



Sarah Rosenbloom, Ph.D.
& ASSOCIATES

333 E. Ontario St., Suite 4401B, Chicago, IL 60611
www.SarahRosenbloomPhD.com

PSYCHOTHERAPY CONTRACT

This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When signed, this document will represent an agreement between us.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easy to describe. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods we may use to help manage the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. For therapy to be most successful, you will work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, anxiety and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have many benefits. Therapy may lead to significant reductions in feelings of distress, solutions to specific problems and better relationships. However, we cannot guarantee what you will experience.

Your first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. At that time, we will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work may include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinion of whether you feel comfortable working with your provider. Therapy involves a commitment of time, money and energy, so you should carefully select your therapist. If you have questions about our procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise.

MEETINGS

We normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 4 sessions. During this time, we can both decide if your provider is the best person to provide the services you need to meet your treatment goals. We will usually schedule one 45-minute session per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. **Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for the session unless you provide at least 24 hours advance notice of cancellation.**

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Our initial session fee is \$290-300. Our regular session fee varies depending upon provider and length of session. In addition to weekly appointments, we charge for other professional services you may need, though we will prorate the hourly cost if we work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include communication with insurance companies, scheduled phone sessions, meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and time spent performing any other service you may request of us. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require our participation, you will be expected to pay for our professional time even if we are called to testify by another party.



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BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held. A \$35 fee, plus any additional fees incurred by the bank, will be assessed for any personal checks returned with insufficient funds. We do not file claims with insurance companies *other than Blue Cross Blue Shield*, so if you have an insurance provider other than BCBS and choose to use it to pay for your treatment, we will provide you with a receipt suitable for submission for your personal reimbursement and provide any additional information needed.

You may stop treatment at any time. If you discontinue treatment the only thing you will still be responsible for is paying for the services you have already received.

If payment for the services you receive here is not made, we may stop treatment. If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, we may use legal means to secure payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency. If such action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information we release regarding a patient’s treatment is his/her name, the type of services provided, and the amount due.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. We will file claims and provide you with assistance to help you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (*not your insurance company*) are responsible for full payment of fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. Managed Health Care plans may require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited, and it may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require us to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. At times we must provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (rarely). This information will become part of the insurance company files. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, we have no control over the information once it is communicated to them. Please note that if you choose to use your insurance benefits for treatment, in some cases, it may adversely affect your future insurability. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for services directly to avoid these potential issues.

CONTACTING ME

We are often not immediately available by telephone. When unavailable, our telephones are answered by confidential voice mails that we monitor frequently. We 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, please inform us of times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach us and feel that you can’t wait for a return call, contact your physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the mental health professional on call. If we will be unavailable for an extended time, we will provide you with the name of a covering therapist to contact if necessary.



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PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of our profession require that we keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy or a summary of your records. If you wish to see your records, we recommend that you review them with us so that we can discuss the contents. You will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent responding to information requests.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist is protected by law, and we may only release information about our work to others with your written permission. However, there are a few exceptions:

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent us from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order our testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which we are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if we must reveal some information about a patient’s treatment. For example, if we believe that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is being abused, we are required to file a report with the appropriate state agency. If we believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, we are required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If the patient threatens to harm himself/herself, we may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. These situations rarely occur. If a similar situation occurs, we will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

There are two situations in which we might discuss part of your case with another therapist. We request your understanding and agreement to do so in these two situations: First, when we are away from the office, we may have trusted colleagues cover our practice. This therapist will be available to you in emergencies. Therefore, he or she needs to know about you. This therapist is bound by the same laws to protect your confidentiality. Second, we sometimes consult with other professionals to help us give the highest quality care. These professionals will never be given your name and will be told only as much as necessary to understand your situation. They are also required to keep your information private.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should be helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have. We will be happy to discuss these issues if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex.

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

I understand that this agreement will become part of my record of treatment.

_____ Date

_____ Print Patient’s Name

_____ Patient’s Signature