive as it could be; (4) our statements will be seen as based in your favor because we have a therapy relationship; and (5) what we might say in testifying or being deposed might change our therapy relationship, and we must put that relationship first. If you want custody evaluations and recommendations, we will be happy to refer you to those with this expertise.

Social Gatherings and Gift Giving

According to the NASW Code of Conduct therapists are taught to separate their professional and personal lives, and as a result, they do not socialize or become friends with their clients. On occasion, however, social workers' professional and personal lives may intersect, often in unexpected ways.

According to the NASW Code of Ethics, this clinic adopts a policy that ensures that therapists/contractors practice equal treatment, unbiased professionalism, and non-discriminatory actions in relation to all clients. The policy states that gifts of food, or small gifts that may arrive during the holidays, and at other times of the year when gift giving is traditional, belong to the entire clinic even if addressed to a single therapist/contractor/staff. All gifts will be shared with and distributed to all.

About Confidentiality

We will treat with great care all the information you share with us. It is your legal right that our sessions and our records about you are kept private. That is why we ask you to sign a "release-of-records" form before we can talk about you or send our records about you to anyone else.

In all but a few rare situations, your confidentiality (that is, your privacy) is protected by state law and by the rules of our profession. Here are the most common cases in which confidentiality is not protected:

- 1) If you were sent to us by a court for evaluation or treatment, the court expects a report from us. If this is your situation, please tell us ahead of time, what you do not want the court to know.
- 2) Are you suing someone or being sued? Are you being charged with a crime? If so, and you tell the court that you are seeing us, we may then be ordered to show the court our records. Please consult your lawyer about these issues.
- 3) If you make a serious threat to harm yourself or another person, the law requires us to try to protect you or that other

person. This usually means telling others about the threat. We cannot promise never to tell others about threats you make.
4) If we believe that a child, older adult, or other dependent person has been or will be abused or neglected, we are legally required to report this to the authorities.

Second, we sometimes talk with other therapists or other professionals about our clients, because it helps us provide high-quality treatment. These professionals are also required to keep your information private. We maintain your privacy with them. We never tell them your name. We change or skip some facts about you and tell only what they need to know to understand your situation and help us.

Except for the situations, we have described above, we and the office staff will always maintain your privacy. We also ask you not to disclose the name or identity of any other client you see in this office.

Health insurance companies will ask for information on your symptoms, diagnosis, progress, and outcomes. Our policy is to provide only as much information as the insurance company will need to pay your benefits. This information will become part of your permanent medical record. If the company does not get the information it asks for, it may refuse to pay your benefits for our treatment. Please understand that we have no control over how these records are handled once they leave our office. For more on these issues, please read the Notice of Privacy Practices.

It is the office policy as well as a state mandate to retain clients' records for 7 years after the end of our therapy.

You can review your own records in our files at any time. We will keep your case records in a safe place.

Confidentiality of Email, Chat, Cell Phone, Video Communication

Communication with a therapist via any online or electronic means is limited in security and thus your confidentiality may not be guaranteed. I use secure and encrypted (HIPAA compliant) video software for our sessions. I use secure email and phone systems. However, I want you to be aware that if you do not also use secure/encrypted programs on your side of the communication, the communications may not be secure. Security laws (HIPAA laws) state that clients have the freedom to request or "opt-in" to less secure means of communication if they are aware of the risks, comfortable with them, and find it clinically helpful to do so.

We also want to acknowledge that while we regularly check in on the security of all of our ways of communicating, swift advances in technology preclude my ability to be certain of our security. Be aware that when we use electronic communication methods, such as email, texting, online video, or messaging, there are various technicians and administrators who maintain these services and may have access to the content of those communications.

Please consider the limits of confidentiality in electronic communications. Please ensure that you too are doing your utmost to protect your privacy by considering who has access to your email, text messages, and so on before choosing online therapy.

Our Backgrounds

Mary Determan, MSW, LCSW, RPT-S has been working with adults, adolescents and children for thirty years. Her background started with a framework around addictions and has grown to include both inpatient and outpatient mental health. Her specialty is working with children through the intervention of Play Therapy. She is a Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor.

Greg Barden, MSW, LCSW, RPT works with children, adolescents, and adults. His areas of specialty are anxiety, depression, trauma and PTSD, adoption/foster care, attachment, self-esteem, spirituality and LGBT issues. He is trained in Play Therapy and in EMDR therapy, as well as traditional talk (CBT) therapy.

Tiffany McCord, MS, LPC works with children, adolescents, and adults. She has experience working with individuals seeking help with anxiety, depression, grief, trauma, social skills, and adjustment issues.

