



Informed Consent Form

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

Nature of Psychological Services: Psychotherapy is not easily described, as its character depends on the personalities of both the psychotherapist and client(s), and the particular problems you bring in. As a group of clinicians, we may use many different methods of practice, most of which call for a very active effort on your part—both in 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 been shown to improve the lives of many people who engage in it—leading to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. Each person's experience is unique, and as such, there can be no guarantees of what you yourself will experience.

Our first few (2-4) sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of this evaluation, we will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work together will entail, and we can both decide whether or not your particular therapist is the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If not, you may request or we may offer you referrals for other professional clinicians within or beyond our practice.

Once psychotherapy has begun, we will usually schedule regular sessions together. Typically, therapy sessions are scheduled once a week for 45-50 minutes, but some situations may require more (or less) frequent or longer sessions. Determining when to end therapy generally is a mutual decision, but is likely to be considered when therapy goals have been met, when a therapist or client feels psychotherapy does not appear to be helping the client, when a client's financial status or insurance changes (or if payment ceases), or when clients repeatedly miss appointments.

Professional Fees: Our fees reflect our specialized training and experience. Unless arranged in advance or dictated by insurance agreements, our fees for typical sessions are as follows: Initial Evaluation (\$180); Individual Psychotherapy (\$150); Couples Psychotherapy (\$180). Payment is due at the time of service unless you have insurance which requires a different arrangement. For scheduled therapy sessions, you will be expected to provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation or be personally responsible for a \$100 fee (unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control). Additional billing is handled by Michelle Marotta at MedOptions, Inc.; she can be reached at (847) 458-1253.

Insurance Considerations: Please consider very carefully whether or not to use health insurance benefits to pay for psychological services. While we strongly support the full and equal inclusion of mental health services in healthcare coverage, we are sadly aware of instances in which psychiatric diagnosis and treatment have been used to deny or limit the availability of life insurance, health insurance, or employment. Health information privacy regulations (HIPAA) generally offer inadequate protection in such cases, especially when insured by small or self-insured employers.

For couples therapy specifically, insurance companies (if they cover the service at all) require that one of the partners be identified as the "patient" and given a diagnosis that passes their criteria for

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"medical necessity" of care—minimally, an adjustment disorder. Given even the remote possibility of future legal involvement (divorce or child custody), in which diagnosis or treatment might be used against the identified "patient," we tend to encourage couples to forego using insurance if possible.

That said, you should investigate how your insurance policy handles mental health services. Some insurance policies make use of managed care companies for mental health, some of which restrict treatment and require significant clinical information to determine what they will and will not cover. We will help you receive benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (*not* your insurance company) are responsible for all fees.

Contact with Therapists: Given our clinical schedules, we are often not immediately available by phone. Our voicemail system handles calls 24 hours a day, but we are only notified of messages during weekday business hours from 8:00 to 5:00. Check with your therapist directly, as each of us has different policies concerning weekend or evening messages, but we try to return calls within a reasonable amount of time. If you are unable to reach your therapist in an emergency, and feel that you can't wait for a return call, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

We do maintain email addresses for all our therapists; however, we discourage the use of email for anything other than scheduling arrangements due to the uncertainty of ensuring the security of our communications. For similar reasons, our therapists do not respond to invitations from clients to connect via online social networking sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn.

Confidentiality: In general, the privacy of all communications between psychotherapists and clients is protected by law; this means that we can only release information about our work together with your written permission (we often ask for such permission to maintain contact with other professionals involved in your care). However, there are a few important exceptions.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent your therapist 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 a therapist's testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it. There are also situations in which we are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if it means revealing some information about a client's treatment. For example, if we believe that a child or elderly person is being abused, we may be required to contact the appropriate state agency. If we believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another person, we may be required to take protective actions—which may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. Likewise, if a client threatens to harm him- or herself, we may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him or her, or to contact family members, psychiatrists, or others who can help provide protection. These situations rarely occur in our practice, but if this happens to occur with you, we will make every effort to discuss it with you before taking action.

In addition, we may occasionally find it helpful to consult with one another or with other professionals, in order to improve our treatment practices. During a consultation, we make efforts to avoid revealing the identity of our clients and expect the same of any consultants.

Professional Records: The laws and standards of our profession require that we keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records; however, some records can be unsettling to untrained readers, so we recommend that you review them in the presence of your therapist.

Signature: Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship. For more information, contact Dr. Lisa Campbell at (847) 318-8200 or 1400 Renaissance Drive, Suite 401, Park Ridge, IL 60068.

Client signature

POA/guardian signature, if applicable

Date