



## INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR OUTPATIENT SERVICES

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

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

There are different methods that I may use to deal with the challenges you wish to address. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will be expected to work on things discussed during our sessions while you are at home, including homework assignments. Because therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, therapy often leads to improved relationships, problem-solving, and significant reduction in distress.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. I will be able to offer you some suggestions of what our work will include and a treatment plan, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should consider this information, along with your comfort level of working with me. If either of us feels that I am not the right therapist for you, I will provide referrals to other practitioners who are better suited to help you.

Therapy involves a commitment of time, money, and energy, so it is important to find the right fit. If you have questions about my therapeutic style, I encourage you to discuss them whenever they arise.

### MEETINGS

I normally conduct an evaluation that will last from one to three sessions. During this time, we can decide together if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If we agree to begin psychotherapy, I usually schedule one [45/50-minute] session per week, at a time we will agree on together, although some sessions may be more frequent.

Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 48 hours advance notice of cancellation. An exception is if we both agree that you were unable to

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attend due to circumstances beyond your control, in which case I will find another time to reschedule the appointment.

Due to the rising cost 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 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. Though a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some clients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. Please note, some managed-care plans will not allow me to provide services to you once your benefits end. If that is the case, I will try to assist you in finding another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require that I provide them with your clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I have to provide additional clinical information, such as treatment plans, progress notes or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. I will provide you with a copy of any records I submit, if you request it. You understand that, by using your insurance, you authorize me to release such information to your insurance company. I will try to keep that information limited to the minimum necessary.

Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we can discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available, and what will happen if your benefits run out before you feel ready to end our sessions.

## **CONTACTING ME**

I am often not immediately available by telephone. Though I am usually in my office between 9 AM and 7 PM, I will not answer the phone when I am with a client. When I am available, my telephone is answered by my answering machine/voice mail that I monitor frequently. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays.

If you are difficult to reach because of your schedule, please inform me of times you will be available. **If you are unable to reach me and feel that it is an emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room.** If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact in my absence, if necessary.

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## **PROFESSIONAL FEES**

My hourly rate is \$125.00. If we meet more than the usual time, I will charge accordingly. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this same hourly rate for other professional services you may need, though I will prorate the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. (Other professional services may include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of treatment summaries, and the 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 any professional time I spend on your legal matter, even if the request comes from another party. I charge \$250.00 per hour for professional services that I am asked or required to perform related to your legal matter. I also charge a copying fee of \$.25 per page for records requests.

## **BILLING AND PAYMENTS**

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage that requires another arrangement. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

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 costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information I will release regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the dates, times and nature of services provided, and the amount due.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychologist 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. A judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it, and I must comply with that court order. 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

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information about a client's treatment. For example, if I believe that a child, elderly person or disabled person is being abused or has been abused, I must make a report to the appropriate state agency.

If I believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I may be required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client 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. If a similar situation occurs in the course of our work together, I will attempt 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 client. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. Ordinarily, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I believe that is important to our work together.

Although this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality is intended to inform you about potential issues that could arise, 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 and provide clarification when possible. However, if you need specific clarification or advice that I am unable to provide, formal legal advice may be needed. The laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and I am not an attorney. If you request, I will provide you with relevant portions or summaries of the state laws regarding these issues.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Client Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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