THE SURGERY CLINIC OF MILAN
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INFORMATION, AUTHORIZATION, & CONSENT TO TREATMENT

I am very pleased that you have selected me to be your therapist, and I am sincerely looking forward to assisting you. This document is designed to inform you about what you can expect from me regarding confidentiality, emergencies, and several other details regarding your treatment. Although providing this document is part of an ethical obligation to my profession, more importantly, it is part of my commitment to you to keep you fully informed of every part of your therapeutic experience. Please know that your relationship with me is a collaborative one, and I welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding your course of therapy at any time.

Background Information

The following information regarding my educational background and experience as a therapist is an ethical requirement of my profession. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

I am a professional counselor, life and health coach. I received my masters in social work from Southern Adventist University. I am licensed in TN. I'm a member of the Phi Alpha Honor Society. I did my training in clinical therapy at the inpatient unit at Skyridge hospital in Cleveland, TN for severe mental health and substance use disorders. Before practicing in Milan, TN I worked for three years at a health clinic in Wildwood, GA which is on the outskirts of Chattanooga, TN. I have had the privilege to speak at various events, teach students, as well as appear on an international television program called "A Multitude of Counselors" on 3ABN to discuss the important topic of mental health. I am passionate about helping others overcome obstacles and live to their highest potential.

Theoretical Views & Client Participation

Some clients need only a few sessions to achieve their goals, whereas others may require months or even years of therapy. As a client, you are in complete control, and you may end your relationship with me at any point. In order for therapy to be most successful, it is important for you to take an active role. This means working on the things you and I talk about both during and between sessions. This also means avoiding any mind-altering substances like alcohol or non-prescription drugs for at least eight hours prior to your therapy sessions. Generally, the more of yourself you are willing to invest, the greater the return.

Furthermore, it is my policy to only see clients who I believe have the capacity to resolve their own problems with my assistance. It is my intention to empower you in your growth process to the degree that you are capable of facing life's challenges in the future without me. I also don't believe in creating dependency or prolonging therapy if the therapeutic intervention does not seem to be helping. If this is the case, I will direct you to other resources that will be of assistance to you. Your personal development is my number one priority. I encourage you to let me know if you feel that terminating therapy or transferring to another therapist is necessary at any time. My goal is to facilitate healing and growth, and I am very committed to helping you in whatever way seems to produce maximum benefit.

Confidentiality & Records

Your communications with me will become part of a clinical record of treatment, and it is referred to as Protected Health Information (PHI). Your PHI will be kept in a file stored in a locked cabinet in my locked office. Additionally, I will always keep everything you say to me completely confidential, with the following exceptions: (1) you direct me to tell someone else and you sign a "Release of Information" form; (2) I determine that you are a danger to yourself or to others; (3) you report information about the abuse of a child, an elderly person, or a

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disabled individual who may require protection; or (4) I am ordered by a judge to disclose information. In the latter case, my license does provide me with the ability to uphold what is legally termed "privileged communication." Privileged communication is your right as a client to have a confidential relationship with a therapist. If for some unusual reason a judge were to order the disclosure of your private information, this order can be appealed. I cannot guarantee that the appeal will be sustained, but I will do everything in my power to keep what you say confidential. Please note that in couple's counseling, I do not agree to keep secrets. Information revealed in any context may be discussed with either partner.

Interaction With the Legal System

I understand that I will not involve or engage my therapist in any legal issues or litigation in which I am a party to at any time either during my counseling or after counseling terminates. This would include any interaction with the court system, attorneys, Guardian ad Litems, psychological evaluators, alcohol and drug evaluators, or any other contact with the legal system. In the event that I wish to have a copy of my file, and I execute a proper release, my therapist will provide me with a copy of my record. If I believe it necessary to subpoena my therapist, I would be responsible for his or her expert witness fees in the amount of $1,500.00 for one-half (1/2) day to be paid five (5) days in advance of any court appearance or deposition. Any additional time I spend over one-half (1/2) day would be billed at the rate of $375.00 per hour including travel time. I understand that if I subpoena my therapist, he or she may elect not to speak with my attorney, and a subpoena may result in my therapist withdrawing as my counselor.

Structure and Cost of Sessions

I agree to provide psychotherapy for the fee of $60 per 50 minute session, $90 per 75 minute session, and/or $108 per 90 minute therapy session. Doing psychotherapy by telephone is not ideal, and needing to talk to me between sessions may indicate that you need extra support. If this is the case, you and I will need to explore adding sessions or developing other resources you have available to help you. Telephone calls that exceed 10 minutes in duration will be billed at $1.20 per minute. The fee for each session will be due at the conclusion of the session. Cash, personal checks, Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express are acceptable for payment, and The Surgery Clinic of Milan will provide you with a receipt of payment.

