

Informed Consent for Psychotherapy

The following information is to clearly define rights and responsibilities in the therapeutic relationship. Knowing your rights and responsibilities creates a safe framework to take risks and open yourself to new experiences.

Professional Qualifications

Dr. Reist, is the Clinical Director of Midtown Psychological Services. She has provided mental health services for well over 30 years including community agencies, schools, hospitals, corporate, and private practice settings. In 2005, after completing her doctorate in psychology at the University of Toronto, she became registered as a Psychologist in Ontario. Dr. Reist is licensed to provide psychological services to children, adolescents, adults, couples and organizations. Her areas of speciality are in clinical, counselling, and school psychology. Dr. Reist's treatment approach is informed by contemporary psychodynamic theory and practice; trauma research, cognitive behavioural therapies, as well as feminist and ecological perspectives.

As a Psychologist practicing in the province of Ontario, Dr. Reist and those practicing under her supervision are accountable to the College of Psychologists of Ontario who is responsible for the licensing and regulation of Psychologists in this province. The contact information is:

College of Psychologists of Ontario
110 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 500
Toronto, Ontario M4R 1A3
(416) 961-8817
www.cpo.on.ca

Benefits & Potential Risks

Most people who take risks in therapy find it helpful. You may gain a better understanding of yourself and your personal goals and values, and develop skills for improving your relationships. You may overcome a specific problem such as depression or addiction. It may be an opportunity for you to resolve relationships from your past and to heal from traumatic experiences. Methods used in therapy include dialogue, free association, interpretation, cognitive reframing, awareness exercises, self-monitoring experiments, visualization, journal writing, drawing and reading books. Some people find that participating in psychotherapy results in positive changes that were not expected or intended at the outset.

Despite its many benefits, therapy has potential emotional risks. Therapy should be a transformative process over time, but it requires that you discuss experiences and events in your life that may be unpleasant. This may increase feelings of sadness, anger, fear, shame or other unpleasant feelings. Making changes in your life can be difficult and may be disruptive to the relationships you have. You may even find that your relationship with a therapist raises strong feelings, some of them painful at times. For some, you may feel worse before you begin feeling better. It is important that you consider carefully whether these potential risks are worth the benefits.



Confidentiality

With a few exceptions, you have the absolute right to confidentiality in your therapy. This means that your therapist cannot share what you have told them to anybody without your consent to do so. You may direct them in writing to share information with whomever you deem necessary and you may revoke that permission at any time. Psychologists may legally speak to another regulated health care provider without your consent, but we would only do so when necessary for the delivery and management of your health care or in the case of an emergency.

There are times when confidentiality must be broken without your consent. These circumstances include:

- If there is reason to believe that you are at serious and imminent risk of physically harming yourself or another person.
- If there is reason to believe that a child is suffering from abuse and/or neglect.
- If you have been sexually abused by another regulated health professional.
- A court has subpoenaed your records.

If you or your partner decide to have some individual sessions as part of couples therapy, what you say in those individual sessions will be considered a part of the couple's therapy, and can and probably will be discussed in our joint sessions. Do not tell your therapist anything you wish kept secret from your partner.

If you communicate by unencrypted email, with Dr. Reist or someone under her supervision, please be aware that email is not completely confidential. All emails are retained in the logs of your or our Internet provider. While under normal circumstances no one looks at these logs, they are in theory available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet service provider. Any email we receive from you and any responses that are sent to you, will be kept in your treatment record. For more information on email and online policies and guidelines, please see our *Social Media Policy*.

Please note that your insurance company may call our office to confirm invoices submitted. Only date, service provided to you, and the amount paid will be confirmed. No other information is shared with insurance providers without your consent.

Record keeping

Personal health information that I have collected is only used for your care and treatment. You have the right to access your health information and will be provided with copies for a minimal fee. You always have a right to ask questions about the way the privacy of your personal health information is being handled. For more information on the privacy of your personal health care please see my *Protecting the Privacy of Your Personal Health Information* pamphlet.

Diagnosis

Diagnoses are technical terms that describe the nature of your problems and whether they are short-term or long-term problems. If I use a diagnosis, I will discuss it with you. All of the diagnoses psychologists use come from a book titled the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of*



Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V) and the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD-10).

