

**INFORMED CONSENT**

Welcome to Levitan & Associates Psychological Services (LAPS). This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. It also contains summary information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), a federal law that provides privacy protections and patient rights about the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI). It discusses when your privacy may be waived for the purposes of ensuring the health and safety of you, the staff, or the public; to provide psychological services; for billing purposes; and for other day to day health care operations. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is very important that you understand them. When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between us.

Please initial after each of the following headings to acknowledge you have read the information and agree to abide by the policies outlined.

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LAPS policies about confidentiality, as well as additional information regarding client privacy and privilege, are fully described in a separate document entitled Confidentiality and Privacy Practices. By initialing above, you acknowledge that you have been offered a copy of that document. You and your clinician will discuss and answer any questions you may have. Please remember that you may reopen the conversation regarding confidentiality, privacy, and privilege at any time during your work with LAPS.

❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Confidentiality

LAPS policies about professional records, as well as additional information regarding federal regulations and client rights to records are fully described in a separate document entitled Client Rights and Professional Records. By initialing above, you acknowledge that you have been offered a copy of that document. You and your clinician will discuss and answer any questions you may have. Please remember that you may reopen the conversation regarding professional records, psychological regulations, and client rights at any time during your work with LAPS.

❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Records

An appointment is typically 45 minutes in duration and generally occurs once per week on a time agreed on by both the client and the clinician. The sessions may be shortened or extended and the frequency may be increased or decreased as needed and agreed upon. Appointments for psychological evaluations may last longer in duration and generally are completed in one or two sessions. Please note, the time scheduled for your appointment is assigned to you and you alone. If you need to cancel or reschedule a session, please provide a minimum of 24 hours advanced notice. If you do not arrive to a scheduled appoint and have not provided sufficient advanced notice, LAPS policy is to collect 50% of the fee. This fee may be waived, at the clinician's discretion, if the appointment was missed due to extraneous circumstances beyond your control (e.g., emergency, illness, transportation failure). If an appointment is missed, efforts will be taken to try and find another time to reschedule the appointment. If you arrive late to the appointment, you will be seen for the remaining portion of your allotted time as long as at least half of the session remains. This means your clinician will still be able to offer a half session (generally 20-25 minute) if you are late, as long as you arrive no later than 20 minutes past your scheduled time. Arriving more than 20 late for your session will constitute as a missed appointment and may be scheduled to no show fees.

An appointment represents a mutual commitment by both you and your clinician. Clients referred to LAPS through third party organizations may be eligible for specific accommodations. Please discuss your responsibilities regarding appointments and scheduling with your clinician if you require any clarification.

By initialing below, you acknowledge that you have read and agree to LAPS policy regarding appointments and scheduling.

❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Appointments

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Fees for all psychological services are due at the onset of the session unless prior arrangements have been made. Clients referred to LAPS through third party organizations may be eligible for specific accommodations, reduced fees, or payment plans. Your clinician or the administrative assistant will discuss the fee structure with you prior to your first appointment. If you have any questions or concerns, or if life circumstances occur which prevent you from prompt payments, please bring this to the attention of your clinician as soon as possible. LAPS will be happy to work with you to establish a payment plan or provide services on a sliding fee scale. Please discuss your responsibilities regarding fees and payments with your clinician if you require any clarification.

Payments must be made by cash, money order, or personal check; I am not able to process credit card charges as payment. Any checks returned to my office are subject to an additional fee of \$25.00 to cover the incurred bank fee. If you are unable to pay your fee prior to services and no prior arrangements have been made, LAPS reserves the right to refuse to provide psychological services. Appointments missed as a result of an inability to provide payment will be treated as a missed appointment at your clinician's discretion. Refusal to pay for services rendered may be subject to the use of an attorney or collection agency to secure payment.

In addition to direct services, an hourly prorated fee will be charged for any indirect professional services which you may require. These services include (but are not limited to): report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, attendance and participation in meetings and consultations which you have requested, or the time required to perform any other additional service which you may request.

By initialing below, you acknowledge that you have read and agree to LAPS policy regarding fees and billing.

❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Fees

❖ Therapeutic Interventions

Therapy is a relationship between people that works in part because of clearly defined rights and responsibilities held by each person. As a client in psychotherapy, you have certain rights and responsibilities that are important for you to understand. There are also legal limitations to those rights that you should be aware of. Similarly, your therapist has corresponding responsibilities to you. These right and responsibilities are described in the following sections.

Psychotherapy has both benefits and risks. Risks may include experiencing uncomfortable feelings, such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness, because the process of psychotherapy often requires discussing the unpleasant aspects of your life. However, research suggests there are benefits to psychotherapy for individuals who undertake it. Therapy often leads to a noticeable reduction in feelings of distress, increased satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, greater personal awareness and insight, increased skills for managing stress and resolutions to specific problems. Note, however, there are no guarantees in psychotherapy. This process requires a very active effort on your part and, in order to be most successfully, you will have to actively use the strategies outside of sessions as well.

Although every client is unique and the clinician will create a customized treatment plan for you, there are certain stages in psychotherapy which are very similar for the majority of clients. The first 1-2 sessions will involve a comprehensive evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, you will be provided some initial impressions of what our work might include. At this point, the clinician will discuss your treatment plan and create an initial treatment goal. You should evaluate this information and make your own assessment about whether you feel comfortable working with your clinician. If you have any questions about the treatment plan, you and your clinician will discuss them whenever they arise. If you feel another clinician

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would suit your needs more effectively or efficiently, LAPS will help set you up a meeting with another mental health professional.