



# CONSULTANTS FOR CHANGE

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## Welcome to my Practice

I am pleased to welcome you to the Consultants for Change. We are a multi-disciplinary group of mental health professionals providing individual, couple, group and family therapy.

I look forward to helping you attain your therapeutic goals as quickly and efficiently as we both can manage. Psychotherapy is a powerful means of making changes that can lead to a life which is more satisfying, more productive, and more meaningful. Psychotherapy is also a difficult process. To be successful, you must understand something about the process, have realistic expectations about what the process can do, and about our respective roles in making this process work. Please read this handout carefully, and bring up any questions in our next session.

### **The Therapeutic Relationship**

No psychotherapist can “magically” change the course of your life. The single most important factor to success in psychotherapy is the relationship between the client and therapist. If you feel comfortable with the therapist, if you can put your trust in her/his professional expertise, then you are likely to resolve your psychological issues. I invite and expect all of my clients to talk with me regarding our relationship.

For many, therapy is a new experience, and this means that there may be some initial discomfort about knowing what to do during the therapeutic hour. Please feel free to ask me any questions about the therapy process, the course of your treatment, or any other question pertaining to the process of psychotherapy.

### **Course of Treatment**

After I have come to understand something about you, the problems you face, and the environment in which these problems occur, I will formulate a treatment plan, which I will share with you verbally. Depending on the client, it may take one session or several sessions before I can form an adequate treatment plan. During the course of therapy, I will revise this plan as needed, to account for your changing condition, or my changing understanding of you. I believe

that psychotherapy requires your active involvement in order to change your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. I will ask for your feedback and views on your therapy and treatment plan, the efforts and progress we are making, and other aspects. It will be helpful if you are open about these. Offering your views and responses when they are important to you, even if I don't ask, is one of the ways you are an active partner in therapy. You are encouraged to ask any questions, at any time, about your treatment plan and the procedures used during therapy. If you are uncomfortable with the treatment at any time, please discuss this with me.

Sometimes in successful psychotherapy you may feel worse for a time before you begin to feel better. This happens because you begin to confront the issues that you have tried to avoid. It is not easy or pleasant to confront this material -- it is likely to be somewhat depressing for a while. However, it is worth the effort, because you can resolve the pain and dysfunctional behaviors caused by these issues.

There are no "magic pills" in psychotherapy; we cannot absolutely guarantee that any particular psychological treatment will be successful. If you do not begin to experience some positive changes within 6 weeks, please discuss this with me.

If you haven't had a recent physical evaluation by your physician, I encourage you to do so. There are a variety of medical problems that can profoundly affect your emotions and behavior. It is helpful to me in devising treatment of your psychological issues to rule out any medical condition that might affect your behavior.

## **Risks of Therapy**

Whenever you attempt to change something, there is always some risk involved. When you try to change something as complex as a human being, enmeshed in an intricate web of relationships, there may be unexpected and even negative consequences. These could include not getting better right away; getting worse before you get better; having to deal with the fears and anxieties that occur when you face your pain directly; and the possibility of a temporary regression. Further, as you change, your relationships with significant others will change; and those others may not like the way you are changing. All of these are risks that may occur and of which you need to be aware. I am here to help you with these changes, should they occur, and I hope you will share them with me.

## **Completing Treatment**

Usually both the therapist and the client have an intuitive sense when therapy has come to completion. When I begin to sense that we are nearing the conclusion of your therapy, I will bring it up with you. If you have a sense that you have successfully addressed the issues for which you sought therapy, then please share that with me. We will plan how to address any remaining issues, and when to end treatment. Ending your therapy should not be done casually, as it can be made a most valuable part of our work. Therefore, if you wish to end your therapy, and we have not previously discussed this, we need to meet for several sessions to review our work together, our goals and accomplishments, any future work to be done, and your options.

## **Confidentiality and Its Limits**

The communications between a psychotherapist and client are “privileged communications,” which means that they may not be revealed to anyone else without consent of the holder of that privilege, which is you, the client. There are, however, several important limitations on that privilege, including:

1. You sign a written document waiving your rights to confidentiality.
2. You were referred for evaluation by the Courts, in which case I am required to furnish the Court with information.
3. You were referred for evaluation or treatment by an agency that requires the therapist to furnish information back to the agency.
4. Your therapist is subpoenaed in a court proceeding, in which case I may be obliged to surrender clinical case notes. This is a very rare occurrence, and would never happen without your knowledge.
5. I am required by law to report any incident of suspected child abuse, molestation, or neglect to the authorities.
6. I am required by law to report any incident of suspected elder abuse, or neglect to the authorities.
7. You intend to commit suicide or homicide, in which case I am required by law to notify the authorities, and any potential victims.
8. If you are a minor, I have to keep your parents or guardians informed of your progress if they ask, but we do not have to share the details of your conversations.
9. If you will be using your insurance, you must sign a release of information for me to contact the insurance company. Each company is different, some require more personal information than others in order to reimburse for services.

## **Availability**

I am ordinarily available by appointment Monday through Friday. We will decide together when your regular appointment will be, within these hours. If, during the course of treatment, you need to change your appointment I will be happy to explore that with you.

Ordinarily, I will schedule you for one appointment per week. If you are in severe crisis, we will schedule more than one depending on your need.

If an emergency arises, you may reach me by phoning the office number at any time of the day or night. You will reach my answering service and they have all of my contact numbers. They will attempt to reach me at those numbers if you tell them it is an emergency. Every effort will be made to return your call as soon as possible. If, however, your emergency call is not returned in a timely manner, dial "911" to be connected with emergency services.

When I go out of town, I typically make arrangements with another therapist to take emergency calls for me. I take some pains to entrust my clients into the care of extremely competent therapists.

## **Hospitalization**

If your psychological problems are of sufficient severity as to require hospitalization, I can arrange hospitalization for you. Please discuss with me any feelings that you might have about needing to be hospitalized.

## **Medication**

If you believe that medication would help your psychological condition, please discuss this matter with me. While psychologists cannot prescribe medication, I do have working relationships with several psychiatrists and can facilitate this for you. Typically, I do not recommend medication except in severe disorders.

## **Ethics**

Each therapist in this office adheres to the Codes of Ethics of their professional organization and the state licensing body. If you have any complaints about my professional services, please talk with me about your concerns. If you are not satisfied after talking with me, you may write the chairman of the Ethics Committee, Board of Psychology, 1625 North Market Blvd., Suite N-215, Sacramento, CA 95834.

**Again, Welcome.** If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them. I am here to serve you. I hope that your time here will be rewarding for you, and I will work diligently to help you accomplish your therapeutic goals.