

Pathway Center for Psychotherapy

OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT

For Robert P. Roney, D. Min.

And those under supervision of Dr. Roney

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychotherapist and patient and the particular problems you will 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 have experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have 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.

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 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 any questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise.

MEETINGS

Therapy sessions are scheduled, as much as possible, for your convenience. Therefore, cancellations should be made at least 24 hours in advance or you will be billed for the session.

Therapy sessions will be 50 minute in length unless otherwise agreed upon by you and your therapist.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Hourly fees depend upon which psychotherapist is treating you. In addition to regular appointments, there may be other charges for professional services you may need. Other services may include report writing, telephone conversations lasting more than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and 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 or legal involvement, I charge \$150 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

Payment for services are due at the time they are rendered unless prior arrangements are agreed upon with your therapist. If you have insurance coverage that will apply to the cost of your therapy, your therapist will cooperate in providing any appropriate information and signatures required.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. (If such legal action is necessary, its cost will be included in the claim.) In most patient's treatment is his/her name, address, and any phone numbers that you can be reached at, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually 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 very important that **you** find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

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. Of course I will 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 after you have made the initial call.

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 patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. (Some managed-care plans will not allow me to provide services to you once your benefits end. If this is the case, I will do my best to find another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy.)

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am usually in my office between 9 AM and 5 PM, I will not answer the phone when I am with a client. When I am unavailable, my telephone is

answered by voice mail, office manager, or one of my colleagues. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make, with the exception of weekends, and holiday. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you are available. 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. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless I believe that seeing them would be emotionally damaging, in which case I will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. (I am sometimes willing to conduct a review meeting without charge.) Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent in preparing information requests.

Some of the records may be kept in electronic form in a password-protected, HIPPA-compliant database secured by an online medical records company contracted specifically for this purpose. If yours will be in an electronic form, I will use extreme caution to avoid disclosing unnecessary details in the records; I have sole access to the records. I will back up the records to a secured drive using industry-standard security measures regularly to avoid loss of information. In the event that the company suffers a breach of security it is their responsibility to do everything within their power to notify their customers. I, in turn, will inform you of the extent of the breach. Any records, notes, payment information or appointments kept in my office are secured under double locks. I also use a confidential voice mail that is password protected. If you have any questions regarding the measures I take to maintain confidentiality, please bring it to my attention in the first session. Should a breach in confidentiality occur, we will discuss the matter and work together toward a plan to remedy the situation.

MINORS

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is my policy to request an agreement from parents that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless I feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, I will notify them of my concern. I will also provide them with a summary of your treatment when it is complete. Before giving them any information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections you may have with what I am prepared to discuss.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychotherapist 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 issue demands 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 patient'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 believe that a patient 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 patient. If the patient 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.

These situations have rarely occurred in my practice. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

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 patient. 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 at our next meeting. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and I am not an attorney.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship. Due to the new HIPPA laws and regulations, it is now necessary to have an expiration date on this contract. This contract will expire on December 31, 2018.

Patient

Therapist

Date