



Dr. Sarita T. Lyons

Consent for Treatment Form

OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT

Welcome to my practice. I am governed by various laws and regulations and by the code of ethics of my profession. The ethics code requires that I make you aware of specific office policies and how these procedures may impact you. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and client, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience. Sometimes counseling services are provided primarily to prevent further deterioration of your mental or emotional status which is considered maintenance treatment.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. Under certain circumstances I may recommend a psychiatric consult; conjoint marital/couple, conjoint parent/child



sessions and/or group psychotherapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to refer you to another mental health professional for a second opinion.

MEETINGS

I normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 4 sessions. During this time, we can both decide whether I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If you decide to continue treatment, I will usually schedule one 50-minute session (one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree upon, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide **24 hours advance notice** of cancellation or unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. If it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

My hourly fee is \$ _____ for an initial intake and individual sessions. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 5 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you request of me. Group therapy options will be available at various times through my practice and would be a separate cost, although you are not required to attend.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise. **If you wish to pay by check, please make checks payable to: Uplifting People, LLC or Dr. Sarita T. Lyons. To avoid wasting your valuable session time, please have your check made out and ready before your session. If you would like to pay with cash, please have the exact fee in cash as I do not keep cash in the office to provide change.** I also accept credit cards for payment with a 2.75% tax to cover the cost of the transaction. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan. You will be allowed to accrue uncollected fees up to and no more than \$300.00 owed for counseling services (due to financial hardships and unusual circumstances). In the event that a debt of \$300.00 or greater of uncollected fees is accrued, counseling services will be terminated so that your bill does not become unmanageable and create additional stress. You will be expected to



repay the debt as soon as you can. If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

I do not take any insurance for payment of services. All clients at my practice are self-pay.

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone. My telephone is answered by voicemail that I monitor periodically throughout the day. I will make every effort to return your call the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you will be available. **Telephone calls are offered as a professional courtesy and this service does not constitute an emergency service.** I am not responsible for your behaviors or decisions occurring outside the consultation room at any given time, whether before or after a telephone call or consultation. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, **contact 911, your family physician or the nearest emergency room.** If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or I can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. Clients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

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 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 that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, I will notify them of my concern. Before giving them any information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do my best to handle objections you may have with what I am prepared to discuss.



CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and counselor is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions. 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 condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. For example, if I believe that a child, elderly person or disabled person is being abused, I must file a report with the appropriate state agency. If I believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I am required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police and seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm himself/herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or contact family members or others who can help provide protection. I will take any threats seriously whether I am informed by you or someone you know. Therefore, please use discretion when providing my contact information to a third party.

You should be aware that when counseling services are sought by third parties such as employers, lawyers, or the courts, disclosure of some information is required by law. You should also be aware that disclosure of requested information to third parties, when mandated by law, could potentially have an adverse effect on your life.

These situations have rarely occurred in my practice. I will make every effort to discuss it with you before taking any action, unless I believe that notifying you may put you or your health in jeopardy. Additionally, it will be helpful to me to engage in peer and professional supervision and consultation with other professionals and licensed professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. The consultation 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 together. While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential situations, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at our next meeting. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex.

TERMINATION

Your participation in psychotherapy is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from treatment without adversity at any time. I would recommend that when termination is considered, you discuss this with me, so that we can create a plan for termination to minimize any possible negative effects. If you don't show-up or never contact me regarding missing 3 consecutive scheduled appointments, your treatment will be considered canceled



and terminated and you will be financially responsible for the fees of the missed sessions. A letter will be sent to you acknowledging the termination along with a closing bill for any unpaid balance.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document, were provided accurate information, and agree to abide by the terms during our professional relationship.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of my authorization for my own records

Signature of Client _____ Date _____

Additional Client Signature (Spouse/Partner/Friend/Family Member) _____ Date _____

Parent Waives right to access minor child's records _____ Date _____

Sarita T. Lyons, J.D., Ph.D. _____ Date _____
Psychotherapist