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Guidelines for Psychotherapy Services

The following information is provided to assist you in understanding the guidelines of psychotherapy services and to make an informed decision when consenting to psychotherapy services.

Limits of Services and Assumption of Risks

Therapy sessions carry both benefits and risks. Therapy sessions can significantly reduce the amount of distress someone is feeling, improve relationships, and/or resolve other specific issues. However, these improvements and any “cures” cannot be guaranteed for any condition due to the many variables that affect these therapy sessions. Experiencing uncomfortable feelings, discussing unpleasant situations and/or aspects of your life are considered risks of therapy sessions.

Confidentiality

As a consumer of mental health services, it is important for you to understand the laws of confidentiality. Generally, all psychotherapy sessions remain confidential – that is, information disclosed during the course of a psychotherapy session remains private between the client and mental health professional. However, as a mental health professional, Ms. Contreras is also a **mandated reporter**. As a mandated reporter, Ms. Contreras is legally responsible to break confidentiality when **safety issues** arise during the course of treatment. These include the following situations:

- **Suicidal:** A client is in immediate danger of harming him/herself.
- **Homicidal:** A client is in immediate danger of harming someone else or property.
- **Child Abuse:** A client under the age of 18 who may be currently experiencing neglect or physical, mental, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse.
- **Dependent or Elder Abuse/Neglect**
- **Gravely Disabled:** A client is unable to care for him/herself (feed, bathe, clothe, etc)
- If any of these safety issues arise during the course of treatment, Ms. Contreras will take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of her client. These steps may include contacting the hospital for a crisis evaluation, the police, the parent/guardians or significant others, and/or DCFS.
- Should an agent of the federal government request a copy of your records, under the *Patriot Act*(Section 215) I must respond without your knowledge.

Litigation Limitation

Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters which may be of a confidential nature, it is agreed that should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you (client) nor your attorney, nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on Ms. Contreras to testify in court or at any other proceedings, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested.

Appointments

Clients are seen by appointment only. Appointments that are not cancelled 24 hours in advance will be charged and clients will be held financially responsible for payment of the session fee. Any collaborative collateral contacts or meetings made by the therapist at the request of the client and/or parent/guardian may be subject to additional fees.

Consent for Treatment

I have carefully read the Guidelines for Psychotherapy Services provided by Jennifer Contreras, MS, LMFT. I understand the information provided in the guidelines and agree to comply with them.

Signature of Client(s) or Parent/Guardians Legally Responsible for Treatment

Client or Parent/Guardian

Date

Client or Parent/Guardian

Date

