

Gerald Walsh Consultation & Counselling Services

**Gerald Walsh MSW/RSW
Clinical Counsellor/Psychotherapist**

Agreement for Clinical Social Work - Therapy Services

**Provided by Gerald Walsh MSW, RSW
Registered Social Worker, No: 829557**

The purpose of this document is to share some important information, which guides my practice. Please take some time to read through this document and feel free to ask any questions about the content for clarification. This document will outline the risks and responsibilities as we enter a therapist/client relationship. As a client in therapy, you have certain rights and limitations. As a therapist, I have corresponding responsibilities to you. Your signature on this document represents an agreement for counselling under the terms noted. A parent signature is required for any child under the age of 16 years old.

My Responsibilities as your Therapist:

Confidentiality

You have the right to confidentiality. Confidentiality means that information will be communicated or disclosed to others only with your written consent. Confidentiality includes the following components.

- I cannot divulge information regarding my assessment of the case or information discussed in your counselling session without your written permission/consent.
- I cannot divulge that you are participating in counselling without your written permission/consent.
- You may request for me to share information with whomever you provide consent for, and you can change your mind and revoke that permission at any time.
- Please be aware that if you choose to communicate by email, that confidentiality and privacy cannot be secured. Any email I receive from you, and any responses that I send to you, will be kept in your personal electronic file. Access to these emails or correspondence can not be secured outside of my possession.

There are limits to confidentiality. The exceptions include the following.

- Knowledge or suspicion of abuse or neglect to a child or vulnerable adult
- Declared intent to seriously harm oneself or another
- A court order or subpoena to release a file
- Clinical supervision or consultation using first name(s) only
- A need to legally defend myself against a complaint

Should there be a risk to self or others, referral or reporting to child welfare and or the police may be required.

Your Records and Record Keeping Procedures

All information gathered and recorded, for the purpose of providing quality service, is stored securely and remains confidential. Both the Personal Health Information Protection Act (2004) and professional practice standards of the College of Social Work govern my record keeping practices and disclosure policies. Completing a case summary or report required review of extensive notes to ensure accuracy. In the event you do not want notes taken, I can only provide information on attendance in counselling. Any objection to the taking of notes requires a written direction at the start of counselling.

Cancellation or Termination of Therapy:

Clients can disengage or terminate counselling at any time. I also can terminate counselling should the client demonstrate with aggressive or violent behavior or it is mutually decided that counselling is no longer in the best interest of the client or the needs are outside of the expertise of the therapist.

YOUR RIGHTS:

You have the right to ask questions about anything that happens in session or impacts therapy. After initiating counselling, clients can come to the conclusion that the relationship is not working. I am open to problem solving and to accepting suggestions and engaging in discussions should this occur. If you decide that I am not the right therapist for you, I can refer you to another professional upon your request.

You can ask me about my education, training or experience. It is important that you feel comfortable and speak openly in sessions. Therapy is a process and may take a few sessions to establish a level of comfort. You have a right to access your files at any time.

Responsibilities of the Client:

CONTACTING ME:

I am often not available by phone. The best form of communication is through email. I will make every effort to return your email within a 48 hour period as most sessions will be offered on weekends and evenings. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide prior notice so that other arrangements can be made if required. Emails should be basic and for the purpose of scheduling or cancelling sessions. Clients are discouraged from emailing narratives or crisis situations as I am often unavailable to respond in a timely manner.

EMERGENCIES:

In case of emergency, please call 911, your family physician, COAST (1-877-825-9011), or visit the local hospital emergency department.

INSURANCE COVERAGE:

Counselling services are often covered by extended health insurance plans. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) may cover Social Work and counselling services. Please check with your insurance company accordingly. The processing of insurance claims is your responsibility.

PROFESSIONAL FEES AND PAYMENT:

Fees are payable at the end of each session by cheque or e-transfer. A receipt will be provided for insurance or income tax purposes. Fees at 135.00 per 50 minute session. Under certain circumstances I reserve the right to adjust fees should an individual's insurance coverage be maximized. Any fee adjustments will be agreed upon and communicated in writing.

CANCELLED OR MISSED SESSIONS:

Due to the nature of the counselling services provided and the involvement of clients who may be involved with the court, probation services or child welfare, there is limited space to accept and accommodate new clients. To help schedule my time and provide timely services to others, it is appreciated that should you need to cancel or reschedule a session you contact me 48 hours in advance. In the case of an emergency an email is required 2 hours in advance of any emergency cancellation. There will be no fee required for 1 emergency missed session. The full counselling fee will be charged for any and all subsequent missed sessions, unless scheduled 48 hours in advance. Should a client miss or cancel more than two sessions, the counselling relationship can be terminated by the therapist.

