



## INFORMED CONSENT FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY

*This Informed Consent for Psychotherapy document contains important information regarding your rights as a client engaged in psychotherapy services. Please read it carefully. We will then discuss it and address any questions that you may have regarding the contents of this document.*

### Purpose of Psychotherapy Services

People come into psychotherapy to address a wide variety of concerns and to reach individualized goals. These concerns can affect all areas of life. Sometimes working with a therapist regarding problems can be emotionally distressing and may lead to uncomfortable feelings such as sadness, anger, disappointment and guilt. Psychotherapy can also lead to resolution of these problems, improved relationships, or help people cope more effectively. There are no guarantees as to the outcome of psychotherapy and you may terminate services at any time.

### Methods of Treatment

The treatment approaches utilized may include Somatic Experiencing (SE), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Dynamic Attachment Re-patterning experience (DARe), and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT). These are therapies commonly used to treat the above concerns and have been researched and found to be effective. Additionally a variety of techniques may be used to assist with issues that come up over the course of therapy, too many to list exhaustively, for example stress-management and mindfulness skills.

### Information about EMDR

EMDR is a psychotherapy that enables people to heal from the symptoms and emotional distress that are the result of disturbing life experiences. Repeated studies show that by using EMDR therapy people can experience the benefits of psychotherapy that once took years to make a difference. It is widely assumed that severe emotional pain requires a long time to heal. EMDR therapy shows that the mind can in fact heal from psychological trauma much as the body recovers from physical trauma. When you cut your hand, your body works to close the wound. If a foreign object or repeated injury irritates the wound, it festers and causes pain. Once the block is removed, healing resumes. EMDR therapy demonstrates that a similar sequence of events occurs with mental processes. The brain's information processing system naturally moves toward mental health. If the system is blocked or imbalanced by the impact of a disturbing event, the emotional wound festers and can cause intense suffering. Once the block is removed, healing resumes. Using the detailed protocols and procedures learned in EMDR therapy training sessions, clinicians help clients activate their natural healing processes.

More than 30 positive controlled outcome studies have been done on EMDR therapy. Some of the studies show that 84%-90% of single-trauma victims no longer have post-traumatic stress disorder after only three 90-minute sessions. Another study, funded by the HMO Kaiser Permanente, found that 100% of the single-trauma victims and 77% of multiple trauma victims no longer were diagnosed with PTSD after only six 50-minute sessions. In another study, 77% of combat veterans were free of PTSD in 12 sessions. There has been so much research on EMDR therapy that it is now recognized as an effective form of treatment for trauma and other disturbing experiences by organizations such as the American Psychiatric Association, the World Health Organization and the Department of Defense. Given the worldwide recognition as an effective treatment of trauma, you can easily see how EMDR therapy would be effective in treating the "everyday" memories that are the reason people have low self-esteem, feelings of powerlessness, and all the myriad problems that bring them in for therapy. Over



100,000 clinicians throughout the world use the therapy. Millions of people have been treated successfully over the past 25 years.

EMDR therapy is an eight-phase treatment. Eye movements (or other bilateral stimulation) are used during one part of the session. After the clinician has determined which memory to target first, he asks the client to hold different aspects of that event or thought in mind and to use his eyes to track the therapist's hand as it moves back and forth across the client's field of vision. As this happens, for reasons believed by a Harvard researcher to be connected with the biological mechanisms involved in Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep, internal associations arise and the clients begin to process the memory and disturbing feelings. In successful EMDR therapy, the meaning of painful events is transformed on an emotional level. For instance, a rape victim shifts from feeling horror and self-disgust to holding the firm belief that, "I survived it and I am strong." Unlike talk therapy, the insights clients gain in EMDR therapy result not so much from clinician interpretation, but from the client's own accelerated intellectual and emotional processes. The net effect is that clients conclude EMDR therapy feeling empowered by the very experiences that once debased them. Their wounds have not just closed, they have transformed. As a natural outcome of the EMDR therapeutic process, the clients' thoughts, feelings and behavior are all robust indicators of emotional health and resolution—all without speaking in detail or doing homework used in other therapies.

