

## **Eva Hudlicka, LICSW, MSW, PhD – Psychotherapy**

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### **Therapist-Client Service Agreement**

I appreciate the opportunity to work with you! You can find more information about how I practice and about my background at [therapy21st.net](http://therapy21st.net). Below are answers to the most common questions that clients have about therapy, as well as information about my psychotherapy practice. Please feel free to discuss any of these with me, and I will be happy to clarify any information below.

#### **How Psychotherapy Works**

First and foremost, you should feel comfortable in therapy. If at any time you feel that our work is not meeting your needs, please bring this up with me and I will do my best to address any concerns you may have.

I typically use the initial 3 sessions of our work together to determine whether I have the appropriate skills for your needs and whether we can work together effectively. If after three sessions it appears that either you don't think it's a 'good fit', or I don't think that my skill set is the most appropriate for what you need, I will be happy to help you find another therapist, with whom you can work effectively to address your concerns.

If after some time working with me you or I feel that treatment is not progressing, we will discuss what your needs may be at the time, and I may suggest that you see another therapist who may better serve your needs. Please note that if my approach to treatment is not addressing your concerns it would be unethical for me to continue treatment.

#### **How We Track Progress**

Within the first 3 sessions we develop a 'treatment plan' that lists your goals for therapy, and some techniques we will use to achieve those goals. This is not 'cast in stone' and we can modify the treatment plan at any point. It does however provide some guidelines for how we will approach our work together, and helps keep our work on track.

Some clients find it helpful to spend the last 10 minutes or so of each session going over what was helpful and what wasn't, and making plans for the coming week; for example, deciding on some 'homework exercises' to reinforce the work we did during the session. This is very individual however – it's up to you if you wish to do this or not.

Clients who choose to stay in therapy for longer term treatment, that is, 6 months or longer, also fill out a “quarterly review”. This is information that helps us review progress and adjust either the treatment plan, or how we work together, to better meet your needs.

## **Benefits and Risks**

Most clients find therapy helpful. Many therapeutic methods have been extensively evaluated and shown to be effective in treating particular conditions; for example, anxiety, phobias, depression, substance use. Psychotherapy can also help people find more satisfaction in life in general, and serve as a way to achieve ‘personal growth’.

However, as with any other treatment, while there are benefits there are also potential risks. It is important that you consider both of these when beginning psychotherapy.

Psychotherapy may sometimes trigger uncomfortable or even distressing feelings; for example, you may feel sad, angry, anxious, frustrated, guilty, ashamed, disappointed, helpless, or experience some other unpleasant emotion. You may recall some unpleasant or sad memories. You may experience negative feelings about people close to you or co-workers. These feelings can be a normal part of treatment and typically resolve after a short period of time. Experiencing distressing feelings in a therapeutic setting often helps us develop better coping strategies for handling those feelings in general. Sometimes, some problem may temporarily worsen or a new problem may arise as therapy progresses. As much as possible, it is important to address these during treatment.

While therapy can sometimes feel uncomfortable for short periods of time, in general, you should feel that your life is benefiting from psychotherapy. If therapy begins to make you feel worse, for long periods of time, it is time to rethink the approach, and possibly time to stop therapy altogether, or to find a new therapist.

I personally believe that therapy can be not only helpful, but transformative.

## **Confidentiality and its Limits**

I take your privacy seriously and protect the information you share with me. It is also your legal right that our sessions and any written records about you are kept private. Before I can discuss or share any information about your treatment with any other provider, I must ask you to sign a “Release of Information” form. I never share with anyone that you are receiving psychotherapy services from me. In all but a few very rare situations, your Privacy is protected by federal and state laws, and by the rules of my profession (social work and the NASW Code of Ethics). Below are the most common cases in which confidentiality is not protected. Since confidentiality laws are very complex, I suggest that you seek legal advice if you have any specific concerns not addressed here.

1. If you make a serious threat to harm yourself or another person, I am required by law to try and protect you or the other person. This usually means telling others about the threat. I cannot promise never to tell others about threats you make.

2. If you believe that a child, an elderly person, or a handicapped person has been or will be abused or neglected, I am legally required to report this to the authorities.
3. I may be ordered by a court to show my records about your treatment, if you are involved in a legal case. If a judge subpoenaed your records, I cannot guarantee that confidentiality will be maintained, although the legal system usually honors client-therapist privilege.
4. If therapy services are covered by your insurance then I will share information requested by them, which typically includes: types of service, dates/times of service, diagnosis, treatment plan, description of functioning, and treatment progress. I will let you know if this should occur and what the company has asked for. Please understand that I have no control over how these records are handled at the insurance company. My policy is to provide only as much information as the insurance will need to pay your benefits.

## **Appointments and Cancellation Fees**

An appointment is a commitment to engage in treatment. I consider our meetings very important and ask that my clients do the same. You get most out of treatment if you don't miss sessions. When you must cancel, please give me as much notice as possible, preferably at least a few days before. I will of course try to do the same for you should I ever need to cancel an appointment. There is a \$45 fee for missed appointments, or appointments cancelled less than 24 hours in advance. Insurance does not cover this fee. The only exception (that is, no cancellation fee charged) is for extremely poor weather conditions that make travel impossible.

## **Fees, Payments and Billing**

Co-pays are due at the end of each session, unless arrangements have been made otherwise. You are also responsible for any deductibles.