Cancellation Policy

In the event that you are unable to keep an appointment, you must notify me at least 24 hours in advance. If such advance notice is not received, you will be financially responsible for the session you missed.

In Case of an Emergency

The Surgery Clinic of Milan is considered to be an outpatient facility, and I am set up to accommodate individuals who are reasonably safe and resourceful. I do not carry a beeper nor am I available at all times. If at any time this does not feel like sufficient support, please inform me, and we can discuss additional resources or transfer your case to a therapist or clinic with 24-hour availability. Generally, I will return phone calls within 24-48 hours. If you have a mental health emergency, I encourage you not to wait for a call back, but to do one or more of the following:

- Call 24-Hour Crisis Line: 1-800-372-0693
- Call State Crisis Line: 1-855-274-7471
- Call Lifeline at (800) 273-8255 (National Crisis Line)
- Visit a local Emergency Room
- Call 911

Professional Relationship

Psychotherapy is a professional service I will provide to you. Because of the nature of therapy, our relationship has to be different from most relationships. It may differ in how long it lasts, the objectives, or the topics discussed.

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It must also be limited to only the relationship of therapist and client. If you and I were to interact in any other way, we would then have a "dual relationship," which could prove to be harmful to you in the long run and is, therefore, unethical in the mental health profession. Dual relationships can set up conflicts between the therapist's interests and the client's interests, and then the client's (your) interests might not be put first. In order to offer all of my clients the best care, my judgment needs to be unselfish and purely focused on your needs. This is why your relationship with me must remain professional in nature.

You should also know that therapists are required to keep the identity of their clients confidential. For your confidentiality, I will not address you in public unless you speak to me first. Please note that these guidelines are not meant to be discourteous in any way, they are strictly for your long-term protection.

Statement Regarding Ethics, Client Welfare & Safety

I assure you that my services will be rendered in a professional manner consistent with the ethical standards of the National Association of Social Workers. If at any time you feel that I am not performing in an ethical or professional manner, I ask that you please let me know immediately. If we are unable to resolve your concern, I will provide you with information to contact the professional licensing board that governs my profession.

Due to the very nature of psychotherapy, as much as I would like to guarantee specific results regarding your therapeutic goals, I am unable to do so. However, with your participation, we will work to achieve the best possible results for you. Please also be aware that changes made in therapy may affect other people in your life. For example, an increase in your assertiveness may not always be welcomed by others. It is my intention to help you manage changes in your interpersonal relationships as they arise, but it is important for you to be aware of this possibility nonetheless.

Additionally, at times people find that they feel somewhat worse when they first start therapy before they begin to feel better. This may occur as you begin discussing certain sensitive areas of your life. However, a topic usually isn't sensitive unless it needs attention. Therefore, discovering the discomfort is actually a success. Once you and I are able to target your specific treatment needs and the particular modalities that work the best for you, help is generally on the way.

Technology Statement

In our ever-changing technological society, there are several ways we could potentially communicate and/or follow each other electronically. It is of utmost importance to me that I maintain your confidentiality, respect your boundaries, and ascertain that your relationship with me remains therapeutic and professional. Therefore, the following policies are in place:

Cell phones: It is important for you to know that cell phones may not be completely secure or confidential. However, I realize that most people have and utilize a cell phone. I may also use a cell phone to contact you. If this is a problem, please feel free to discuss this with me.

Text Messaging and Email: Both text messaging and emailing are not secure means of communication and may compromise your confidentiality. I realize that many people prefer to text and/or email because it is a quick way to convey information. **However, please know that it is my policy to utilize these means of communication strictly for appointment confirmations (nothing that could be inferred as therapy). You also need to know that I am required to keep a summary or copy of all emails and texts as part of your clinical record that address anything related to therapy.**

Faxing Medical Records:

If you authorize me (in writing) via a "Release of Information" form to send your medical records or any form of protected health information to another entity for any reason, I may need to fax that information to the authorized entity. It is my responsibility to let you know that fax machines may not be a secure form of transmitting information.

Our Agreement to Enter into a Therapeutic Relationship

I am sincerely looking forward to facilitating you on your journey toward healing and growth. If you have any questions about any part of this document, please ask.

Please initial that you have read this page _____

Please date and sign your name below indicating that you have read and understand the contents of this "Information, Authorization and Consent to Treatment" form. Your signature also indicates that you agree to the policies of your relationship with me, and you are authorizing me to begin treatment with you.

_____ _____

Client Name (Please Print) **Date**

_____

Client Signature

If Applicable:

_____ _____

Parent's or Legal Guardian's Name (Please Print) **Date**

_____

Parent's or Legal Guardian's Signature

My signature below indicates that I have discussed this form with you and have answered any questions you have regarding this information.

_____ _____

Therapist's Signature **Date**

Please initial that you have read this page _____