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PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES: A NOTE ABOUT WHAT TO EXPECT

Welcome to my practice. This note is an informal attempt to let you know what to expect from this psychotherapy/counseling process. Please ask me about any questions or concerns that you may have at any time.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on: the concerns that lead you to seek help; the particular problem(s) you are experiencing; the origins, course, and previous treatment of this (these) problem(s); your current and ongoing motivations, expectations, resources, and circumstances; and, the personalities of the psychologist and the patient and how we interact with each other. There are many different methods I may use to help you deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy often calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you may have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and outside of sessions.

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 many benefits. Therapy has been shown to be effective and often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. While most of my clients experience improvement in their difficulties, there are no guarantees of what you will experience, or guarantee of the outcome of psychotherapy.

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 may include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If you have persistent doubts about our work, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with 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 if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, I will usually schedule one 45-minute session (one appointment hour of 45 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree on, although sessions may be longer or more or less frequent – either routinely or as needed. The process of counseling or therapy requires continuity and consistency in keeping appointments in order to be effective.

CONTACTING ME

Due to my work schedule, I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am in the office, I usually do not answer the phone when I am with a client. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail (that I monitor frequently). I will make every effort to return your call on 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. In emergencies, please state such in your message. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest hospital emergency room and ask for the psychiatrist or psychologist on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact if it is necessary.