

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF TREATMENT EXPLAINED

Please read the following document with care and make a note of any questions you may have. I will be happy to discuss anything you are unsure of at our next meeting. If you wish to revoke the contract at any time, you can do so simply by writing to me.

### 1 PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY CONSULTATIONS

In the initial consultation, we will aim to discuss the issues you are concerned about and will consider the feasibility of a diagnosis, if any. It usually takes a couple of sessions to be able to discuss all the issues and expectations and to establish a treatment plan. At any time, do not hesitate to ask questions if you are not clear about any information you are provided with.

### 2 CONFIDENTIALITY

Your treatment will entail discussing some very intimate things with your psychologist, such as your thoughts, feelings, and actions. To some extent, my ability to help you will depend on how open you are about yourself during our meetings. Anything that you do disclose will remain confidential. It is important that during your discussions, you feel you can talk openly and that your right to privacy is protected. This generally means that you or your case cannot be discussed with any third parties without your consent. Please note that this includes relatives, partners and/or spouses even if they are paying for your treatment.

Records: Psychologists are required to keep records of your sessions. These tend to be brief and include information such as the dates you met, the topics covered and any problems or goals you have. These are just to document your meetings and are protected under the strictest of privacy rules. Records of charges, payments, diagnoses, and any other sensitive information are kept on your practitioner's computer and is password protected.

Audio-recording: In some instances, e.g. hypnotherapy, it is also useful for sessions to be audio-recorded but this will not be done without your prior consent. Any audio-recordings are kept securely on a recording device which is password protected and are completely erased when your treatment is complete.

2.1 Exceptions to confidentiality: There are some situations that may arise where confidentiality-codes can be broken. Although these situations **are rare**, you should be made aware of what they are:

#### 2.1.1 Potential for harm

- If you threaten to harm another person, your practitioner is required by law to protect anyone they feel may be in danger. This could include contacting the person or people who have been threatened and, in some cases, notifying the police.

- Likewise, if you threaten to cause severe harm to yourself, and your practitioner believes your threat to be serious, then he/she is ethically required to protect you in any way they see fit. In such situations, interventions may involve talking to you about going to a hospital, or having you placed in a hospital without your permission. They may also need to call a crisis team or, in some cases, the police.
- If any child, elderly person, or incompetent person is at risk from abuse or neglect, the law requires me to report this to the appropriate body. Laws such as these are in force to protect any dependable persons from being physically hurt.

### 2.1.2 Forensic work

**Please note that I do not do forensic work so if you are wanting to see a psychologist as part of a legal process, you need to consult with someone who has expertise in this field.**

- If you have been ordered or referred by a court for psychotherapy or an evaluation of your mental state, the court will require some form of report from your practitioner. Therefore, it is in your best interests to provide your psychologist with any court letters or orders so they can determine exactly what the court wants to know. Of course, you have the right to only disclose information you feel necessary; however, in some cases, they will be required to reveal treatment plans or progress and results' reports to the court.
- If you are involved in a lawsuit or administrative procedure, e.g. an Employment Tribunal, you may wish to tell the court about your psychological issues, especially if they could help your case. However, if you do this, please be aware that we may not be able to keep your records or information about your therapy private in court.
- If I receive a subpoena or a court order requesting your records, I will be required to provide any relevant information.

### 2.1.3 Disclosure for medical purposes

a) Medical schemes: If you are planning for your health insurance to cover the costs of your psychotherapy expenses, you will be asked to sign a consent form enabling me to disclose certain information to the medical aid. Generally, medical aids require us to submit a diagnosis, treatment plan and treatment summary. On some occasions, they may even request progress reports. Please take into consideration that once a scheme requests this information, it is no longer in your practitioner's control who sees it. Insurance companies state that they will keep the information confidential, but I cannot assure you that they will. However, prior to sending any information to any third parties, I will discuss with you what has been detailed. It is completely up to you what information is released, but please note if you do not release the information required most companies won't fund your treatment.

