

# Sara Wye, MA, LMHC

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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 that you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. Once you sign this, it will constitute a binding agreement between us.

## **The Treatment Process**

I offer individual psychotherapy, and **sometimes**, couple and family meetings as an adjunct to individual psychotherapy. My orientation is broadly eclectic, which means I draw from a number of different theoretical perspectives.

The goals of therapy are arrived at by mutual agreement. The length of therapy can range from a few sessions to a number of years. It is often hard to realistically assess at the beginning how long therapy will take.

Sessions are usually scheduled for 50 minutes. You and I will determine the frequency, depending upon your goals, the financial support for your therapy, and our mutual assessment of what frequency is likely to fit your needs best.

Psychotherapy has both benefits and risks. Risks sometimes include experiencing uncomfortable levels of feelings like sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger and frustration, loneliness and helplessness. Psychotherapy often requires recalling unpleasant aspects of your personal history. On the positive side, psychotherapy has been shown to benefit most people who undertake it. It often leads to a significant reduction of feelings of distress, better relationships, and resolutions of specific problems. But there are no guarantees about what will happen.

After our initial one or several evaluation sessions, I will tell you my impressions and make some recommendations, including whether I think I'm the right person to treat you. You need to think carefully about 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, or anything else about our work, we should discuss them whenever they come up. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you get a consultation with another mental health professional.

## **Fees**

My regular fee for a 50 minute session is \$115; \$165.- for the initial session. If we meet for longer or shorter periods, the fee is adjusted accordingly. Reduced rates can be negotiated, depending upon my low-fee client load and other circumstances. If your financial circumstances change over the course of treatment, we might renegotiate the fee. Also, I reevaluate fees once a year, and my own fee may go up over the course of a treatment that lasts more than one year. I would prefer you to pay me at the time you come for your appointment.

I do not charge for telephone contacts that are shorter than 15 minutes, but do charge my usual fee on a prorated basis for calls 15 minutes or longer.

Twenty four hours is requested for cancellations or changes of appointment times, or else you will be expected to pay your full fee for the cancelled session. In the event of illness or emergency, there will be no charge

for a cancellation. Insurance companies do not pay for missed appointments, so you will be expected to make any payment yourself.

### **Insurance Coverage**

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources are available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health benefits policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I will help in whatever way I can to insure you receive the benefits to which you are entitled, including filling out forms as appropriate. However you, and not your insurance company, are responsible for full payment of the fee we have agreed to.

You need to be aware that insurance agreements require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis, and sometimes additional clinical information such as a treatment plan or summary, or in rare cases, a copy of the entire treatment record. This information will become part of the insurance company files, and computerized. All insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, but once it is in their hands, I have no control over what they do with it. I will provide you with a copy of any report which I submit on your behalf.

### **Telephone Accessibility**

You can always call me at 401-821-0929, where you will usually reach an answering machine accessed only by myself. I will return your call as soon as possible, and usually within the day. I do not carry a beeper and am usually not available during the night. If you cannot reach me and feel you cannot wait for me to return your call, you should call your family physician or the emergency room at the nearest hospital and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. If I am unavailable for an extended time, and if you feel it would be helpful, I will provide you with the name of a colleague whom you can contact if necessary.

### **Record**

As required by law and professional ethics, I maintain a confidential record of your contacts with me. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records, unless I have reason to believe seeing the records would be emotionally damaging, in which case, I will be happy to provide them to an appropriate mental health professional of your choice. Professional records can be misinterpreted and/or can be upsetting. If you wish to see your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss what they contain. Clients will be charged an appropriate fee for any preparation time which is required to comply with their information requests.

### **Confidentiality**

Except as described elsewhere in these pages, I will not reveal to anyone any details about your consultations or therapy, or even the fact that you have met with me without your consent. If in the course of our work, we decide to meet with members of your family or with friends, we will discuss the limits and expectations about confidentiality in advance.

There are circumstances under which I am legally obligated to take action, even though that requires revealing some information about a client's treatment. If what you tell me leads me to believe that a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person is being abused, I must file a report with the appropriate state agency. If I believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I am required to take protective actions. If a client indicates a serious intent to harm him/herself, I am required to attempt to prevent that harm. These events have rarely occurred in my practice. Should such a situation occur, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

### **Consultation with Colleagues**

I regularly participate in peer supervision and periodically seek consultations from experts about the psychotherapy I provide. The purpose of these consultations is to provide clients with a higher quality of service. Names and identifying information about clients are not revealed, however, in order to better protect confidentiality. If you would like to know the names of the individuals with whom I consult, please let me know and I will be glad to share that information with you.

Just as it is helpful to me to talk about my experiences as a therapist, within the bounds of maintaining appropriate confidentiality, so I believe it is helpful for clients to talk with people close with them about their experiences, to help clients keep some perspective on their experiences.

### **Interruptions in Treatment**

When I will be out of town, I will inform you about this several weeks in advance, or longer if I will be away for a week or more. If it seems desirable to both of us, I will provide the opportunity for you to meet with another therapist in the interim.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationships.

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Name

Date