



Royalton Psychological Associates, LLC

INFORMED CONSENT / SERVICE CONTRACT

Welcome to Royalton Psychological Associates, LLC (“RPA,” “We,” or “Us”). Please read this document carefully and be sure you understand its terms, as it contains essential information about our professional services and business policies and constitutes a binding legal agreement between you and RPA for the provision of psychological services.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. Therapy varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and client and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods our providers 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 you and your therapist talk about both during your 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.

MEETINGS

Our providers typically conduct an initial evaluation of your needs over the course of two 55 minute sessions. During this time, both you and the provider can evaluate if one of our psychotherapists is the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. At the end of the evaluation, RPA’s therapist will offer you some first impressions of what work will be included 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 RPA’s psychotherapists. 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 our office’s procedures, please raise them so that you and your therapist can discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, RPA will, at your request, help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion, either with a professional in our office or another practice, whichever you prefer.

If you decide to continue with psychotherapy after this evaluation period, RPA's therapists usually schedule one 55-minute session (one appointment hour of 55 minutes duration) per week at a mutually agreed upon time, although some sessions may be shorter or longer or more or less frequent.

OFFICE ENVIRONMENT - ANIMALS

RPA encourages the use of therapy animals in our practice, and clients often bring their pets and therapy animals to the office. Additionally, RPA occasionally trains puppies as therapy dogs. You recognize that these animals may be present and the attendant risks associated with animals being present, including bites, scratches and/or other injuries. Please do not approach any of these animals without express permission from their owners. You agree that if you do approach the animals that you are doing so at your own risk and release RPA from any liability for injuries that result from your negligence or willful conduct relating to these animals.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Our hourly fees are \$125. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you agree to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation, unless RPA agrees that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. If it is possible, RPA will work with you to find another time to reschedule the appointment. In addition to weekly appointments, RPA's professionals charge \$125 an hour for other professional services you may need, prorated for periods of less than one hour. Other professional services for which RPA will charge this hourly rate include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than ten 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. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require your therapist to participate, you agree to pay for our professional time at \$200 an hour for preparation and attendance, even if the provider is called to testify by another party (e.g. custody hearing).

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You agree to pay for each session at the time it occurs, unless RPA agrees otherwise. Payment schedules for other professional services, such as those described above, will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, RPA may, at its discretion, negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

You hereby authorize and guarantee payment for all services rendered. Although fees for services are due and payment expected at the time services are rendered, if you have been granted a grace period for payment of fees, you acknowledge that payment is due and expected at the time the billing statement is received. In the event that your account becomes delinquent for more than 30 days, you also agree to pay a finance charge of 1.5% per month on any balance due, as well as all reasonable collection costs not to exceed 50% of outstanding fees and finance charges, court costs, attorney fees, and interest fees accrued with the collection of this account. In such proceedings, RPA will release only your name, pertinent demographic information, the general nature of the services provided, and the amount due.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

If you have a health insurance policy, it may provide some coverage for mental health treatment. RPA will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance it can, within reason, so that

you can receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. If you use in-network insurance, you agree to provide RPA with a current insurance identification card. By signing this informed consent, you authorize RPA or its representative to contact your health plan, if RPA is in-network, for purposes of obtaining reimbursement, provided, however, that if you pay for RPA's services in full and indicate that you do not want your health plan to be contacted, RPA will not contact or provide information to your health plan.

You are responsible to 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, please call your plan administrator. Of course, RPA will provide you with information based on experience and, within reason, we will try to help you understand the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear up confusion, RPA will call the insurance company on your behalf. It is your responsibility to pay all co-pays at the time of service and to make all payments according to the terms of your health plan, including co-insurance payments and payments for services prior to reaching to your deductible.

CONTACTING YOUR THERAPIST

RPA's therapists are often not immediately available by telephone. While RPA's therapists are usually available between 9:00 am and 7:00 pm, our therapists may not answer the phone when they are with a client. If you do not reach someone when you call, please leave a message on our voice mail or with our office coordinator. We will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform our office of some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach an RPA therapist and feel that you cannot wait for RPA to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or mental health professional on call. If your therapist will be unavailable for an extended time, RPA will provide you with the name of another person in our office to contact if necessary.

RPA recognizes that more and more communication is occurring in digital forms, including text messaging and email because of their convenience. However, these communication methods are not secure and can be intercepted in transmission or misdirected. Because of this, we try to limit our use of text messaging, email and other digital technologies to re-scheduling appointments and we do not recommend communicating with us regarding treatment information via text, email or other non-secure digital medium and suggest that you communicate sensitive information with us via telephone, fax, or mail. If you do choose to communicate with us via email, we will limit the information we include in our response to the minimum necessary for treatment or billing purposes. Please note that scheduling information is not considered part of the medical record and may not be maintained in the same manner as the information contained in your medical record.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS AND NOTES

The laws and standards of our profession require that RPA keep treatment records, which may include progress notes and psychotherapy notes, however psychotherapy notes will be maintained separately from other parts of the records (the "Records"). You are entitled to

receive a copy of these Records unless our therapists in their professional judgment believe that seeing the psychotherapy notes portion of the Records would be emotionally damaging, in which case RPA will 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. We recommend that you review them in the presence of an RPA therapist so that the contents can be discussed. You will be charged an appropriate fee for preparation of information requests in accordance with Ohio law.

MINORS

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law provides your parents the right to examine your treatment records. RPA's policy is to request an agreement from parents that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, RPA will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless our therapist feels there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In such a situation, RPA will notify them of our concern. RPA will also provide them with a verbal summary of your treatment when it is complete. Before giving them any information, your RPA therapist will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do his or her best to handle any objections you may have with what will be discussed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychologist is protected by law, and RPA can only release information about the work you do with your RPA therapist and any psychotherapy notes to others with your written permission. Generally, the way in which RPA handles your information is governed by the attached Notice of Privacy Practices, which you acknowledge receiving by signing below. A few specific instances are discussed below.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent your RPA therapist 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 your therapist to testify or provide psychotherapy notes if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which RPA therapists are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if some information about a client's treatment must be revealed. For example, if a therapist believes that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is being abused, he or she is obligated to file a report with the appropriate state agency. If this report requires the sharing of psychotherapy notes, RPA may share the notes without notifying you.

Additionally, if a psychologist believes that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another person, that psychologist is required to take protective actions, including, notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm himself/herself, the therapist 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 RPA's practice, but if one arises during the course of your treatment, we will make every reasonable effort to fully discuss the matter with you before taking any action.

Client Name: _____

RPA's therapists may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case, whether in our office or an outside psychologist. During a consultation, RPA's therapists will disclose the minimum necessary information and will make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of the client. RPA will not share psychotherapy notes in these consultations without your consent. The consultant also will be legally bound to keep the information confidential. We will not tell you about these consultations unless, in RPA's professional judgment, it is important to your work with your therapist.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information in this document and agree to be bound by its terms during our professional relationship.

Client or Guardian Signature & Date

Minor Signature (if applicable) & Date