

Consent for Treatment and Office Policies

Introduction

This document is intended to provide important information to you regarding your treatment. Please read the entire document carefully and be sure to ask your therapist any questions that you may have regarding its contents.

About Lisa Klipfel, MFT

Lisa Klipfel is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the state of California since 1999. She has a Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. She also completed a 2 year program at UC San Diego for certification in play therapy. Lisa has worked in a variety of settings including group homes for teenagers who were homeless, had substance use issues, teen mothers, abused kids and kids with severe emotional issues. She was the clinical coordinator at an adult acute psychiatric residential facility for the homeless mentally ill for 5 years. In addition, while at the San Diego Regional Center, she coordinated services for those with autism, mental retardation, epilepsy and cerebral palsy. You are free to ask questions at any time about your therapist's background, experience and professional orientation.

Ethics

- Your therapist is a clinical member of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT). Your therapist follows the ethical guidelines set out by CAMFT, and would gladly provide you a copy of these guidelines upon request.
- Lisa is licensed by the state of California as a Marriage and Family Therapist, license #35517. This is a sole proprietor business, Lisa Klipfel, MFT.

Confidentiality

- All communications between the therapist and the client will be held in strict confidence unless the client provides written permission to release information about the treatment. There are limits to confidentiality which are outlined in the Notice of Privacy Policies.
- If you would like your therapist to coordinate care with other professionals or agencies, such as a doctor, psychiatrist, etc, please let your therapist know you would like to sign a release form.

Minors and Confidentiality

- Communications between therapists and patients who are minors (under the age of 18) are confidential. However, parents and other guardians who provide authorization for their child's treatment are often involved in their treatment. Consequently, your therapist, in the exercise of his or her professional judgment, may discuss the treatment progress of a minor patient with the parent or caretaker. Therapy will be the most beneficial, especially with teens, if the information in therapy is kept private and not disclosed to the parents.
- Disclosure to parents: Confidentiality may be breached in cases where a child expresses danger to self or others. Additional topics that parents want disclosed should be brought up in the beginning of therapy, so an agreement can be made by all parties. Please refer to Notice of Privacy Policies.
- Progress reports: The therapist and the parents, legal guardians and/or caregivers will discuss how goals will be set and the frequency/modality of progress reports to the parents, legal guardians and/or caregivers.

Couple & Family Therapy and Confidentiality

- Secrets: There are times when a therapist is contacted outside of a couple or family session, where a secret is revealed. The therapist will not be the bearer of secrets and will have the party discuss any secrets with the rest of the therapeutic entity. This means that if you participate in family, and/or marital/couples therapy, your therapist is permitted to use information obtained in an individual session that you may have had with him or her, when working with other members of your family.
- Release of information for couple and families - If you participate in marital or family therapy, your therapist will not disclose confidential information about your treatment unless all person(s) who participated in the treatment with you provide their written authorization to release.
- Visitors: Occasionally, a client will bring in a "visitor" to session, such as an additional family member, boyfriend, who is not the primary client. This visitor is not considered a client. Although the nature of

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the session will be held confidential, the visitor will not be entitled to confidentiality or privilege under the law. This may apply to some parents, when the therapist is mainly working with the child.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

There are exceptions to confidentiality. For example, therapists are required to report instances of suspected child or elder abuse. Therapists may be required or permitted to break confidentiality when they have determined that a patient presents a serious danger of physical violence to another person or when a patient is dangerous to him or herself. In addition, a federal law known as The Patriot Act of 2001 requires therapists (and others) in certain circumstances, to provide FBI agents with books, records, papers and documents and other items and prohibits the therapist from disclosing to the patient that the FBI sought or obtained the items under the Act. Please read the Notice of Privacy Practices for an expansion on these limitations and exceptions.

Minors and Consent

- Parents legally married or legal guardians: One parent can sign the consent to treat a minor, if there are no other legal documents indicating otherwise.
- Divorced Parents: When treatment is for a child of divorced parents, the presenting parent must bring the court documents indicating who has legal rights to consent for mental health services at the initial session. If these papers cannot be produced, no further sessions will be scheduled until they are available. At times the custody order will have specifications about mental health treatment of the minor(s), which may be different than physical custody, or legal custody. It is customary to gain the consent of both parents who have joint legal custody.
- Emancipated minors: Emancipated minors sign their own consent for mental health treatment.

