



## Informed Consent for Psychotherapy

Welcome to Calm Science!

First of all, congratulations on your decision to seek psychotherapy. The therapeutic relationship is unique in that it is highly personal, and at the same time, a contractual agreement. Given this dynamic, it is important for us to reach a clear understanding about how our relationship will work, and what each of us can expect. This consent will provide a clear framework for our work together. Feel free to discuss any of this with me during your intake appointment and throughout the psychotherapy process. Please read and indicate that you have reviewed this information and agree to it by filling in the checkbox at the end of this document.

### The Therapeutic Process

Please read the following very carefully.

You have taken a very positive step by deciding to seek therapy. The outcome of your treatment depends largely on your willingness to engage in this process, which may, at times, result in considerable discomfort. Treatment begins with an acknowledgment and an acceptance of your willingness to change yourself in some way. Acknowledgment and acceptance of your desired changes are essential for your success throughout psychotherapy. My job is to support you and your goals for change. While I will never force you to bring up any difficult topics (nor should any therapist ever do this), remembering unpleasant events and becoming aware of feelings attached to those events can bring on strong feelings of anger, depression, anxiety, and other feelings. There are no miracle cures, and there is no set timeline for how long psychotherapy will take. Some patients find relief in just a few sessions, while others stay in psychotherapy for a year or more. I cannot promise that your behavior or circumstance will change, because that is solely up to you. However, I can promise to support you and be there for you throughout the psychotherapy process. I will do my very best to understand you and draw attention to repeating patterns in your life. I will also work to help you clarify what it is that you want for yourself. Sometimes, the therapist must challenge what a patient brings to the consulting room. I am here to let you know that it is also okay for you to challenge me, if you think that something I am saying is inaccurate or off-track. No emotions are off the table in psychotherapy. You are allowed to bring your rage, anger, depression, fear, and pain into the consulting room with me, whether that be in-person or virtual. I am here to create and hold a safe space for you to experience and express these emotions. I am not here to judge you, shame you, make you feel bad about your past or present choices, or to punish you. I am here to support you in the best way that I can.

I will often check in with you on how “we” are doing and ask you about how you are experiencing me, or my relationship with you, in a given session. I would like to clarify that the purpose of my asking this is not to focus the session on me! Asking patients these questions is a cornerstone of *relational psychoanalytic therapy*. It is my job to check in with you on how you feel our work together is going and how you are feeling about working with me. This may feel very strange at first if you have not experienced this type of interaction before, such as with a coach, primary care provider, or mentor. Sometimes patients and therapists may say or do things that cause unintentional harm. You may feel angry with me, feel suspicious of me, or feel that I have judged you. **If I sense that something I have said or done has hurt you in any way, I will do my best to recognize, apologize, address, and work through these issues with you to repair any harm this has done to our working relationship.** Similarly, you are welcome to bring up any incident where you feel I have wronged you. This is exactly the purpose of psychotherapy. When we have a positive working relationship, you will develop the skills to bring up difficult and awkward topics with me. When we are successful in our work together, you will be able to transfer these skills outside of therapy, resulting in positive changes that continue long after therapy is over.

### Termination

I mainly work with patients who have experienced trauma, many of whom have experienced significant abandonment



in their lives. Ending a relationship can be very painful for some patients, and it is my job to both acknowledge the end of therapy and prepare you for ending therapy. The patient-provider relationship is different from the patient-provider relationship with other medical providers, in that you discuss your concerns and ailments on a much deeper level and more frequently than you would with your primary care provider. Because of the nature of the patient-therapist relationship, termination of psychotherapy is often difficult for patients, especially when termination is initiated by the therapist. You may experience fear, anger, sadness, or even abandonment when treatment comes to an end. Prior to terminating treatment, I will do my best to repair any issues we have, to help you find closure in our work together, and to set you up for success after therapy is over. If termination is near because you have succeeded in change and achieving your goals for psychotherapy, I will let you know that we are nearing termination and acknowledge your successes. **Termination of psychotherapy will not be a surprise.** Sometimes, patients decide to terminate therapy because of a lack of fit with the therapist, because they feel the therapist has mistreated them, because they are no longer making progress, or for other significant reasons, such as cost, time, work, life changes and transitions, or relocation. If we have completed a few sessions together and you feel that therapy is not working for you or that I am not a good therapist fit for you, I will be happy to listen to your concerns and help you find the best therapist for *you*. If you do choose to terminate, I will recommend that we have one last session to discuss your situation and help you find a more suitable therapist, or work through any issues we may have. If you need to terminate because you are moving, changing jobs, or deploying, I will do my best to help you find a therapist in your area so you can continue treatment with a qualified provider. I will wish you success regardless of the circumstances in terminating psychotherapy. Feel free to ask me any questions about this process during the intake appointment and throughout the psychotherapy process.

#### Confidentiality

The session content and all relevant materials to the patient's treatment will be held confidential unless the patient requests in writing to have all or portions of such content released to a specifically named person/persons. Limitations of such patient held privilege of confidentiality exist:

- If a patient threatens or attempts to commit suicide or otherwise conducts themselves in a manner in which there is a substantial risk of incurring serious bodily harm.
- If a patient threatens grave bodily harm or death to another person.
- If the therapist has a reasonable suspicion that a patient or other named victim is the perpetrator, observer of, or actual victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of children under the age of 18 years.
- Suspicions as stated above in the case of an elderly person who may be subjected to these abuses.
- Suspected neglect of the parties named in items #3 and #4.
- If a court of law issues a legitimate subpoena for information stated on the subpoena.
- If a patient is in therapy or being treated by order of a court of law, or if information is obtained for the purpose of rendering an expert's report to an attorney.

Occasionally, I may need to consult with other professionals in their areas of expertise in order to provide the best treatment for you. Information about you may be shared in this context without using your name. If we see each other accidentally outside of the therapy office, I will not acknowledge you first. Your right to privacy and confidentiality is of the utmost importance to me, and I do not wish to jeopardize your privacy. However, if you acknowledge me first, I will be more than happy to speak briefly with you but feel it appropriate not to engage in any lengthy discussions in public or outside of the therapy office in order to protect your confidentiality.

*By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to the items contained in this document.*



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Patient Signature

Date

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Signature of Legal Guardian/Representative

Date