



& associates inc.

COUPLES THERAPY SERVICES AGREEMENT

Confidentiality

In providing you with psychological services such as assessment and therapy, it is very important that you can speak openly with your therapist in order to benefit from the service. To encourage this openness, your therapist agrees to keep the information that you share with them confidential. This means that information shared in the course of an assessment or therapy will not be shared with anyone without your consent. To protect the safety of vulnerable persons or your own safety, and in certain other unusual circumstances, however, an exception will be made to this confidentiality agreement. The following situations may require your therapist to share pertinent information with another party:

1. If you present a risk of safety to yourself or others, this may be reported to others who can ensure or maintain your safety or the safety of others.
2. If you disclose knowledge that yourself or another person under the age of 19, an elderly person, or any other vulnerable person may be at risk of harm (e.g., physical, verbal, sexual abuse or neglect), this will be reported to the appropriate Child or Adult Welfare agency.
3. As it concerns the release of information from your couples' therapy file to a third party, your therapist will require the consent of both parties prior to releasing any information. In some situations, for example, the consent of both parties will be needed to release limited information to third party payers for the coverage of fees for service. When this is the case, your therapist will review the policies of the third-party payer and the required information with both of you prior to proceeding with releasing the information.
4. If you make an ethical or legal complaint against your therapist, they are not bound to keep information related to the complaint confidential. This is to allow them to explain their behavior in the appropriate legal forum.
5. If a court judge subpoenas your file, or as otherwise required by law.

Couples' therapy is for therapeutic purposes. Should legal proceedings evolve between partners, it is understood that your therapist will not testify for or against either party or provide records in a court action except as required by law.

With regards specifically to couples' therapy, there are times when individuals may make comments, ask questions, or share information that is relevant to the couples' therapy work with their therapist outside of conjoint sessions. Depending on the circumstances of this information, your therapist may be ethically, but not legally, obligated to seek that it be shared with your therapy partner. While this information will not be shared without discussion and permission, it should be noted that, when permission is not granted for the sharing of pertinent information, it is possible that the efficacy of couples' therapy will be negatively affected. Should there be concerns about the overall benefit of couples' therapy under these circumstances, it will be at the therapist's discretion whether to continue with couples' therapy and the decision will be discussed with the couple.

Other information about our psychological services

1. Your therapist is professionally required to keep records of their contact with you. These records will be kept in the LHA Inc. practice management software. This software complies with provincial and federal privacy standards

for health information. Technical support and administrative staff may be able to view your information if the need arises. These staff members have signed confidentiality agreements and will not access this information unless necessary for administrative or IT support functions.

2. Your full name, address, phone number, email address, emergency contact information, and family physician's name will also be stored in the LHA Inc. practice management software.
3. Neither the therapist nor clients will take audio or video recording of sessions without written consent from all parties.
4. There is a fee for private mental health services, as these are not covered by government health plans. The fees depend on your therapist's profession, and are set to be at or slightly under the recommended rates set out by their various associations. The fee for a Psychologist is \$190, a Social Worker \$160, and an Occupational Therapist, \$150. This fee will be billed directly to you. You will have to check with your health insurance plan to ensure it is covered, and if it is, will need to submit it for reimbursement yourself.
5. At least 24 business hours' cancellation notice is required to avoid charges for missed appointments. Monday appointments must be cancelled by 12:00 pm noon on Friday, and appointments scheduled on the first day following a holiday must be cancelled by 12:00 pm noon on the last business day before the holiday. Appointments that are not cancelled within policy guidelines will incur a charge equivalent to the scheduled session's full fee. Exceptions can be made for extenuating circumstances, at your therapist's discretion. Outstanding balances must be paid in full prior to rescheduling.
6. Your therapist cannot direct bill insurance companies. Therefore, you will be expected to pay for the session upon receipt of the service and may send in the receipts to receive your reimbursement from your insurance company.
7. Clients who require third party funding for group services must have secured funding in writing prior to the commencement of the program. Failure to do so will result in the full-service fees being the sole responsibility of the client due immediately upon notice by Lesley Hartman & Associates Inc.
8. Your therapist books appointments on specified days. Evening hours may be limited. This means you may not always get your first choice of appointment times.
9. Your therapist is only available on a limited basis by telephone between appointments, and not for emergencies. Phone calls under 15 minutes in length will not be billed, however longer phone calls will be considered phone counseling and will be billed at the regular rate. Your therapist will discuss other options for you to access immediate assistance in the case of an emergency.
10. Although we take precautions to minimize risk of privacy breaches through our office email, we cannot eliminate that risk. Please be aware that email communication can be intercepted in transmission or misdirected. Consider communicating any sensitive information by telephone, fax, or mail.