Fees

- Full fee for therapy services is \$115 per therapy hour.
- Monthly discounted advanced payment fee is \$400 for a 4 week month or \$500 for a 5 week month, paid by the 7th of the month. Please note the cancellation policy below. With this plan, if you cancel a weekly appointment, you will be credited \$100 for the following month. With this plan, a late cancel or no show appointment will be credited with \$50 for the following month.
- A therapy hour is 50 minutes, although sometimes 45 minutes with children.
- Report writing is \$115 per hour. Your therapist does not generally write reports.
- Telephone therapy services are \$30 per 15 minute increment, beyond 5 minutes for routine appointment setting.
- Email therapy services are \$30 per email exchange. An email exchange is defined as a receipt of an email with a resulting responding email by the therapist for therapy services.
- Late cancel fee or missed appointment fee is \$50. There is a \$35 returned check fee, or credit card denial.
- Please ask your therapist if you wish to discuss a written agreement that specifies an alternative payment procedure. Fees are collected prior to the start of each session. You can request weekly credit card billing. Your therapist offers a discount if you prepay your services for the month at the beginning of the month.
- Balances: If for some reason you find that you are unable to continue paying for your therapy, you should inform your therapist. The accrual of balances can disrupt the therapeutic relationship. Your therapist will help you to consider any options that may be available to you at that time. Therapy may be terminated due to large unpaid balances, but client would be referred to another therapist or agency for continuity of care. If unpaid balances continue to be a problem, collection may be pursued through a collection agency, small claims court, or other standard collection means. In the event that litigation becomes necessary for the collection of fees owed, the client agrees to pay the fees associated with collecting fees, including but not limited to collection agency fees or reasonable attorney fees.

Insurance

- Your therapist does not directly bill any insurance company.
- Your therapist is not currently a contracted provider for any insurance company.

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- Your therapist will provide you with a “super bill” which you can submit to your insurance company for reimbursement of services, upon request.
- Health insurance plans generally limit mental health coverage to certain diagnosable mental conditions, certain modalities and typically require the treatment to be “medically necessary”. You should also be aware that you are responsible for verifying and understanding the limits of your insurance coverage. Although your therapist is happy to assist your efforts to understand insurance reimbursement, she is unable to guarantee whether your insurance will provide payment for the services provided to you.
- Please note that your health insurance may request specific health information, such as diagnosis, modality of treatment, treatment plan, and/or additional private health information.

Appointment Scheduling and Cancellation Policies

- Frequency: Sessions are typically scheduled to occur one time per week at the same time and day if possible. At times a different frequency may be suggested depending on the nature and severity of your concerns. Your consistent attendance and engagement greatly contributes to a successful outcome.
- Cancellation: If you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment, you are expected to notify your therapist at least 24 hrs. in advance of your appointment. Online scheduling is available. If you do not provide your therapist with at least 24 hours notice in advance, you are responsible for the late cancel fee. Please understand that your insurance company will not pay for missed or cancelled sessions.
- Standing Appointments: If a client does not show up for a standing appointment, no further standing appointment will exist.

After Hours Contact/Emergencies

- If an immediate mental health need arises, please contact your therapist by phone. When you leave a message, begin your message with “page for Lisa”. Your therapist will attempt to contact you as soon as practically possible, but it may take up to two hours. If you are unable to wait for a return call, contact the county crisis line **(877) 727-4747**, or go to your nearest emergency room. In the event of a medical emergency or an emergency involving a threat to your safety or the safety of others, please call 911 to request emergency assistance.
- Do not send an email or text to your therapist for urgent health care needs. Emails and text messages may not be able to be responded to in an adequate time frame.
- While on vacation, there will be another therapist available during this time.

Communication with Your Therapist and Between Session Contact

- Telephone, email and text communication between sessions are available, but it is requested that you attempt to keep those contacts related to brief updates or scheduling issues due to the belief that important issues are best addressed within regularly scheduled sessions.
- Telephone: You may leave a message for your therapist on her confidential voicemail. Please be sure to leave your name and phone number along with a brief message concerning the nature of your call. Typically non-urgent calls are returned within 24 hours Monday through Friday. Your therapist is not typically available on Saturdays, Sundays or holidays. Phone calls lasting longer than 5 minutes most likely will be considered telephone therapy, which is a billable service.
- Email: You may use email for progress updates, referral/resource exchange or scheduling included in your weekly session fee. Once you request advice through email, you will be engaging in email therapeutic services, which is a billable service. Email services may not be secure and encryption email services are recommended to engage in email therapy services. Your therapist typically checks her email once a day. Email responses may take up to 24-36 hours. Email: lisa@lisaklipfelmft.com
- Text: You may text your therapist for scheduling changes, but please be aware that texts are not secure and can be read by others. Therapeutic services are not typically provided via text.
- Online audio and video conferencing: Audio online and video conferencing services need to be pre-arranged and are a billable therapeutic service. If you wish to engage in these services, please discuss security measures with your therapist.
- In Person: Your therapist may live in the same community as you. She is involved with many school and child related events. To avoid awkward social situations, she will not acknowledge you unless you first acknowledge her.