Fees

The services provided by a psychologist in private practice are not covered by provincial health insurance plans (OHIP). In most cases you will be billed directly. Many people have extended health benefits they obtain themselves or through their employer that cover a portion of the cost of psychological services annually. The cost of psychological services may also be a negotiated benefit with your employer or may be covered through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The cost of psychological services can be deducted as a medical expense on your income taxes. They may also be tax deductible as a business expense.

My fees are consistent with the guidelines suggested by the Ontario Psychological Association and may be revised each year effective January 1st. Payment by cheque, Visa, MasterCard and Debit are accepted at the beginning of each session. Emergency phone calls of less than ten minutes are normally not billed. However, if we spend more than 10 minutes in a week on the phone, I will bill you on a prorated basis for that time. All overdue bills are expected to be paid within 30 days and will be charged 1.5% per month interest. If you refuse to pay your debt, I reserve the right to give your name and the amount due to a collection agency.

Length of sessions

Although a full hour is scheduled for you, the actual session lasts 50 minutes. This allows me to use the remaining 10 minutes to complete session notes and prepare for the next session.

How often are therapy sessions?

The frequency of sessions depends on the individual and typically ranges from once a week to five times a week. I will work with you to establish the frequency of sessions that will be best for you and your financial situation.

Missed appointments

Your appointment is a block of time that is reserved for you. Missed appointments and last minute cancellations prevent me from scheduling other people. If you believe you won't be able to make a scheduled appointment, I would ask that you notify me as soon as possible. There may be a possibility that I can find you a different time in the week. Alternatively, if I am able to fill the time with another patient, no fee will be charged to you. However, the regular fee for one session will be charged for any missed appointments I cannot fill.

How long does therapy last?

Normally you are the one who decides when therapy ends. This is usually when you feel you have made satisfactory progress. This may take a few sessions or several years. Generally, cognitive behavioural and solution focused therapy take a shorter period of time than longer-term psychodynamic psychotherapy or psychoanalysis. You have the right to stop therapy at any time without further financial obligations, other than those already incurred. Some people do decide to stop therapy suddenly when difficult issues come up. Rather than just quitting, it is



best to discuss your feelings with me. Talking about your wish to quit therapy, including negative feelings you have towards me, will very often lead to progress, new insights and a stronger therapeutic alliance.

On occasion, I may decide to terminate therapy. If I have contracted with you for a specific number of sessions to address a problem, then therapy will end at the end of that contract. If I feel that I cannot help you due to limitations in my training, I will inform you of this and refer you to a therapist who may be better suited to meet your needs. If you threaten me verbally or physically or harass my office staff, my family, or myself, I will terminate you immediately from treatment. I will offer you referrals, but cannot guarantee that they will accept you for therapy.

Complaints

You have the right to refuse anything I might suggest throughout the therapy process and to seek a second opinion. I do not carry on friendships or sexual relationships with patients or former patients because that would be unethical and/or illegal.

Misunderstandings and other difficult or uncomfortable issues may arise in our relationship and are not uncommon in the process of therapy. If you are unhappy with me or what is happening in therapy, I hope that you'll talk about it so that I can respond to your concerns. I will take such criticism seriously, and with care and respect. If you believe that I've been unwilling to listen and respond, or that I have behaved unethically, you can complain about my behaviour to the College of Psychologists of Ontario (see contact info above). You have a right to discuss your therapy with anyone you choose, as well as the right to bring someone with you to your session. If you would like someone to accompany you, it is best to let me know ahead of time so that we can discuss your concerns and how best to protect your privacy.

Emergency Procedures

If you are experiencing an emergency I may usually be reached at 647-241-4182. I am available for brief between session phone calls during normal business hours including some evenings and weekends. I will tell you in advance of any anticipated lengthy absences and give you the name and phone number of the therapists who will be covering my practice. If you are unable to reach me or my alternate, please call your local crisis line. The Toronto Distress Centre number is 416-408-4357 or you may call The Gerstein Centre at 416-929-5200. Parents and children may also call the Kids Helpline at 1-800-668-6868. If you believe that you cannot keep yourself safe, please call 911, or go to the nearest hospital emergency room for assistance.

