



## **OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT**

Welcome to Manhattan Mental Health Services, LLC (MMHS). This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that they can be discussed at your next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and Manhattan Mental Health Services, LLC.

### **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 we 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 the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on 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 go through 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.

Our first session will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, we 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 us. 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 our procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, we will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

As psychologists, we do not prescribe medication. Medication is prescribed by medical professionals, for example, psychiatrists, primary care doctors, and others with prescription privileges. We often coordinate efforts with other treatment providers and there may be times when we will refer you for a consultation to a prescribing provider in order to obtain medication.

### **MEETINGS**

We normally conduct an initial evaluation that lasts approximately 90 minutes. During this time, we can both decide if MMHS is the best fit to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, we will usually schedule one 45-minute session (one appointment hour of 45 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation, unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. If it is possible, we will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment. However, for circumstances that do not meet these requirements, there will be a fee of \$50.

## **PROFESSIONAL FEES**

Given that we work with various insurance companies, our fee schedule is agreed upon ahead of time with that company. In the event that you forgo insurance and pay out of pocket, the hourly fee at MMHS is \$150. In addition to weekly appointments, we charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though we will break down the hourly cost if the work is for periods of less than one hour. Other services include 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. You will be informed of any other additional fees before services are rendered. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require participation on the part of MMHS, you will be expected to pay for that professional time even if MMHS is called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, there is a charge of \$408 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

## **BILLING AND PAYMENTS**

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage which requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, we may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, MMHS has 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 released regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due. Services will be terminated until such time that a payment or a payment plan is established. In the event of a crisis, services will not be terminated until that person has become stabilized. Please note that this does not preclude the patient from paying the remaining balance and any additional charges for crisis services will be added to the balance.

## **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. MMHS will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance we can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of 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 MMHS will provide you with whatever information we can based on our 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, MMHS 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. Some managed-care plans will not allow us to provide services to you once your benefits end. If this is the case, MMHS will do its best to find another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize MMHS and your therapist to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes insurance is provided 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, MMHS has 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. MMHS will provide you with a copy of any report submitted, 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 services yourself to avoid the problems described above unless prohibited by contract.

#### **CONTACTING MANHATTAN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Manhattan Mental Health Services is often not immediately available by telephone. While we are usually in the office Monday thru Friday between 9:00 AM and 8:00 PM, the phone will most likely not be answered when a clinician is with a patient. When unavailable, our telephone is answered by a voicemail that is monitored frequently. MMHS will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please provide information about some times when you will be available. In emergencies, you can try to reach us at our cell phone numbers: Kathryn Tolle (785-341-8626) or Chaz Mailey (217-799-1900). If you are unable to reach us and feel that you can't wait for a return call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. If unavailable for an extended time, MMHS will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

#### **PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

The laws and standards of our profession require that our office keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or MMHS can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. Therefore if you wish to see your records, we recommend that you review them in our presence so that we can discuss the contents. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist is protected by law, and MMHS 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 MMHS 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 your therapist's testimony if the judge determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which MMHS is legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if it means revealing some information about a patient's treatment. For example, if it is believed that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is harmed or being abused, MMHS is required by law to file a report with the appropriate state agency.

If it is believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, MMHS is required by law 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, MMHS and your therapist might 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 our practice. If a similar situation occurs, MMHS will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

It is occasionally helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, MMHS makes every effort to avoid revealing the identity of patients. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, you will not be informed about these consultations unless it is deemed to be important to our work together.

**MINORS (Skip if this does not apply to you)**

Under Kansas law, any person under age 18 is a minor unless (1) he/she is 16 or older and is or has been married; or (2) a court has conferred rights of majority upon the person pursuant to state statute. The law may provide parents with the right to examine a minor's treatment records. It is our policy to request an agreement from parents to consent to give up access to the minor's records. We will, however, provide the parents with general information about therapy. If we believe that there is a high risk that the minor will seriously harm self or another, we will notify the parents of our concern. If possible, we will always discuss with the minor what we will reveal to the parents and will do our best to resolve with the minor any objections he/she may have about what we are prepared to discuss. **Parent(s) consent to give up access.** \_\_\_\_\_

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. MMHS is 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 our providers are not attorneys.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of client) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name) (Date of birth)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Witness/co-signature needed only if client is a minor or otherwise necessary) (Date)