EMDR can have the following impact on individuals:

- distressing, unresolved memories may surface
- higher levels of emotional or physical reactions that were unanticipated by the client nor therapist have been experienced by some clients during sessions
- following EMDR sessions, the processing of therapeutic information/incidents/material/insights may continue to surface, as well as dreams, memories, flashbacks, sensations and emotions

Prior to EMDR treatment, we will discuss this as well as other markers to be sure you are ready for EMDR, including considering alternative options, and you may obtain all feedback and/or professional advice you consider as necessary/appropriate to commence.

## Information About SE

The Somatic Experiencing® method is a body-oriented approach to the healing of trauma and other stress disorders. It is the life's work of Dr. Peter A. Levine, resulting from his multidisciplinary study of stress physiology, psychology, ethology, biology, neuroscience, indigenous healing practices, and medical biophysics, together with over 45 years of successful clinical application. The SE approach releases traumatic shock, which is key to transforming PTSD and the wounds of emotional and early developmental attachment trauma.

SE offers a framework to assess where a person is "stuck" in the fight, flight or freeze responses and provides clinical tools to resolve these fixated physiological states. It provides effective skills appropriate to a variety of healing professions including mental health, medicine, physical and occupational therapies, bodywork, addiction treatment, first response, education, and others.

Trauma may begin as acute stress from a perceived life-threat or as the end product of cumulative stress. Both types of stress can seriously impair a person's ability to function with resilience and ease. Trauma may result from a wide variety of stressors such as accidents, invasive medical procedures,



sexual or physical assault, emotional abuse, neglect, war, natural disasters, loss, birth trauma, or the corrosive stressors of ongoing fear and conflict.

The SE approach facilitates the completion of self-protective motor responses and the release of thwarted survival energy bound in the body, thus addressing the root cause of trauma symptoms. This is approached by gently guiding clients to develop increasing tolerance for difficult bodily sensations and suppressed emotions.

- SE employs awareness of body sensation to help people ‘renegotiate’ and heal rather than re-live or re-enact trauma.
- SE’s guidance of the bodily ‘felt sense’ allows the highly aroused survival energies to be safely experienced and gradually discharged.
- SE may employ touch in support of the renegotiation process.
- SE ‘titrates’ experience (breaks down into small, incremental steps), rather than evoking catharsis - which can overwhelm the regulatory mechanisms of the organism.

SE can result in a number of benefits to you, such as relief of traumatic stress symptoms, increased resiliency, and resourcefulness. Like any other treatment it may also have unintended negative side effects, such as sleep disturbances, frightening memories, or unfamiliar and uncomfortable body sensations. Such reactions are not uncommon and can be attended to in the course of our work together.

My own education and training in SE includes full certification, advanced courses in the use of touch, and working as a teaching assistant and approved session provider. It is your responsibility to tell me if you are uncomfortable with any parts of the treatment. If you have any questions about SE or other therapeutic techniques, please ask and I will do my best to answer your questions in full. You have the right to refuse or terminate treatment at all times, or to refuse touch, SE techniques, or any other intervention I may propose or employ.

**For more information about SE please note the following references:**

Levine, P. and Frederick, A. (1997). *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma : The Innate Capacity to Transform Overwhelming Experiences*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Kline, M. and Levine, P. (2007). *Trauma Through A Child’s Eyes: Awakening the Ordinary Miracle of Healing*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

For further references and information online about SE go to <http://www.traumahealing.com>

## **Course of Treatment and Appointments**

The first session we will meet together for an initial assessment. You may, if you wish, bring a friend, family member, or significant other person to this assessment with you. During this assessment we will discuss the history of the concerns that you bring to therapy, information about how these concerns affect your life including your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. At the end of our initial meeting we will discuss goals for therapy and create a treatment plan. The treatment plan will outline the anticipated course of treatment. This will be your map to course, and we can monitor, evaluate and revise as needed. You may refuse suggested courses of action, and you may not experience the outcomes of those suggestions. If at any time I believe that you will be harmed in any way by not participating in a



suggested course of therapy, or by limiting yourself to what I can provide as a therapist, I may ethically have no other option but to refer you to (an)other provider(s) who may be able to assist you with meeting your goals. You may, however, terminate therapy at any time.