- b) Disclosure to other medical practitioners /psychologists: To provide you with the best treatments, I may need to seek advice from other mental health professionals. If it is necessary to discuss your case with a clinical supervisor or colleague to help you, this will be done with your best interests in mind. Your identity will always be kept confidential. Furthermore, the content of what we discuss will also be treated with the same level of confidentiality and the same exceptions to confidentiality will apply to other professionals as well.
- Your patient records are confidential within the practice and will not be shared with other parties without your prior permission. Generally, it is helpful to keep your GP informed of your treatment and for us to be able to contact you if we need to. However, this is a private service and you have the right to decline information sharing with your GP. When medication is prescribed it's best we update your GP about this unless you can come up with an alternative plan with your Psychiatrist. To do this we will require your consent as set out below.
  - If you agree, a letter may be sent by email to your GP or another referring specialist with an outline of your condition, diagnosis and treatment recommended. During your treatment, it may be helpful for your GP to be informed about factors relating to your mental health or treatment. It may also be necessary for me to get details of your medical history from your GP. In these cases, I will ask for your permission again before doing so.

### 3 FEES

I offer treatment at the rates determined by the medical schemes. The initial assessment session lasts for roughly an hour and thereafter sessions are 50 minutes or unless otherwise agreed. Treatment sessions are also the same fee. If your sessions are longer than this, the basic fee could change on a pro-rata basis. Treatment prices usually increase annually due to inflation and increased living costs and fees are adjusted at the beginning of the new calendar year.

Occasionally I may be required to attend a meeting on your behalf or write a report. If this occurs, the same hourly rate will be charged on a prorated basis.

### 4 PAYMENT

Payment must be made on time, in full, and without any deduction, set off or counterclaim. If an account is outstanding, we will refer the matter to our debt collection agents, which will incur a surcharge of 15% of the debt, plus VAT at the prevailing rate. You agree that you will be legally liable to pay that surcharge, and that payment of the same can be enforced against you in court. You also agree to pay interest at the relevant reference rate, which interest is payable both after and before any judgment of the court and continues to accrue.

## 5 MEDICAL INSURANCE

- 5.1 If you are planning to file a claim for your psychotherapy sessions with your insurance company, you must check your coverage terms with your provider prior to entering this contract. Please do not assume that all mental health services are covered. Please monitor how many sessions your insurance company will cover throughout your treatment. I am not responsible for monitoring whether your sessions are covered by your insurance company. If you attend sessions which are not covered by your insurance company, you will be responsible for paying for these sessions.
- 5.2 You should also note that some schemes will require pre-authorisation from us before they help to cover the costs of any services required.
- 5.3 In the instance that your insurance coverage runs out before the treatment is complete, we can discuss ways of trying to complete our work together regardless. However, if you cannot afford my fees, and we cannot find any reduced slots available, I will try to refer you to an appropriate clinic.

## 6 MISSED APPOINTMENTS

Please note that an appointment is considered confirmed once verbally agreed with the practitioner. If you cannot attend a planned appointment, please call or email me (0833056929 / drcathcpractice@gmail.com) to notify me as soon as possible. If you simply fail to show up for a scheduled appointment, or do not cancel 24 hours in advance, the full fee will still apply. Please take into consideration that insurers will not cover you for any missed appointments and you will be responsible for the full fee if you were unable to notify me a full 24 hours prior.

## 7 CONTACTING YOU

If I need to contact you, I or my admin assistant team will try to speak to you personally over the phone. If this is not possible, we will leave a message by phone or email you. We will not speak to anyone else about your treatment without your permission.

## 8 COMPLAINTS

Although it rarely happens, a situation may arise in which you feel dissatisfied with my service or feel treated unfairly or unprofessionally. I am totally committed to high ethical standards and in the event of any difficulties arising expect for these to be resolved as speedily as possible. Consequently, if you have a grievance, accept that you will:

- Raise it with me in person or if this is too difficult, in writing
  - Give me reasonable time to respond, either in person or in writing
  - If we fail to settle the matter, meet with a neutral mediator
- If all these steps fail, it will be reasonable that you pursue the matter further with the necessary authorities (e.g. The Psychology Board).

## 9 ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CONSENT

By signing the accompanying contract form or by attending your sessions you are acknowledging that:

- You understand and agree to abide by the policies detailed in this treatment contract;
- We have discussed and clarified any questions you may have about this document.
- By attending the appointments, you are accepting the client contract terms.