Peggy Reilly, MSW, LCSW has been working as a child and family therapist for 20+ years, serving the mental health needs of children and families. Her interests include; children impacted by the trauma of sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect and domestic violence, and divorce, as well as children and families suffering with depression and anxiety disorders. Peggy has worked in a variety of settings including outpatient, inpatient, in-home, and residential treatment.

Mary Sosalla, MA, LPC, RPT has training in individual and family therapy and extensive training in child psychotherapy and play therapy. She works with clients on issues such as anxiety, ADHD, depression, trauma, divorce, grief and loss, stress management, social skills, and self-esteem concerns.

Lainie Tuggle, MSW, LCSW has been a member of Mary Determan MSW, LLC since 2016. Lainie works in individual sessions with children, adolescents, adults, and families to address diagnosis such as ADHD, Trauma, Depression and Anxiety.

*We also have therapists who are working towards getting their license. They have graduated with their Masters Degree and now are required to practice for no less than three years before receiving their license.

Fees, Payments, and Billing

Payment for services is important in any professional relationship. This is even true in therapy. You are responsible for seeing that our services are paid for. Meeting this responsibility shows your commitment.

Our current regular fees are as follows. You will be given advance notice if these fees should change.

Initial assessment: the fee is \$175.00

Individual therapy: the fee is \$150.00

Family therapy: the fee is \$150.00

Telephone Consultation over 30 minutes: the fee is \$100.00

No Show Fee (24 hour cancellation notice is required) \$25.00

Returned checks or invalid charge card fee: the fee is \$35.00

Please pay for each session at the end of each session. We have found that this arrangement helps us to stay focused on our goals. Other payment or fee arrangements must be worked out before the end of our first meeting. If we do not receive payment after each session, you will be invoiced after we receive payment from the insurance company. You will have a maximum of 90 days to satisfy that invoice.

We believe that telephone consultations may be suitable or even needed at times in our therapy, as well as meetings at schools with teachers or IEP meetings. If so, we will charge you the regular fee for an individual therapy session.

If you have any questions about billing or insurance please contact your therapist. We will do the same with you if we have any questions. Such problems can interfere greatly with our work. They must be worked out openly and quickly.

Health Insurance Coverage and Payments

Many health insurance plans will help you pay for therapy and other services we offer. Each health insurance company and each particular plan is different so we cannot tell you what your plan covers nor do we know your benefits.

Please read your plan's booklet under coverage for "Outpatient Psychotherapy" or under "Treatment of Mental and Nervous Conditions". Alternatively, call your insurer's office to find out what you need to know.

If your health insurance will pay part of our fee, our billing manager will file the claim with your insurance company for you. However, please keep two things in mind:

- 1) We have no role in deciding what your insurance covers. You are responsible for checking your insurance coverage, deductibles, payment rates, co-pays, and any other charges. Your insurance contract is between you and your company; it is not between the insurance company and us.
- 2) You, not your insurance company or any other person or company are responsible for paying the fees we agree upon. If you ask us to bill a separated spouse, a relative, or an insurance company, and we do not receive payment on time, we will then expect this payment from you. If you will be sharing the financial responsibility with another person(s), all parties involved must sign the 'Agreement to Pay Form' that is included in this packet.

If You Need to Contact Us

Because we are outpatient therapists, we cannot promise that we will be available at all times. A therapist is in the office Monday through Friday from 11:00 am to 8:00 pm and Saturday mornings from 11 am until 2pm. We do not take phone calls when we are with a client. You can always leave a message on our confidential voicemail or with a secretary and we will return your call as soon as we can. Generally, we will make every effort to return your call.

If you have a behavioral or emotional crisis and cannot reach us by telephone, or cell phone, you and your family members should call your insurance emergency number or one of the following community emergency agencies: **Cope Hotline 262-377-2673, First Call for Help 211.** In emergencies outside of our regular office hours, call your own medical doctor or go to the nearest emergency room.

Statement of Principles and Complaint Procedures

Problems can arise in our relationship, just as in any other relationship. If you are not satisfied with any area of our work, please raise your concerns with us at once. Our work together will be slower and more difficult if your concerns are not worked out. We will make every effort to hear any complaints you have and to seek solutions to them. You can also contact the state or local psychological association and speak to the chairperson of the ethics committee. He or she can help clarify your concerns or tell you how to file a complaint.

In our practice as therapists, we do not discriminate against clients because of any of the following factors: age, sex, marital/family status, race, color, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, place of residence, veteran status, physical disability, health status, sexual orientation, or criminal record unrelated to present dangerousness.

We truly appreciate the chance you have given us to share a little bit about the professional services that we can offer you. We look forward to the possibility of meeting you and engaging in a successful relationship in the near future. Feel free to share this information with any one else that you think might benefit from our services.