Appointments will usually be set for weekly or every two weeks in the beginning (twice per month) but, depending on needs, may be more or less frequent. Sessions are typically 60-minute sessions and will be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time and day. On some occasions, clients may wish to schedule a longer or shorter session.

## Policy on Termination of Services

Services may be terminated in a few instances:

- (1) When you have reached your goals or decide you no longer need this service or it appears that no further gains can be made at this time; or if you would be harmed by continued care.
- (2) If I believe it is in your best interest to work with another therapist, such as if I am unable to assist you in meeting the treatment goals.
- (3) If for some reason I feel threatened or endangered by yourself or someone close to you.

## Cancellation Policy

If you are unable to attend a scheduled appointment, *you must provide 24 hours notice of cancellation. If you missed the scheduled appointment or cancel the appointment with less than 24 hours notice, a no-show fee of \$40 will be charged.* However, if the circumstances were out of your control, the fee may be waived.

## Professional Fees and Payment

The hourly fee for my services is \$150, and 60 minutes is typical in length. If you require a shorter or longer appointment, the fees will be adjusted for every 30 minutes, rounding the time to the nearest 30 minute increments. \$75/30 min., \$150/60 min., \$225/90 min., \$300/120 min.

Accepted methods of payment are: Cash, Check, Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, Diners Club International, and JCB cards.

In addition to psychotherapy appointments, other services may be provided and will be billed at the same rate. These other services, which you or others may request, may include such things as consultations with other providers, reports and records requests, and court proceedings.

Payment is expected at the time of service, at the end of the service to ensure cohesion between time and fees. However, I expect that appointments begin and end as scheduled, except on rare occasions for unforeseen reasons. As I do not accept insurance, please check with your insurance company to see if you have out-of-network benefits for counseling. If so, I can provide you with a super-bill so that you can submit it directly to your insurance company to request reimbursement. If you are experiencing financial hardship after therapy has been initiated, please consult with me. Financial arrangements may be made and/or referrals to other lower-cost providers for continued care.

## Emergency Contact Information

In a life-threatening emergency, call 911. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, you may contact the county-wide crisis line at (602) 222-9444. During business hours (9:00am-6:00pm) you may leave a message on my voicemail and a return call will usually be returned within 48 hours, unless my message states otherwise, such as if I am on vacation.



## Client Records

Client treatment records are kept for a period of 7 years after termination of therapy or 3 years after the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday of the client, whichever is longer. You are entitled to a copy of your records, unless viewing the records would cause emotional harm to you. If you wish to receive a copy of your records or to review your records, you will need to make your request in writing, so that I have a copy for your record. Upon signing a Release of Information form, records may be given to you and/or to other providers as you wish. Releases of Information will be valid for one year unless stated otherwise. You may request in writing to void any Release of Information. If doing so may harm you and/or your therapeutic process in any way, I may ethically have no choice but to refer you to (an)other provider(s) who may be able to assist you with meeting your goals.

On rare occasions I may provide services to a minor. If you are a minor, your parents have access to your treatment records. Parents are usually asked to not request to look at the records as doing so may prevent you from sharing those things necessary for you to progress in treatment. A general statement of progress towards treatment goals will be provided to your parents on a regular basis.

## Confidentiality

Privacy between a client and a psychotherapist is protected by law. Information may only be released with written permission except where there are concerns about danger to you or danger to others, if required by court orders, licensing requirements, or for your insurance provider.

It is good practice for therapists who work in private practice to consult regularly with other licensed therapists, and therefore, I may consult with other professionals during the course of your treatment, but unless given expressed permission by you, will not divulge identifying information about you.

If I believe that you may harm yourself or someone else, or if a child or dependent adult has been harmed, I must act to protect yourself and others. This may involve informing the police, reporting information to Child Protective Services or Adult Protective Services, seeking emergent hospitalization and/or requesting a court ordered evaluation for continued treatment.

## Acknowledgement of Informed Consent

***By signing below, you indicate that you have read, understand, consent, and have discussed this document with me, and agree to the contents of this document. By signing this document, you also are agreeing to begin treatment without pressure or influence from any other person or entity.***

Client: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name/Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name/Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Gallagher, LPC, LISAC, CT, SEP, CGRS Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_