

INFORMATION YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW

When you come for therapy, you are buying a service. Therefore, you need information to make a good decision. Below are some questions you might want to ask. You are entitled to ask me any of these questions. If you don't understand my answers, ask me again.

The Office and Fee Policies & General Information Agreement for Psychotherapy Services handout, the Notice of Privacy Practices and the Informed Consent to Treatment form covered many of these questions. I will be happy to explain them and answer any other questions you may have. This will help make your decision a good one. You can keep this information. Please read it carefully.

I. THERAPY

- A. What is the name of your kind of therapy?
- B. How did you learn to do this kind of therapy? Where?
- C. How does your kind of therapy compare with other kinds of therapy?
- D. How does your kind of therapy work?
- E. What are the possible risks involved? (Like divorce, depression, etc.)
- F. What percentage of clients improve? In what ways? How do you know? (eg. Published research? Your own practice experience? Discussions with your colleagues?)
- G. What percentage of clients get worse?
- H. What percentage of clients improve or get worse without therapy? How do you know?
- I. About how long will this take?
- J. What should I do if I feel therapy isn't working?
- K. Will I have to take any tests? If so, what kind?
- L. Do you follow a manual with pre-determined steps?
- M. Do you do therapy over the phone? Over the internet?

II. ALTERNATIVES

- A. What other types of therapy or help are there? (Like support groups, etc.)
- B. How often do they work? How do you know?
- C. What are the risks and benefits of these other approaches? What are the risks and benefits of NO therapy?
- D. How is your type of therapy different from these others?
- E. Do you prescribe medication? Do you work with others who do?
- F. (If I am taking medications:) Will you be working together with the doctor who prescribed my medication? How much do you know about the medications I am taking?

III. APPOINTMENTS

- A. How are appointments scheduled?
- B. How long are sessions? Do I have to pay for longer ones?
- C. How can I reach you in an emergency?
- D. If you are not available, who is there that I can talk to?
- E. What happens if the weather is bad, or I'm sick?

IV. CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. What kind of records do you keep? Who has access to them? (Insurance companies, billing clerk, my physician, my family, etc.)
- B. Under what conditions are you allowed to tell others about the things we discuss? (Suicidal or homicidal threats, child or elder abuse, court cases, insurance companies, consultation group) .
- C. Do other members of my family have access to information?
- D. How do governmental regulations (such as the federal Health Information Portability and Accountability Act) influence how you handle the confidentiality of my records? Under these regulations, is confidentiality equal for all types of information?

V. MONEY

- A. What is your fee?
- B. How do I need to pay? At the session, monthly, etc.?
- C. Do I need to pay for missed sessions?
- D. Do I need to pay for telephone calls, letters or emails?
- E. What are your policies about raising fees? (For example, how many times have you raised them in the past two years?)
- F. If I lose my source of income, can my fee be lowered?
- G. If I do not pay my fee, will you take me to small claims court? Do you use a collection agency or lawyer? Under what circumstances?

VI. INSURANCE/MANAGED CARE

- A. How much and what kind of information will you be required to tell the insurance company about our sessions? (diagnosis, symptoms, etc.)
- B. How much influence does the insurance company have on the therapy? (length, goals, etc.)
- C. What if I switch insurance companies or lose my insurance? Or what if you stop accepting my insurance?
- D. What if you disagree with the insurance company about the best treatment?
- E. How would therapy be different if I chose to pay without using insurance?

VII. GENERAL

- A. What is your training and experience? Are you licensed by the state? Supervised?
- B. Are you a psychologist? Psychiatrist? Counselor? Family therapist? What are the advantages and limitations of your credentials?
- C. Whom do I talk to if I have a complaint about therapy which we can't work out?