



## **GROUP INFORMED CONSENT**

Group counseling is a unique relationship in which a group of people who are likely experiencing similar difficulties come together to both give and receive help from one another. Manhattan Mental Health Services, LLC (MMHS) attempts to create an environment where honest, interpersonal exploration will occur that will benefit all members. In order to create this environment, there are certain guidelines that need to be agreed upon by each participant. These guidelines are in addition to the service agreement that you made as an individual upon starting therapy at MMHS.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Therapy is effective because individuals feel safe to share private information in a confidential atmosphere. It is important that every member of the group agree to uphold the confidentiality of the therapeutic setting. Members agree to keep names and identities of other group members confidential. Facilitators will discuss a group or individuals in the group only with fellow professionals who are clearly concerned with the group, and then only for professional consultation. If a member of the group has a therapist from outside MMHS and there is need for consultation, it is important to note that only the individual's information that made the request will be identified; all other group members' information will be de-identified and kept confidential.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Group therapy is successful (as is any form of therapy) when there is regular attendance on behalf of the participants. If you cannot attend a group meeting, please email or call to let your leader or co-leaders know as soon as possible. In your message please also indicate whether or not it is permissible for your leader or co-leaders to share why you are absent. Please arrive on time. If you miss and do not call ahead of time, you will be charged for the session (\$50). It is important to note that insurance does not typically cover for missed appointment fees so those will be the responsibility of the group member.

### **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION**

Members of effective groups actively share thoughts, reactions and feelings during group meetings as a way of increasing their self-understanding and contributing to the personal growth of other members. To support that goal, facilitators will strive to establish and maintain a climate of respect within the group. Each member will undoubtedly share in different ways and be comfortable with different levels of disclosure. It is requested that as a participant you share what is comfortable and actively listen and attend to other group members. Participation does not necessarily mean talking. It can also mean listening to what other members have to say. No one will ever be forced to share anything that they are not comfortable sharing.

### **RELATIONSHIPS**

Members agree to primarily use relationships in the group therapeutically, not socially. Group provides an opportunity for learning about one's self in relation to others. If, by chance, members meet outside the group, then it is their responsibility to discuss any relevant aspects of that encounter at the next group session. Group members are asked to refrain from dating or engaging in close friendships other members of the group while group is ongoing.

### **WITHDRAWAL**

Starting a new group can be difficult and even awkward at first, thus MMHS requests that you please attend a minimum of three sessions before deciding to quit group therapy. Members will let the group know in advance if they are leaving the group. Group participation is on a

voluntary basis. If you or the group leader(s) determines that group is not serving your needs, you will be referred to other options.

Signing below means that you agree with the guidelines and will do all in your power to uphold them. Should it be discovered that you are in breach of any of the policies above, co-leader(s) and/or other group members may ask that you terminate your participation in group therapy.

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(Signature of client)

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(Date)