USE OF TELE COUNSELLING AND/OR VIDEO COUNSELLING SERVICES:

While sessions may be in person, tele counselling is an alternative. Tele counselling and/or video counselling involves the use of technological applications to enable therapists to provide services remotely. The information set out below is provided to help you understand the conditions and procedures associated with VIRTUAL counselling sessions so that you can make an informed decision about participating in either of these types of counselling appointments.

As a condition of counselling, the client has to ensure that they are private and in a safe and quiet place at the time of the session to reduce distractions and ensure confidentiality.

The client is also required to ensure the maintenance of any computer, tablet or mobile device used during sessions. This includes adequately power supply and/or that you have access to a nearby charger.

In the event of disruption or disconnection, I will attempt to reconnect virtually or by contacting you at the phone number you provided on the intake form. Due to possible internet issues and weather disruptions, sessions may have to be offered by telephone on occasion.

RISKS OF VIRTUAL THERAPY

As a client, you should be aware that there are some limitations and risks associated with VIRTUAL therapy. These include, but are not limited to:

Possible misunderstandings:

With VIRTUAL therapy, body language is harder to observe so non-verbal cues may be difficult to discern. Sometimes the quality of the connection may be poor, choppy or inconsistent; or the location you are in when meeting with your therapist may cause distractions. Both therapist and client should stop and ask for clarification if you believe a misunderstanding has occurred.

Privacy/confidentiality: Virtual Therapies used are in compliance with PHIPA, PIPEDA, HIPPA and HITECH guidelines.

Triggered feelings: Counselling is emotionally difficult work. Often clients are confronted with realities that are hard to accept. Many clients feel helpless, insecure and vulnerable when discussing personal issues that can be embarrassing or stigmatizing. I understand these feelings and will do everything possible to respond in a kind and normalizing manner. Clients however should be prepared that they may feel worse after initiating counselling before starting to feel better. Often it can take three or four sessions to see improvements. Often change can be slow, clients should expect a minimum of four sessions before change is noticeable.

SESSIONS by Psychology Today:

Most sessions will be in person or on the phone, in the event we use another platform, client should be familiar with their requirements to connect.

Before meeting with your therapist, please ensure your computer/tablet/cell phone is capable of running the program. Your device may need to have Chrome or Firefox downloaded in order for the program to work. Prior to a scheduled session I will send a link to your email address. Simply click on the link to join and you will be placed directly in the counselling waiting room. Please join the waiting room 15 minutes prior to your first session and advise me if there are any complications via email or telephone.

VIRTUAL VIDEO (SESSIONS) CONFIDENTIALITY:

We will be using Sessions as an online software to conduct VIRTUAL VIDEO sessions. While SESSIONS by Psychology Today is a trusted tool and is PHIPA, PIPEDA, HIPPA and HITECH compliant, there are always risks associated with the use of online software due to the nature of cyber security. By signing this form, you acknowledge that you are aware of these risks, and waive Gerald Walsh of responsibility in the event a breach occurs.

FINANCIAL AGREEMENT & DISCLOSURE

In compliance with ethics and professional standards of practice, I am required to disclose all billing and financial information regarding therapy services.

Please review the following:

My current rate for providing Individual Counselling and Psychotherapy services is \$135.00 per hour, unless an alternative amount has been agreed upon. A therapeutic hour is considered 50 minutes.

- Services will be paid at the end of each session by cheque or e-transfer.
- Receipts will be provided each session for insurance and income tax purposes.
- You are fully responsible for all aspects of extended health care insurance benefits and/or other forms of financial reimbursement available to you.
- The cost of providing or completing written reports and/or documents will be negotiated prior to the report or documents being written or completed. Fees for report writing are extra. Every effort will be made to complete a counselling report within the 50 minutes regular session routinely provided.

EMAIL & TEXT MESSAGING COMMUNICATION

I will occasionally send and receive email and messages from clients, usually when initiated by the client. I am responsible for the security of emails and correspondence I send/receive. I can not be responsible for any breach of privacy, confidentiality, or security for emails and correspondence a client has in their possession.

SIGNATURES VERIFYING THE AGREEMENT

I _____ have had an opportunity to ask questions and/or seek any clarification and, I am satisfied with the responses I have received to my questions and/or clarifications.

Printed Name (Client): _____

Signature (Client): _____

Date: _____

Signature (Therapist): _____

Date: _____

Gerald Walsh MSW, RSW.

