



Two Doors Down, PLLC
Hawthorne Hills Professional Building
4026 NE 55th Street, Suite E250
Seattle, WA, 98105
p.206.769.6792/f.206.299.9588
megswan73@gmail.com

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES CONTRACT

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my 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 you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with 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. In order for therapy to be most successful, it will be most important for you to work on and apply the 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, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who consistently participate in it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience, and it is most helpful for you to stay open to your experience and set aside any specific expectations.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, please bring them forward for us to discuss, whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

MEETINGS

I usually schedule a 45-minute or 53-minute weekly session at a day and time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent, depending on issues that may arise and require more time. Once an appointment hour is scheduled it is entirely reserved for you. If you do not show or cancel with less than 24-hour notice, you will be responsible for paying my hourly rate of \$150. If your appointment is on a Monday, the 24-hour cancellation notice would need to be received by the previous Friday.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

My hourly fee is \$150 for a 45-minute session and \$165 for a 53-minute, or dependent upon your insurance policy fee schedule. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

Please provide me with your insurance information. If you have a co-pay, you will be expected to pay for it at each session; unless, we have arranged for a different pay schedule. I will regularly bill your insurance company, and I am willing to provide

assistance with insurance reimbursement, as needed. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. [If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim.] In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the nature 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. I will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Of course, I will provide you with whatever information I can based on my experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, I will be willing to call the company on your behalf.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. "Managed Health Care" plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. 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 you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I am required to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. I will provide you with a copy of any report I submit, if you request it.

Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end our sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above.

RILEY

I have a dog who accompanies me to work. His name is Riley. He is about 9 years old, and a mix of Labrador retriever and American Bulldog. He is a very gentle and good-natured fellow. Please let me know if your concerns regarding him.

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone. When I am unavailable, you may leave me a voice message or text me at 206-769-6792, that I monitor frequently. The best and quickest way to reach me is by email at: megswan73@gmail.com and I will make every effort to return your call or email on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays.

EMERGENCIES

I am a solo practitioner which means that if you are unable to reach me or I am out-of-the-office for predetermined extended periods of times, and feel that you can't wait for

me to return your call or email, your options are to call 9-1-1, the crisis clinic 24-hour helpline 1-866-847-2727, contact your family physician, or go the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call.

PATIENT RIGHTS

As a client receiving psychological services, you have a number of rights. You are entitled to receive full information about my psychological training and qualifications, treatment philosophy, and explanation of fees for my services. You have the right to ask questions about your therapy, and to refuse any course of treatment suggested by me. Further, you have the right to terminate therapy at any time, without penalty. You have the right to request access to your treatment records and to request a copy of those records or to request to correct those records. You also have the right to request in writing that no treatment records be maintained. You have the right to have your psychologist release appropriate information from your treatment records to another entity, provided you sign a release of information. You have the right to discuss your treatment with anyone you choose.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me 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 my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a patient's treatment. For example, if I believe that a child [elderly person, or disabled person] is being abused, I must [may be required to] file a report with the appropriate state agency.

If I believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I am [may be] 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, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

These situations have rarely occurred in my practice. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at our next meeting. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and I am not an attorney. [If you request, I will provide you with relevant portions or summaries of the state laws regarding these issues.]

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

Client Signature _____ Date _____

Megan Swan, PhD _____ Date _____