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COUNSELLING SERVICES CONTRACT

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

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 such as better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience. After the first session I will typically be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and approaches we may take, 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. Therapy involves a commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about our work together, please let me know whenever they arise. If you decide we are not a good match, I will be happy to help you try to find another mental health professional who might be a better match for you.

MEETINGS

During the first session or two, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need. If psychotherapy is begun, we might schedule one 50-minute session per week, but every-other week or other time frames can be arranged. Once an appointment is scheduled, there will be a charge unless you provide 24 hours notice of cancellation (excluding circumstances beyond your control such as sudden illness or snow storm). **My fee for same-day cancellation or no-shows is \$50. But if you're sick and might be contagious please DO cancel and I won't charge!**

PROFESSIONAL FEES

My usual fee is \$150.00 per 50-minute afternoon session, or \$175 per 50-minute evening session. In addition to appointments, I charge \$150/50 minutes for other professional services, 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 (beyond my usual notes to myself), and the time spent performing any other services you may request of me.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, especially temporary circumstances, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment below my normal rate, or some delay in payment. I accept cash or personal checks, but am not set up to take credit card payments directly. If you want to pay by credit card, that can be arranged through PayPal.

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail that I monitor fairly frequently. I will make an effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends, holidays, and vacations, but cannot guarantee that. 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 emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. I often travel for two or three weeks at a time, especially during the summer months. I will inform you

ahead of time of upcoming absences. If you anticipate that these occasional absences will be problematic for you, you may want to choose a different therapist.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. These records are confidential, subject to the legal limitations noted below.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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. 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 is being abused**, I must file a report with the appropriate child welfare agency. I am also required to report **abuse perpetrated by registered health professionals** if you identify the abuser. If I believe that a client is **threatening serious bodily harm to another**, I may be required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client **threatens clear and imminent harm to himself/herself**, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. *Most of these situations have never yet occurred in my practice.* If such a situation occurs, if possible I will discuss it with you before taking any action. Note that if sessions are conducted long distance (e.g., by telephone or Skype video call) I will be following Ontario law and the ethical code of the Canadian Psychological Association, regardless of your location. **Couples: Please do not tell me anything that is to be kept secret from your partner.**

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. 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 together.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you, but formal legal advice may sometimes be needed (e.g., if you have concerns about an impending child custody case) because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and I am not an attorney. Please note that my Privacy Policy is available at www.beckyliddle.ca or you can request a paper copy. On rare occasions an insurance company calls me to verify a claim. In those cases I will only disclose the date of the session in question and the fee. If you want me to refuse to give even that much information to an insurer, let me know.

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

Client signature

Becky Liddle

Second signature (if couple)