

## **General Information about Psychotherapy Services**

*We are committed to providing you with the highest quality of care. Psychotherapy services are unique--both highly personal and at the same time a business contract. Because therapy often begins in a situation of considerable emotional and psychological stress, a clear understanding and agreement about rights, responsibilities, and limitations of the professional relationship are important. Please read the following important information carefully.*

### **Recommendation**

At the outset of seeking psychotherapy, it may be advisable for you to see a physician to rule out any medical conditions which might contribute to your difficulties.

### **Cancellations and Emergencies**

Scheduling an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you. Once an appointment is scheduled, you are expected to keep it unless you provide a minimum of 24 hours prior notice to cancel or to reschedule or we both agree that you were unable to appear due to circumstances beyond your control.

Children under the age of 14 cannot be left unattended in our waiting area. Unfortunately, if you bring under-age children who must wait outside, we may have to reschedule your appointment.

Out of respect for you, your therapist usually does not answer the telephone when seeing clients; the phone is answered 24 hours a day by voicemail which is monitored regularly. Calls are usually returned within 24 hours with the exception of weekends and holidays. Your therapist cannot guarantee a phone response within a certain period of time; if you are unable to reach the therapist and have an emergency that cannot wait, call your family physician, the nearest emergency room, or 911. When your therapist is unavailable for an extended period of time, a colleague will be available for you to contact.

### **The Process of Psychological Treatment**

You are being seen for psychotherapy. Therapy is not easily described. It varies depending on the therapist, the personality of the client and the particular problems that a client brings in. Treatment generally involves a series of meetings with the therapist to understand your difficulties, to try different approaches, and to observe your progress.

A number of different approaches can be applied to psychological problems. During the course of therapy, your therapist is likely to draw on various approaches according in part to the nature of the problem being treated and his assessment of what will benefit you. These include cognitive, psychodynamic, interpersonal, existential, family systems or psycho educational approaches.

Treatment can be uncomfortable. Therapy often requires recalling distressing aspects of your history. You may experience unpleasant thoughts or strong feelings like sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, loneliness, or frustration. This is a natural reaction to the therapy process and often provides the basis for change. Your therapist may propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations. You may be asked to do in-between session homework assignments. Change can sometimes be easy or rapid but more often is gradual and can be frustrating. If you are uncomfortable with anything the therapist asks you to do, please tell the therapist right away.

Treatment can result in a number of benefits to you, including improved interpersonal relationships, reduced symptoms, and resolution of specific problems that led you to seek therapy. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to therapy in the first place may result in changes that you did not originally intend such as changes in behavior, employment, education, or relationships. Sometimes a change that is viewed as positive by one person will be seen as negative by another.

