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Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them. Your signature on the Consent to Treatment and Psychological Services acknowledges that you have read this information and that it constitutes an agreement between us.

**ABOUT DR. KYLE'S TRAINING AND CREDENTIALS**

I am licensed as a Psychologist by the Alaska Board of Psychologists and Psychological Associate Examiners (License number 628). I earned a Psy.D. (Doctorate of Psychology) degree in counseling psychology from the Department of Psychology at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio Texas. I also have a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology. I completed a practicum at The Alaska Native Medical Center (for my Master's Degree), Our Lady of the Lake University Community Counseling Center and Brooke Army Medical Center, Child, and Adolescent Psychological Services. My doctoral internship was completed at St. Mary's Medical Center in West Palm Beach, Florida, where I specialized in child psychology and pediatric neuropsychological assessment. I completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, Department of Psychology, Child and Adolescent Psychology. I am recognized by the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology. Registrant #51360. My practice is guided by the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association and by state law.

**MY THERAPY APPROACH**

Although my training focused largely on children and families, it also included individual adult therapy. I use cognitive-behavioral, family systems, and/or solution-focused approaches to therapy, depending on the client's needs. However, the therapeutic relationship with the client

(and family) is the most important aspect of therapy. It is through collaborative exploration with the client (and family) that growth and recovery develop and solutions are discovered. Therefore, it is vital that you trust your therapist to a degree that you can be totally open and honest (with the therapist and with yourself). This means that if you have trouble being open, honest, or doing your part, we need to discuss the reasons for this trouble and explore the possible solutions. Many issues addressed in therapy needs also to be addressed outside the therapy session, therefore, I may make recommendations for outside exercises or I may recommend reading material.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the problems you bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

## **MEETINGS**

I normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 4 sessions. During this time, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, I will usually schedule one 50-minute session (one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation, you will be charged \$75 for missed appointments, unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. If it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment.

## **PROFESSIONAL FEES**

My hourly fee is \$150. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 20 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me.

## **LEGAL PROCEEDINGS**

Clients will frequently request services related to legal proceedings involving divorce or custody disputes. There are professionals in the community who have expertise in this area and who can provide comprehensive assessments for legal proceedings. Please let me know if you intend to use my services for any legal proceedings so that I can refer you to the appropriate professional. I will not accept cases where this is the parent's intent. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$250 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

## **BILLING AND PAYMENTS**

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment. I do

not bill insurance, but will provide you with a superbill that you can submit to your insurance company to repay you the fees that the insurance company has agreed to pay.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

### **INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

I do not bill your insurance. My practice is an Out of Network or Private Pay office only. Some health plans, such as an HMO plan, will not cover care from out-of-network providers at all. In that case I can only accept private pay, meaning the client pays my fee with no expectation for reimbursement from their insurance company. Also, Alaska statutes does not allow independently practicing Psychologists to bill Medicaid. Therefore, I am unable to see clients, who wish to use Medicaid Health Insurance Benefits.

For us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I do not bill health insurance directly; I will provide a superbill to you, which you can submit to your health insurance company for compensation of my fees in accordance with your health insurance policy. I will provide you with whatever assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Of course, I will provide you with whatever information I can based on my experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, I will be willing to call the company on your behalf.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. “Managed Health Care” plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. I will provide you with the whatever information I can to obtain authorization, but I am not able to provide my services until the authorization is obtained. I can only provide the services authorized. If more services as needed than are authorized, I will do my best to assist you in finding the services you need.

### **SUPERBILL**

The Superbill contains all the information you need to submit a claim to your insurance company for your covered benefits. However, payment from insurance is not guaranteed. Insurance will only cover up to their contract rate. My rate may be more than the contract rate. By submitting a superbill, you are giving the insurance company permission to audit the case notes. If the insurance company requests repayment for any reason, it is you who will owe the money and not this provider. Most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I must provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands.

### **CONTACTING ME**

I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am usually in my office between 10AM and 5 PM on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, I probably will not answer the phone when I am with a patient. I do have call-in hours at 5-6 PM on Fridays. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail that I monitor frequently. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, apart from weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychiatrist on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

## **PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or I can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. I am sometimes willing to conduct a review meeting without charge. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless I believe that seeing them would be emotionally damaging, in which case I will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. I am sometimes willing to conduct a review meeting without charge. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent in preparing information requests.

## **MINORS**

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is my policy to request an agreement from parents that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless I feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, I will notify them of my concern. Before giving them any information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections you may have with what I am prepared to discuss.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I must reveal some information about a patient's treatment. For example, if I believe that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is being abused, I must file a report with the appropriate state agency.

If I believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I may be required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If the patient threatens to harm himself/herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

These situations have rarely occurred in my practice. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at our next meeting. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and I am not an attorney.

### **IN-PERSON VISITS & SARS-CoV-2 ("COVID-19")**

When guidance from public health authorities allows and your Provider offers, we can meet in-person. If you attend therapy in-person, you understand the following: You can only attend if you are symptom-free (For symptoms, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>); and if you are experiencing symptoms, you can switch to a telehealth appointment or cancel. If you need to cancel, you will not be charged a late cancellation fee. Please know, you must follow all safety protocols established by the practice, including: following the check-in procedure; washing or sanitizing your hands upon entering the practice;

adhering to appropriate social distancing measures; wearing a mask, if required; telling me if you have a high risk of exposure to COVID-19, such as through school, work, or commuting; and telling me if you or someone in your home tests positive for COVID-19.

I may be mandated to report to public health authorities if you have been in the office and have tested positive for infection. If so, I may make the report without your permission, but will only share necessary information. I will never share details about your visit. Because the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, your ability to meet in person could change with minimal or no notice. By signing this Consent, you understand that you could be exposed to COVID-19 if you attend in-person sessions. If I test positive for COVID-19, you will be notified. If you have any questions, or if you want a copy of this policy, please ask.

### **TERMINATION**

The end of psychological services is usually agreed upon by the psychologist and client. Clients are free to terminate therapy sessions at any time. If you cannot attend your appointments three times in a row or more than four times within two months, I will need to terminate services as treatment is usually not effective when consistency cannot be maintained. However, clients considering premature termination or with complaints about the services are urged to discuss these concerns with me. Referral to alternative sources of treatment can be discussed.