

Formation Counseling Services, Inc.
A Ministry of Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church

CONSENT FOR EVALUATION, PSYCHOTHERAPY OR COUNSELING

The decision to use psychological services, including evaluation, counseling or psychotherapy or other related services is an important one which may have significant consequences. Research has shown that when individuals enter these types of services with a good understanding of what they are going to experience, they are more likely to see positive results. The following is provided to help you understand the services you are thinking of receiving, so that you can make an informed choice regarding your decision to receive those services.

What is psychotherapy or counseling? Psychotherapy or therapy or counseling (we use these terms to mean the same thing in this setting) is a tool that involves, among other things: working with a trained mental health professional toward the end of promoting emotional healing; developing strategies for handling problems of daily living; experiencing a decrease in psychological symptoms; promoting healing and growth within relationships; and promoting personal and spiritual (for those interested) growth.

Various methods are employed in psychotherapy depending on the problems people present and the goals they have for their experience. It is important that you understand the particular methods your therapist plans on employing to help you meet your therapy goals. However, you need to know that psychotherapy most always involves talking about the issues and events that are important in your life and clarifying your thoughts and feelings regarding those issues and events. Psychotherapy may involve working with an individual, couple, family or group, depending on the nature of the problems involved.

Because you are seeking counseling in a Christian therapy setting, you will be meeting with a therapist who is trained to integrate the Christian faith with the services you receive. Please understand that if you do not want services from a Christian perspective, this wish will be honored and respected. You will be offered the highest quality clinical services possible to treat your situation while respecting your views regarding religion and spirituality. If you are a Christian and you would like services that integrate your Christian faith with the counseling you receive, your therapist will work with you to do this in the way that is best for you.

What benefits can I expect from psychotherapy or counseling? It is important to understand that psychotherapy is both an art and a science. While many people benefit from therapy, the results cannot be guaranteed. Whether or not a person benefits from counseling depends on many factors, including, for example: how serious the difficulties are that prompted counseling; how long the individual has experienced these difficulties; how well the person functioned before the difficulties began; how much support is available from family and friends as the person uses therapy to make life changes; how motivated the person is to experience change; and how well the individual makes use of the process of therapy toward the end of meeting their goals.

Research has shown that about two thirds of all clients show improvement during therapy. Those who show improvement may report an increase in their awareness and understanding of their feelings and thoughts, a decrease in psychological symptoms, an increased sense of well-being, and an increase in the quality of their relationships, to name some possibilities. Those who seek counseling that integrates their spiritual lives may also report an increase in the beneficial practice of their faith as a result of counseling.

What are the possible side effects from psychotherapy or counseling? It is important that you know that there are possible risks associated with being involved in psychotherapy. Although therapy is unlikely to be harmful, it may stir up or make you aware of uncomfortable or painful thoughts or feelings. As this occurs, sometimes people report feeling worse before they feel better as they begin therapy. These periods are typically temporary. You also need to know that changes resulting from therapy, even positive changes, may adversely affect relationships with certain people in your life.

If you have questions or concerns about your therapy, either as you begin the process or during the course of therapy, you are strongly encouraged to discuss your concerns with your therapist. If you are not satisfied with the way your therapist addresses your concerns, you might consider seeking a second opinion regarding your situation or changing to a different therapist. Competent therapists recognize that they will be better able to serve the needs of some clients versus others. A good therapist will want to ensure that you are working with the therapist that is the best possible match for your needs.

What are alternative sources of help? It will help you to remember that other services may be important for you to consider in addition to or instead of psychotherapy or counseling. You are encouraged to work with your therapist to decide if it will be helpful for you to explore other options for your situation, such as psychotropic medication, books, changes in your job situation, self-help or support groups, pastoral counseling, vocational counseling, or legal assistance, to name some examples.

I acknowledge that I have received and read the above information. I acknowledge that I have had any questions about the above information answered to my satisfaction. I do hereby seek and consent to participate in evaluation, counseling, and or psychotherapy as offered by this counseling service.

I am aware that the practice of psychotherapy or counseling is not an exact science and so predictions of the effects, both positive and negative, are not precise or guaranteed. I acknowledge that no guarantees have been made to me regarding the results of treatment, including evaluation, psychotherapy or counseling or other procedures provided by this counseling service. I am aware that I may terminate my treatment with this counseling service at any time without consequence, but that I will be responsible to pay for the services I have received. I am also aware that I have been promised a copy of this document, should I so desire.

Signed

Date _____

Please print your name