

MY POLICIES / CONSENT FOR TREATMENT - COUPLES

Why Psychotherapy?

People seek out psychotherapy when there is something in their lives making them unhappy. The unhappiness could be an annoying or troubling thought, feeling or behavior; disappointments or conflicts in a love relationship; a disturbance in mood or self esteem; or a problem with children or a job. Sometimes a particular personality trait makes it hard to make or keep friends, leading to feelings of loneliness or rejection.

What is Psychotherapy?

Psychotherapy is a process based on a partnership between a patient and a therapist, whereby they work together to try and figure out what is causing the emotional suffering. Since many of the causes of emotional problems may be outside of one's awareness, it is the task of therapy to make patients more aware of why they think, feel or behave in a particular way. This will ultimately help the patients to better deal with the realities of everyday life and to make better choices.

Psychotherapy may be done with an individual, a couple, an entire family or with a group. After an initial evaluation, the patient and the therapist will determine the most beneficial form of psychotherapy.

In psychotherapy, unlike in other situations in life, it is important for patients to talk as openly as possible about whatever is on their minds. Even when a thought or feeling seems irrelevant or silly, the patient should feel free to talk about them.

In the spirit of psychotherapy, the patient is also free to bring up any thought or feeling pertaining to me, the therapist, or something I have said or done. Anything about the therapeutic relationship deserves careful and respectful consideration.

Here are a few things I would like you to know about what to expect from our first session together, as well as some other, general information:

1. We will spend some time *describing your presenting symptoms and what brought you in to my office, at this particular time.*
2. I will want to know the *history of your relationship, any history of previous counseling you have had and the specific goals you expect to accomplish at the end of the treatment.*
3. You will be able to *ask me any questions* that may come up for you as a result of our discussion.
4. I will introduce an Imago process through an experiential exercise.

Please take a few moments to read the next couple of pages very carefully so that you will get a clear understanding of what is expected of you and what you can expect from me.

Sincerely,

Dita Teitelbaum, LCSW

General Information, Policies and Agreements

Successful relationships are based on clear policies and procedures, so please review the following carefully and thoroughly. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me at any time.

Regularity and Punctuality of Regularly Scheduled Sessions

1. ***Consistency and frequency*** of sessions is very important for the treatment to be effective. Normally, I see couples ***once a week***. If there is a compelling reason, like a crisis, I may recommend a temporary schedule of twice-a-week sessions.
2. It's also of utmost importance that you ***come on time*** so that you can take full advantage of each session. A session is 90 minutes long, so ***if you come late, the session will still end at the regularly scheduled time***. Just imagine coming late 5 minutes every session. After 12 sessions you would have missed a full hour!
3. Please do not determine whether you will continue or stop coming to your counseling sessions based on whether you are feeling good, you have just had a fight or the weather! This decision should be made with a clear mind ***and in collaboration with your therapist***. This decision making process should take all relevant information into account, so that you can arrive at a conclusion that will best serve your long term goals, while giving you enough time for termination work.

Cancellations, Emergencies, No Shows and Rescheduling

4. The established appointment time is set aside for a particular couple. Therefore, ***if you miss or cancel a session, without a 48 hours advance notification, the full fee will be charged.***
5. If you must cancel a session, it would be important to ***reschedule it for another time or day in the same week***. Please be sure to bring up any rescheduling issues at the beginning of the session.
6. If, for whatever reason, only one partner shows up to the session, for the sake of the neutrality and symmetry of the therapy, ***I will not conduct an individual session***. It is, nonetheless, expected that ***the full fee for the session will be paid***.
7. I am aware that emergencies sometimes arise and, in such a case, I will always try to reschedule your appointment for the same week. If none of the times offered to you are acceptable or convenient to you, ***you will be expected to be financially responsible for the missed session***.
8. Living in Florida, we are forced to deal with hurricanes and the havoc they leave behind. My "***Hurricane Policy***" is as follows:
 - (a) As long as we are under a hurricane watch (possible hurricane within 36 hours) I will continue to "carry on" normally and my normal cancellation policy will be in effect.
 - (b) As conditions change and we come under a hurricane warning you will no longer be expected to keep your appointment.
 - (c) As soon as the hurricane is over I will check back with you to find out how you fared, as well as let you know how my office weathered(!!!) the storm. We can then decide on how to proceed with the scheduled appointments.

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Phone Calls

9. Once you start using, at home, the processes and techniques you will learn in sessions, you might "get stuck". I will be happy to help you get "unstuck" over the phone. With two caveats: (a) To maintain my neutrality, **I will only speak to the two of you together.** (b) **After the first 10 minutes you will be billed in 15 minutes increments.**

10. If either of you tell me something outside the couple's session, **it will be shared with your partner in the next couple session.**

Payments and Insurance Claims

11. **PAYMENT FOR SERVICES IS EXPECTED AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH SESSION. I accept payment by cash or check. I do not take credit cards. If a monthly payment is preferred, it must be made at the beginning of each month.**

12. For clients paying out of pocket, who would like to use their insurance benefits, I will be happy to provide a monthly claim (at the END of the month) and any reimbursements will be either applied to their balance or directly sent to them (depending on the insurance benefits.)

In the event that your check is returned by your bank, for whatever reason, you will be expected to reissue the amount of the check, plus a \$20.00 return fee. A second returned check will require you to pay for your sessions in cash.

Referrals

13. My practice is built on referrals. If you are satisfied with and are benefiting from our professional relationship, I hope you will refer your colleagues, friends and family to me.

To indicate that both of you have read, understood and agree to abide by the policies stated above, please sign and date this paper.

Client _____ Date _____

Client _____ Date _____

Therapist _____ Date _____

So, welcome aboard and I am looking forward to meeting with you and participating in this collaborative and healing process.