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INFORMED CONSENT

Welcome to my counseling practice! The decision to begin counseling is one which may impact significant areas of your life. This form contains information to help you make informed decisions about the unique process of counseling and my services and policies.

The Therapy Process

Terri will establish therapeutic goals with her clients. Assignments and/ or recommended changes in behavior are often made following sessions. Completing these should facilitate therapy and reduce the number of sessions needed. Please bring up any concerns that you have about therapy or your therapist so they can be resolved. Please be as open as possible concerning any issues that relate to your problems. Withholding information may cause therapy to take longer. Parents of minor children need to be involved in the therapy in order for it to be effective. Although therapy may help you personally and with your relationships, it may not by itself resolve your issues. Assessment of your progress will be made periodically with you to ensure movement toward your goals.

Therapist qualifications and credentials

Terri Clinton Dichiser, M.A., J.D., has a Master's degree in Counseling and Guidance with emphasis in marriage and family therapy. I am a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in Kansas and a Licensed Professional Counselor in Missouri. I am also a National Certified Counselor. I provide individual, relationship and family therapy.

Financial considerations and arrangements

Terri's session fee is \$95 per 50-minute session. Sessions are 50 minutes, unless otherwise agreed upon. Terri is able to offer some reduced fees whether or not you have insurance.

***Most PPO plans are accepted and reimburse at least 50% after the out-of-network deductible is met. HMO insurance plans are not reimbursed.** Insurance will not guarantee payment until claims are filed.

***Please be prepared to pay at least half of your session fee at the end of each session, unless other arrangements have been made.** If you have insurance Terri's bookkeeper will file it for you. All balances are expected to be paid at the end of the month. If you have a credit balance when you end therapy and all insurance has been paid, a check will be mailed to you.

***The first time you cancel a session with less than 24 hours notice, there is no charge. From the second time on there will be a charge of \$50, unless the cancellation is due to bad weather.**

***If you request a report, there will be a charge for the report**

***Account balances over 30 days old (except insurance money due) will incur finance charges at the rate of 18% per year.**

***Account balances over 90 days old are subject to collection and being turned over to a collection agency or attorney.**

***There is a separate fee schedule for testifying in court or for depositions. Please see section on lawsuits.**

Appointments

Your appointment time has been reserved especially for you. If you need to change your appointment, call the office at least 24 hours before your scheduled appointment time to avoid being charged for the session.

Consultation

If you could benefit from a treatment I cannot provide, I will help you get it. You have a right to ask me about such other treatments, their risks, and their benefits. Based on what I learn about your problems, I may recommend a medical exam or use of medication. If I do this, I will fully discuss my reason with you, so that you can decide what is best. If you are treated by another professional, I will coordinate my services with them and with your own medical doctor.

Limits to Confidentiality

I am dedicated to preserving the confidentiality and privacy of all my clients. However some state laws specify certain circumstances when mental health professionals are required to breach confidentiality. I want you to be informed of these limits on confidentiality.

- When information pertains to child or elder abuse or neglect
- When information pertains to a criminal act
- When a child was the victim of a crime
- When a client brings charges against the therapist
- When the court orders the therapist's testimony or your records.
- When the therapist is collaborating or consulting with professional colleagues. This helps me in providing high quality treatment. These persons are also required to keep your information private.
- When the client presents a clear and immediate danger to herself or himself or other person or persons (suicide and homicide)
- In order to provide insurance with information about therapy
- Parents have a right to have a reasonably account of their minor child's therapy.

Occasionally when a child/ adolescent reveals information in therapy, they wish it to remain confidential. Usually their request will be honored unless it involves dangerous behavior such as drug/alcohol use, sex, suicidal ideation or running away.

It may be beneficial for me to confer with your primary care physician with regard to your psychological treatment or to discuss any medical problems for which you are receiving treatment.

Please check ONE of the following:

You are authorized to contact my primary care physician whose name and address are shown below to discuss the treatment that I am receiving while under your care and to obtain information concerning my medical diagnosis

Physician _____ Phone Number: _____

I do not authorize you to contact my primary care physician with regard to the treatment that I am receiving while under your care or to obtain information concerning my care.

Contacting Terri Outside of Scheduled Session

When Terri is unavailable (vacation), you will be provided with the number of another therapist in the office.

I cannot promise that I will be available at all times. I usually do not take telephone calls when I am with a client. You can always leave a message on my voice mail and I will return your call as soon as I can. Generally, I return messages daily except weekends and holidays. If the message is left after 5:00 p.m. I will return the message the next business day.

If you have an emergency or crisis, call me at (913) 226-4972. If you cannot reach me in a dire emergency, call your own medical doctor, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911.

I find that telephone therapy does not work as well as face to face therapy, and so I discourage it. I will generally suggest a counseling session if you call with a problem that is not critical. If we do have telephone contact, this service will be charged at my usual rate.

Telephone, Internet and Cell Phones

Counseling should occur during scheduled sessions and will not be conducted over the internet or on the telephone. I cannot insure the confidentiality of communication through the internet, e-mails and cell phones. Additional charges will be charged to you and prorated based on your session rate, i.e. 15 minutes = _ of your session rate for e-mails and cell phone calls.

Lawsuits, Testimony, Depositions, Divorce and Custody Proceedings

Notice: In the event that a subpoena for records or testimony is received, the policy will be that (1) the client will be notified in writing and provided with a copy of the subpoena; (2) the client must either provide the practitioner with a written waiver of objection to the subpoena or indicate that an objection will be filed with the court (with a copy sent to the practitioner); and (3) if an objection to that subpoena is to be filed, it is the responsibility of the client to have it filed with the court.

If you ever become involved in a divorce or custody dispute, I want you to understand and agree that I will not provide evaluations or expert testimony in court. You should hire a different mental health professional for any evaluations or testimony you require. This position is based on two reasons: (1) My statement will be seen as biased in your favor because we have a therapy relationship; and (2) the testimony might affect our therapy relationship and I must put this relationship first.

This psychotherapy will not yield recommendations about custody. In general, I recommend that parties who are disputing custody strongly consider participation in alternative forms of negotiation and conflict resolution, including mediation and custody evaluation, rather than try to settle a custody dispute in court.

In providing testimony my hourly rate is \$190 and includes all time out of the office (including travel time). I require payment five business days in advance of the testimony. The charge will occur even if I do not testify unless given seven days notice of the cancellation, as I was unable to schedule any clients during this time. Any time spent meeting with your attorney will also be billed at \$190 per hour.

In providing a deposition in my office, I will charge my normal clinical fee of \$95 per hour. You will also be billed for the time needed to review your file or other related activities. If I

