

Sara Denman, Psy. D.

Licensed Psychologist

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**OFFICE POLICIES AND GENERAL INFORMATION
AGREEMENT FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES**

This form provides you (patient) with information that is additional to the HIPPA Notice of Privacy Practices.

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 are described in the Notice of Privacy Practices.

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.

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When Disclosure May be Required: Disclosure may be required pursuant a legal proceeding. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant ay have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by Dr. Sara Denman. 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. Sara Denman will use her clinical judgment when revealing such information. Dr. Denman 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 your work with Dr. Sara Denman, or in the future after termination where Dr. Sara Denman 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 person whose name you have provided on the patient information sheet.

Health Insurance and Confidentiality of Records: Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO/PPO/EAP in order to process the claims. If you instruct Dr. Sara Denman, 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. Sara Denman 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 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.

Confidentiality of E-mail and Cell Phone Communication: It is very important to be aware that e-mail and cell phone communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence, the privacy and confidentiality of such communication can be compromised.

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. Sara Denman to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested.

Consultation: Dr. Sara Denman 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 and Emergency Procedures: If you need to contact Dr. Sara Denman between sessions, please leave a message on the voicemail at (925) 648-4941 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. You may also email her at drsaradenman@gmail.com. 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 the 24-hour county psych unit at (925) 646-2800.

Payments and Insurance Reimbursement: Clients are expected to pay the standard fee of \$175.00 per 50 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. Sara Denman 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. If requested, Dr. Sara Denman will provide you with a copy of your receipt on a monthly basis, which you can then submit to your insurance company for reimbursement if you so choose. As was indicated in the section, *Health Insurance and 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.

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MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION: All disputes arising out of or in relation to this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediations, before, and as a pre-condition of, the initiation 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 Contra Costa County, CA 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. Sara Denman 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 the sum.

THE PROCESS OF THERAPY: 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. Sara Denman will ask for your feedback and views and will expect you to respond openly and honestly. Sometimes more than one approach will be helpful in dealing with certain situations and Dr. Sara Denman has expertise in many different techniques. During 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. Sara Denman may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling a situation that can cause you to feel 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. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and even frustrating at times. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield the intended results. During the course of therapy, Dr. Sara Denman will likely 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, systems/family, developmental (adult, child, family), psycho-educational, mindfulness, DBT or ACT.

Termination: As set forth above, after the first couple of meetings, Dr. Sara Denman will assess if she can be of benefit to you. She 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 who may be a better fit for you. If at any point during psychotherapy, Dr. Sara Denman 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. Sara Denman 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. Sara Denman 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. Sara Denman will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

Dual Relationships: Not all dual relationships are unethical or avoidable. Therapy never involves sexual or any other dual relationship that impairs Dr. Sara Denman's objectivity, clinical judgment, or therapeutic effectiveness or can be exploitative in nature. Dr. Sara Denman will assess carefully before entering into non-sexual and non-exploitative dual relationships with clients. Danville is a small town and many clients know each other and Dr. Sara Denman from the community. Consequently you may bump into someone you know in the waiting room or into Dr. Sara Denman out in the community. Dr. Sara Denman will never acknowledge working therapeutically with anyone without his/her written permission. Many clients choose Dr. Sara Denman as their therapist because they know her before they enter into therapy with her and/or are aware of her stance on the topic. Nevertheless, Dr. Sara Denman will discuss with you, her client/s, the often-existing complexities, potential benefits, and difficulties that may be involved in such relationships. It is you, the client's, responsibility to communicate to Dr. Sara Denman if the dual relationship becomes uncomfortable for you in any way. Dr. Sara Denman will always listen carefully and respond accordingly to your feedback. Dr. Sara Denman will discontinue the dual relationship if she finds it interfering with the effectiveness of the therapeutic process or the welfare of the client. In an attempt to cut down on

the dual relationship issues, she does not accept clients as “friends” on Facebook or any other social on-line networks.

CANCELLATION: Since scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24 hour notice is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless we reach a different agreement, the full fee will be charged for sessions missed less than a 24 hour notice. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions so if you are using insurance, you will need to pay Dr. Sara Denman directly for those missed sessions.

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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