



DEBORAH G. MATHER, PH.D.

THErapy FOR INDIVIDUALS · GRIEF & LOSS

PYO727 · PSY17113

OFFICE POLICIES & GENERAL INFORMATION AGREEMENT FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your (client's) written permission, except where disclosure is required by law. Most of the provisions explaining when the law requires disclosure were described to you in the Notice of Privacy Practices that you received with this form.

When Disclosure Is Required By Law: Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required by the law are: where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect; and where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled.

When Disclosure May Be Required: Disclosure may be required pursuant to a legal proceeding. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by Dr. Mather. In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. Dr. Mather will use her clinical judgment when revealing such information. Dr. Mather will not release records to any outside party unless she is authorized to do so by all adult family members who were part of the treatment.

Emergencies: If there is an emergency during our work together, or in the future after termination, where Dr. Mather becomes concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper psychiatric care, she will do whatever she can within the limits of the law, to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive the proper medical care. For this purpose, she may also contact the police, hospital or the person whose name you have provided on the biographical sheet.

Health Insurance & Confidentiality of Records: Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO/PPO/MCO/EAP in order to process the claims. If you so instruct Dr. Mather, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Unless authorized by you explicitly the Psychotherapy Notes will not be disclosed to your insurance carrier. Dr. Mather has no control or knowledge over what insurance companies do with the information she submits or who has access to this information. You must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk to confidentiality, privacy, or to future eligibility to obtain health or life insurance. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is entered into insurance companies' computers and soon will also be reported to the, congress-approved, National Medical Data Bank. Accessibility to companies' computers or to the National Medical Data Bank database is always in question, as computers are inherently vulnerable to break-ins and unauthorized access. Medical data has been reported to have been sold, stolen, or accessed by enforcement agencies; therefore, you are in a vulnerable position.

LITIGATION LIMITATION: Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters which may be of a confidential nature, it is agreed that should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you (client) nor your attorney, nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on Dr. Mather to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested.

CONSULTATION: Dr. Mather consults regularly with other professionals regarding her clients; however, the client's name or other identifying information is never mentioned. The client's identity remains completely anonymous, and confidentiality is fully maintained.

TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: If you need to contact Dr. Mather between sessions, please leave a message on the answering machine (714) 846-8230 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Dr. Mather checks her messages a few times a day, unless she is out of town. If an emergency situation arises, please indicate it clearly in your message. If you need to talk to someone right away, you can call the Police 911 or your nearest hospital emergency room.

PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT: Clients are expected to pay the standard fee of \$160.00 per 45 minute session at the end of each session unless other arrangements have been made. Telephone conversations, site visits, report writing and reading, consultation with other professionals, release of information, reading records, longer sessions, travel time, etc. will be charged at the same rate, unless indicated and agreed otherwise. Please notify Dr. Mather if any problem arises during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. Clients who carry insurance should remember that professional services are rendered and charged to the clients and not to the insurance companies. Unless agreed upon differently, Dr. Mather will Submit to your insurance company for reimbursement if you so choose. As was indicated in the section, *Health Insurance & Confidentiality of Records*, you must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk. Not all issues/conditions/problems, which are the focus of psychotherapy, are reimbursed by insurance companies. It is your responsibility to verify the specifics of your coverage.

MEDIATION & ARBITRATION: All disputes arising out of or in relation to this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediation, before, and as a pre-condition of, the initiation of arbitration. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Dr. Mather and client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in Los Angeles/Orange County, California in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association which are in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, Dr. Mather can use legal means (court, collection agency, etc.) to obtain payment. The prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceedings shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum for attorneys' fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum.

THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION: Participation in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improving interpersonal relationships and resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy. Working toward these benefits, however, requires effort on your part. Psychotherapy requires your very active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings and/or behavior. Dr. Mather will ask for your feedback and views on your therapy, its progress, and other aspects of the therapy and will expect you to respond openly and honestly. Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful in dealing with a certain situation.

During evaluation or therapy, remembering or talking about unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts can result in your experiencing considerable discomfort or strong feelings of anger, sadness, worry, fear, etc. or experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. Dr. Mather may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations that can cause you to feel very upset, angry, depressed, challenged, or disappointed. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to therapy in the first place, such as personal or interpersonal relationships, may result in changes that were not originally intended. Psychotherapy may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing, or relationships. Sometimes a decision that is positive for one family member is viewed quite negatively by another family member. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and even frustrating. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results. During the course of therapy, Dr. Mather is likely to draw on various psychological approaches according in part to the problem that is being treated and her assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, existential, system/family, developmental (adult, child, family), or psycho-educational.

Discussion of Treatment Plan: Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, Dr. Mather will discuss with you (client) her working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and her view of the possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your therapy, their possible risks, Dr. Mather's expertise in employing them, or about the treatment plan, please ask and you will be answered fully. You also have the right to ask about other treatments for your condition and their risks and benefits. If you could benefit from any treatment that Dr. Mather does not provide, she has an ethical obligation to assist you in obtaining those treatments.

Termination: As set forth above, after the first couple of meetings, Dr. Mather will assess if she can be of benefit to you. Dr. Mather does not accept clients who, in her opinion, she cannot help. In such a case, she will give you a number of referrals that you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy, Dr. Mather assesses that she is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals, she is obliged to discuss it with you and, if appropriate, to terminate treatment. In such a case, she would give you a number of referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, Dr. Mather will talk to the psychotherapist of your choice in order to help with the transition. If at any time you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another therapist, Dr. Mather will assist you in finding someone qualified, and, if she has your written consent, she will provide her or him with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate therapy at any time. If you choose to do so Dr. Mather will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

Dual Relationships: Therapy never involves sexual or any other dual relationship that impairs Dr. Mather's objectivity, clinical judgment, or therapeutic effectiveness or can be exploitative in nature.

CANCELLATION: Since scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of **48 hours weekday** notice is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment for any cancellations. Unless we reach a different agreement, the full fee will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions.

I have read the above Agreement and Office Policies and General Information carefully; I understand them and agree to comply with them:

Client name (print)	Date	Signature
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Client name (print)	Date	Signature
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Therapist	Date	Signature
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