

CLIENT INFORMATION AND CONSENT

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services. Please read it carefully and discuss any questions you have with me.

THERAPIST

I, Dr. Mary Monroe, have a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Denver (2001) and a B.A. in Psychology from Cornell University (1993). I am a licensed clinical psychologist in the state of Colorado (license #2680).

I am an independent practitioner, and, as such, am not legally or professionally affiliated with any other mental health professional. My office colleagues and I share office space, but do not operate otherwise as a group practice.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

1. *Psychotherapy* (not applicable to assessment cases).

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist 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 the 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 significant 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. For example, one risk of marital therapy is the possibility of choosing to divorce.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of our initial meeting, 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. 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 help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional.

2. *Assessment* (not applicable to psychotherapy cases).

My professional services also include a number of different types of assessments. These include evaluations for learning disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, cognitive functioning and psychological/emotional functioning.

Evaluations also have both benefits and risks. Risks can include experiencing uncomfortable and difficult feelings, as you may be asked to answer questions that are very difficult or to remember unpleasant episodes or aspects of your life. Like psychotherapy, evaluations require active participation on your part. The benefit of these evaluations is that they often lead to a more complete understanding of the nature of one's functioning, including strengths and weaknesses, and areas that would benefit from interventions. It is the main goal of assessment to provide recommendations for interventions to you and those working with you.

Usually, an assessment begins with an interview (with the client and/or the client's parents). At this time, background data is gathered and the issues to be addressed in the evaluation are identified. Additional appointments for the actual testing are also arranged. Appointment times are also set up for feedback sessions to the client and/or his/her parents. A written report of the evaluation, including results and recommendations, is also provided as part of the evaluation. Fees for assessment approximate my hourly fee and are usually given as a sum figure prior to beginning the process that is agreed upon by both parties.

YOUR RIGHTS

As a client seeking mental health services, you have certain rights. These include your right to seek a second opinion from another therapist or your right to terminate this therapy at any time. You are also entitled to receive information regarding the methods of therapy, techniques used, the duration of therapy, if known, and the fee structure. Please ask if I do not fully provide you with this information or if you have any questions.

The practice of psychology in Colorado is regulated by the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies. The agency within the Department that has responsibility for licensed and unlicensed psychotherapists is the Department of Regulatory Agencies. Any questions or concerns regarding your mental health treatment may be directed to:

State Grievance Board
1560 Broadway, Suite 1370
Denver, Colorado 80220
Phone: 303-894-7766

THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

Your relationship with me is a professional and therapeutic relationship. In order to preserve this relationship, it is imperative that I not have any other type of relationship with you. Social and/or business relationships undermine the effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship. Gifts, bartering, and trading services are not appropriate and should not be shared between us. Additionally, sexual intimacy is never appropriate in a therapeutic relationship. Any circumstances of sexual intimacy within a therapeutic relationship should be reported to the grievance board listed above.

MEETINGS

After our first meeting, 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 50-minute session per week at a time we agree on. Some clients choose to attend meetings more or less frequently, depending on need. There is no charge for appointments cancelled 24 hours in advance of the scheduled time. Appointments cancelled less than 24 hours ahead of time are charged full fee unless in case of an emergency.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Psychotherapy: Your fee per 50-minute session is _____. This fee should be paid on the day of your session unless other billing arrangements have been made. *Assessment:* Your fee for the complete evaluation is _____. One-half of the payment for an assessment is expected during the first phase of the evaluation and the remainder is due at the end of the evaluation.

I will assist you in processing claims for your insurance by providing the necessary documentation. It is your responsibility, however, to pursue the claim itself. 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 15 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 may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge a forensic fee for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

Health insurance companies may provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. It is important for you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers so that you know what to expect.

You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. I will also provide you with whatever information I can based on my experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, I will be willing to call the company on your behalf.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. "Managed Health Care" plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some clients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. If requested, I will provide you with a copy of any report I submit.

Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end our sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for services yourself to avoid the problems described above.

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am often in my office, I 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 within 24 hours, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you will be available. **Please be informed that I do not carry a pager and I do not provide 24-hour services in case of an emergency.** If you feel that you may require emergency contact and would prefer that contact to occur with a regular provider, you will want to reconsider working with a provider who is able to be available at all times. If this is your choice, please let me know and I will provide you with the names of therapists who provide 24-hour care. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, you can call your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call.

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 might be misinterpreted by 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.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, law protects the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychologist, and I can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. However, 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 have reason to 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, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm himself/herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. If such a situation occurs in your treatment, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

Additionally, I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I always maintain the confidentiality of the client's identity.

Please note that cellular phone and e-mail communications are vulnerable to breaches of confidentiality due to their modes of information transmission.

Please feel free to voice any and all questions or concerns that you might have, either in response to this form or at any time during our work together. I look forward to working with you.

AGREEMENT

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 Name(s) (Print) Client Signature(s) (If 15 or Older) Date

Parent(s) Name(s) (Print) Parent Signature(s) Date