

Peter Oppermann, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist #12395
Phone: (925) 878-5288

OFFICE POLICIES & GENERAL INFORMATION
AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES

Dear Client,

I hope the following information will assist you in beginning our therapy together. Although the information may sound somewhat threatening, it is only intended to provide you with ethical and legal standards. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call before or after we begin sessions together.

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.

When Disclosure is Required by Law: Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required by the law are when there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent, or elder abuse or neglect; 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. Oppermann. In couple or family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. Dr. Oppermann will use his clinical judgment when revealing such information.

Emergencies: If there is an emergency during our work together, or in the future after termination where Dr. Oppermann becomes concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper psychiatric care, he will do whatever he 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, he may also contact the person whose name you have provided on the biographical sheet.

Health Insurance: Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO/PPO/MCO/EAP in order to process the claims. Only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Dr. Oppermann has no control or knowledge over what insurance companies do with the information he submits or who has access to this information.

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 proceeding (such as, but not limited to, divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc...), neither you (client's) nor your attorney's, nor anyone else acting on your behalf will require Dr. Oppermann to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested.

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

Your Right to Review Records: As a client, you have the right to review or receive a summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when Dr. Oppermann assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in anyway. In such a case Dr. Oppermann will provide the records to an appropriate and legitimate mental health professional of your choice.

Cancellation: Since scheduling an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24 hours (1 day) notice is appreciated for rescheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless a different agreement has been made, a **\$100 fee** will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. If you leave a message to cancel, please confirm your next appointment (day, date, and time) so there are no misunderstandings. Confirming your next visit is important and appreciated as it prevents unnecessary additional phone calls. Unfortunately, most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions.

Telephone and Emergency Procedures: If you need to contact Dr. Oppermann between sessions, please leave a message on the voice mail service (925) 878-5288 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Please call from 9:00a.m. to 8:00p.m. for non-emergency calls. Call between 8:00p.m. and 9:00a.m. only if it is urgent. Dr. Oppermann checks his messages several times a day during the week. Please leave your name, the date, and your telephone number where Dr. Oppermann can reach you, even if you think Dr. Oppermann already has it. In case of an emergency, please indicate it clearly in your message and Dr. Oppermann will call you back as soon as he is able to. If you need to talk to someone right away, please call the 24 hour crisis line (800) 222-8220, the Police (911), or the 24 hour Psychiatric Emergency.

Payment and Insurance Reimbursement: Clients are expected to pay the agreed upon fee, which may be the full fee, a sliding scale fee, or in insurance cases, a co-payment. The standard fee is **\$220 per 60-minute session**, which should be paid 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... , may be charged at the same rate, unless agreed otherwise. Please notify Dr. Oppermann if any problem arises during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments.

Please remember Professional services are rendered and charged to the clients and not to the insurance company. Dr. Oppermann's Billing Service will submit your bill to your insurance

company at least twice a month. 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. Should insurance not cover visits, full payment is due for completed visits. Payment for visits is ultimately the responsibility of the client.

Mediation and 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 part chosen by agreement of Dr. Oppermann 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 shall be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in Contra Costa or Alameda County, California in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association, which is in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the even that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, Dr. Oppermann may use legal means to obtain payment. The prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceeding shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum as and for attorneys' fees. In the case of arbitration, that sum will be determined by the arbitrator.

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. Oppermann 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. During evaluation or therapy, remembering or talking about unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts can result in your experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc... This distress is typically temporary.

Dr. Oppermann may also challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations which 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 change that were not originally intended. Psychotherapy may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance abuse, 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. Oppermann is likely to draw on various psychological approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and his assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include cognitive-behavioral, expressive, psychodynamic, existential, system/family, developmental or psychoeducational techniques.

Discussion of Treatment Plan: Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, Dr. Oppermann will discuss with you (client) his working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and his opinion as to whether he can help you. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your therapy, Dr. Oppermann's expertise in employing them, or about the treatment plan, please ask and he will answer all questions in good faith.

Termination: After the first few meetings, Dr. Oppermann will assess if he can be of benefit to you. Dr. Oppermann does not accept clients who, in his opinion, he cannot help. In such a case, he will give you some referrals whom you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy Dr. Oppermann assesses that he is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals, he is obligated to discuss it with you and, if appropriate, to terminate treatment. In such a case, he would give you a number of referrals which may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, Dr. Oppermann 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. Opperman will assist you in finding someone qualified, and if he has your written consent, he 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. Oppermann will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

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

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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