Telehealth sessions

In some situations, you and your therapist may decide to have your sessions via telehealth (i.e. a secure online platform, or on the telephone). There are potential benefits and risks to telehealth services that are different from in-person sessions (e.g., emails are not secure, it may make it easier for you to access if you live far from our office, etc.) Prior to starting telehealth services, you agree to the following:

- The confidentiality parameters set out above still apply for telehealth services. Your therapist will take all possible steps to ensure privacy and confidentiality are preserved.
 - All online video services will be provided using secure platforms specialized for telehealth.

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- Your therapist will discuss the video-conferencing platform selected for your virtual sessions, and will explain how to use it before proceeding. If you choose to proceed that indicates your consent to the use of the selected platform.
 - For online sessions, you need to use a webcam or smartphone during the session.
 - Your therapist will not record telehealth sessions without your permission and the permission of all person(s) involved (for instance, both couples for couples' therapy; or other family members for family therapy).
 - Please note that by signing this agreement, you are also agreeing to not record sessions unless it has been discussed with your therapist in advance.
 - Your therapist will provide you telehealth sessions from a confidential and private space.
 - It is important that you as the client are also in a quiet, private space that is free of distractions (including cell phone or other devices). Please ensure that no one else is in the room with you while we are in session, unless they are a participant in the session. Please ensure all doors are closed. Headphones, if you have them, are recommended to improve privacy for video sessions.
 - Please note that for telephone therapy, landlines are more secure than smartphones, and should be used when possible.
 - Please use a secure internet connection rather than a public or free Wi-Fi.
 - To minimize the possibility of someone impersonating you, your therapist will use some form of coded identification in cases where visual verification of your identity is not possible.
- For online therapy, please provide a phone number where you can be reached to restart the session or to reschedule it, in the event of technical problems. If the telecounseling (online) service is interrupted, your therapist will attempt to reach you immediately by telephone at least twice, at a number you have provided and with your consent to leave a voicemail if necessary. If you don't respond within 15 minutes of the first call, your therapist will assume you have left the session, and you will be billed at the full rate of your session. If the service is interrupted within 15 minutes of its' scheduled end, your therapist will attempt to contact you by telephone, but if they don't reach you right away, you will be billed for the full session.
 - If you need to cancel or change your tele-appointment, please notify your therapist in advance by phone or email as is normally required, or you will be charged for the missed session.
 - Please provide your therapist information about your location at the time of your session, and at least one emergency contact, in the event of a crisis situation.
 - Please confirm with your insurance company that the telehealth sessions will be reimbursed; if they are not reimbursed, you are responsible for payment.
 - Your therapist may determine that due to certain circumstances, telehealth is not appropriate and you need to resume in-person sessions. Likewise, due to public health and our licensing guidelines, your therapist may be unable to provide in-person sessions at certain times.
 - Your therapist cannot provide you therapy via email or text messaging. However, at times they may be able to provide brief coaching. Please discuss this with your therapist, as each therapist has their own parameters regarding coaching emails or text messages.
 - Keep in mind that emails and text messages are printed off and stored in your file.
 - Miscommunication can happen in telepsychology services. Please bring up any concerns that you may have so that you can work through these together with your therapist.

I have read the above information and/or it has been reviewed with me. I understand the limits of confidentiality and the terms of receiving these psychological services. I accept them and consent to psychological services.

Client Signature: _____

Last Updated: 28-Apr-21

Client Signature:

Therapist Signature:

Date:
