

Consent for Treatment

The purpose of this form is to describe the treatment relationship and to explain basic policies. I look forward to working together and I promise to honor your autonomy and respect your strengths as we engage in the counseling process.

My philosophy and expectations of clients and therapist

I strongly believe that you are the expert of your own life and I work hard to help my clients see their strengths and access their truths to pursue the choices that help them feel whole and happy. Rarely will I tell you specifically what to do and often I will encourage you to challenge yourself and view your situation from an alternate perspective.

My practice is a holistic one and I draw from many different theories and will examine your life's effect on your body, mind, work, spirit and relationships. Your decision to enter into a therapeutic relationship with me is a voluntary one and you may terminate at any time. In some cases, I will refer you to another therapist if I think it would be more appropriate.

By signing this consent, you are agreeing to begin the counseling relationship with me. This relationship will be in effect until termination occurs or until I have not seen you in session for more than four weeks from the date of our last scheduled session--unless you and I have a prior agreement to leave your case open for a specified length of time.

I promise to listen without judgment, value your time as highly as my own, be emotionally present during session and work with you toward termination. Therapy is not life and while I am sure I will enjoy working with you, I will put continuous effort toward helping you meet your goals and "graduate" from treatment. All that being said, it is your job to do the bulk of the work. Therapy can be emotionally draining and if I am going too fast or you feel overwhelmed, please alert me. Overall, you should leave your session feeling heard and respected and with valuable information to help you in your life.

Scope of practice and emergency contact

I am an outpatient therapist working with children, adolescents and adults. I offer individual, family and couples treatment. I do not have an emergency practice. Clients are assumed to **not** be in need of day to day supervision. I will return routine client calls received during office hours within 24 hours. When I am out of the office for an extended amount of time, I will leave detailed information about when I will be returning phone calls.

In the event of an emergency, you can receive 24 hour help at Ridgeview Institute by calling 770-434-4567. Should you experience a life or death emergency, immediately call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

Ethical guidelines and standards

I promise you my services will be rendered in a professional manner consistent with ethical standards for licensed clinical social workers. If at any time you are dissatisfied with my services, please let me know. I am open to discussing any concerns you may

have about our work together. If we are not able to resolve your concerns, you may report your complaints to the Georgia Composite Board for Licensed Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists. For a copy of the ethics to which I adhere, you can contact the above board.

Confidentiality and exceptions

Please understand that I will keep confidential anything you tell me, with the following exceptions, as mandated by law:

1. You direct/allow me to tell someone else by signing a release of information.
2. I determine you are a danger to yourself or others.
3. I am ordered by a court to disclose information.
4. You abuse a child or an elderly person.
5. If you are under 18 years old and you report you are a victim of physical or sexual abuse.

**Children and teenagers have additional limits to confidentiality which will be addressed in the intake appointment. These limits may include alcohol and drug use, running away, truancy, sex and other safety issues.

Testifying and participating in court procedures is not my role as a clinical therapist and I do not speak with attorneys on behalf of clients. It changes the clinical services and I cannot be neutral and unbiased if there is a court case. In rare cases, I will write a letter of treatment and this is billed at my hourly rate.

Fees, payment and appointments

Individual, family and couples therapy is \$135 per 45 minute session. The initial diagnostic session is one hour and is \$150. If we have a phone call over ten minutes, it is charged at one dollar a minute. There is no charge for a phone call less than ten minutes. Any time I spend in consultation with others at your request or doing paperwork for you at your request is charged at \$135 an hour.

Payment for each session is due the day of service and there is a \$30 fee for checks returned for insufficient funds. I accept cash, check and all major credit cards. Checks should be made out to Annette Hodgson, LCSW.

I will make every effort to begin and end sessions on time. The weekend before your next appointment, you will receive a reminder e-mail to the e-mail address you provide me when you begin treatment. I completely understand and respect any appointment change if I receive 24 hours notice.

Without that notice, you will be responsible for a \$135 late cancellation/no show fee.

If it is before 24 hours, the best way to change an appointment is to e-mail me at annette.hodgson72@gmail.com. If it is within the 24 hour window, please leave a

message at 404-597-3327 and the fee will be due at that time. You can then pay me over the phone with a credit card or mail a check to Annette Hodgson, PO Box 70061, Marietta, Georgia 30007.

A subsequent appointment will not be scheduled until the fee is received. If it is an emergency, you and I will discuss if the fee will or will not be waived. As a small appointment-based business owner, I have kept that appointment open for you and I must have a policy to address late cancellations and no shows.

If you are going to be more than fifteen minutes late to your appointment, please let me know by calling 404-597-3327 and leaving a message. Otherwise, if you are more than fifteen minutes late and I haven't heard from you, I will assume you are not coming to the appointment and may be unavailable. In this situation, you will be responsible for the missed appointment and required to pay the \$135 fee. Also, if the client is over the age of 16 and comfortable with it, I can complete the session over the phone occasionally.

Insurance, consultation and records

I keep record of all of our sessions and can provide monthly receipts for you to submit to your mental health insurance for reimbursement and deductibles. Also you can pay me with flexible spending accounts. In keeping with accepted standards of practice and to ensure quality of care, I regularly consult with other mental health therapists regarding clients. Client confidentiality is kept at all times.

Your file is kept for at least seven years from the date of your initial session. For minors, this seven year period begins when the minor turns 18. Your file contains my copy of this informed consent, your client backgrounder and all materials that pertain to you, including treatment notes. The file is confidential with the exceptions noted in the confidentiality section. Your file is locked and will be destroyed by shredding after seven years.

Personal statement from therapist

I believe it's important to balance work, personal and family time and I do my best to take care of myself in ways that reflect this belief. This means there are times I will be unavailable. I will inform you of my planned absence in advance. Should you need support during this time, I will provide you with the name and number of another therapist you can contact. As we begin the therapeutic relationship, I promise to actively listen without judgment, respect your beliefs and opinions and maintain integrity. It is a privilege to work with you and for that I am grateful.

Your signature indicates that you agree to adhere to the policies specified in this document.

Client signature

date