



## **Office Policies & General Information Agreement for Psychotherapy Services or Informed Consent for Psychotherapy**

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission except where disclosure is required by law.

**WHEN DISCLOSURE IS REQUIRED OR MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW:** Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required or may be required by law are: where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent, or elder abuse or neglect; where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled; or when a client's family members communicate to Zaneta Ellison, LMHC that the client presents a danger to others. Disclosure may also be required pursuant to a legal proceeding by or against you. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by Zaneta Ellison, LMHC. In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, even over a period of time, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members, unless otherwise agreed upon Zaneta Ellison, LMHC will use her clinical judgment when revealing such information. Zaneta Ellison, LMHC will not release records to any outside party unless she is authorized to do so by all adult parties who were part of the family therapy, couple therapy or other treatment that involved more than one adult client.

**EMERGENCY:** If there is an emergency during therapy, or in the future after termination, where Zaneta Ellison, LMHC becomes concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper psychiatric care, she will do whatever she can within the limits of the law, to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive the proper medical care. For this purpose, she may also contact the person whose name you have provided on the biographical sheet.

**HEALTH INSURANCE & CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS:** Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO/PPO/MCO/EAP in order to process the claims. If you so instruct Zaneta Ellison, LMHC, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Zaneta Ellison, LMHC has no control over, or knowledge of, what insurance companies do with the information s/he submits or who has access to this information. You must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk to confidentiality, privacy or to future capacity to obtain health or life insurance or even a job. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is likely to be entered into big insurance companies' computers and is likely to be reported to the National Medical Data Bank. Accessibility to companies' computers or to the National Medical Data Bank database is always in question as computers are inherently vulnerable to hacking and unauthorized access. Medical data has also been reported to have been legally accessed by law enforcement and other agencies, which also puts you in a vulnerable position.

**LITIGATION LIMITATION:** Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters which may be of a confidential nature, it is agreed that, should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you nor your attorney(s), nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on Zaneta Ellison, LMHC to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested unless otherwise agreed upon.

**CONSULTATION:** Zaneta Ellison, LMHC consults regularly with other professionals regarding her clients; however, each client's identity remains completely anonymous and confidentiality is fully maintained.

**E-MAILS, CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS, AND FAXES:** It is very important to be aware that computers and unencrypted e-mail, texts, and e-faxes communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. E-mails, texts, and e-faxes, in particular, are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers or communication companies may have Zaneta Ellison, LMHC's laptop is encrypted, e-mails and e-fax are not. It is always a possibility that e-faxes, texts, and email can be sent erroneously to the wrong address and computers. Zaneta Ellison, LMHC's laptop is equipped with a firewall, a virus protection and a password, and her backs up all confidential information from his computer on a regular basis onto an encrypted hard-drive. If you communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted e-mail, texts or e-fax or via phone messages, will assume that you have made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and she will honor your desire to communicate on such matters. Please do not use texts, e-mail, voice mail, or faxes for emergencies.

**RECORDS AND YOUR RIGHT TO REVIEW THEM:** Both the law and the standards of Zaneta Ellison, LMHC profession require that she keep treatment records for at least 3 years. Unless otherwise agreed to be necessary, Zaneta Ellison, LMHC retains clinical records only as long as is mandated by Florida law. If you have concerns regarding the treatment records, please discuss them with Zaneta Ellison, LMHC. As a client, you have the right to review or receive a summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when Zaneta Ellison, LMHC assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. In such a case, Zaneta Ellison, LMHC will provide the records to an appropriate and legitimate mental health professional of your choice. Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, and upon your request, Zaneta Ellison, LMHC will release information to any agency/person you specify unless Zaneta Ellison, LMHC assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. When more than

one client is involved in treatment, such as in cases of couple and family therapy, Zaneta Ellison, LMHC will release records only with signed authorizations from all the adults (or all those who legally can authorize such a release) involved in the treatment.

**TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** If you need to contact Zaneta Ellison, LMHC between sessions, please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible. If an emergency situation arises, indicate it clearly in your message and if you need to talk to someone right away call 24-hour crisis line 1800-273-8255 or the Police: 911. Please do not use email or faxes for emergencies. Zaneta Ellison, LMHC does not always check her email or faxes daily.

**PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT:** Clients are expected to pay the standard fee of \$80.00 per 45 minute or \$90.00 per hour session at the end of each session. Telephone conversations, site visits, writing and reading of reports, consultation with other professionals, release of information, reading records, longer sessions, travel time, etc. will be charged at the same rate, unless indicated and agreed upon otherwise. Please notify Zaneta Ellison, LMHC if any problems arise during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. Clients who carry insurance should remember that professional services are rendered and charged to the clients and not to the insurance companies. Unless agreed upon differently, Zaneta Ellison, LMHC will provide you with a copy of your receipt on a monthly basis, which you can then submit to your insurance company for reimbursement, if you so choose. As was indicated in the section, *Health Insurance & Confidentiality of Records*, you must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk. Not all issues/conditions/problems, which are dealt with in psychotherapy, are reimbursed by insurance companies. It is your responsibility to verify the specifics of your coverage. If your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no written agreement on a payment plan, Zaneta Moton, LMHC can use legal or other means (courts, collection agencies, etc.) to obtain payment.

**TREATMENT PLANS:** Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, Zaneta Moton, LMHC will discuss with you his/her working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic

objectives, and his/her view of the possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your therapy, their possible risks Zaneta Ellison, LMHC 's expertise in employing them, or about the treatment plan, please ask and you will be answered fully. You also have the right to ask about other treatments for your condition and their risks and benefits.

**TERMINATION:** As set forth above, after the first couple of meetings, Zaneta Ellison, LMHC will assess if she can be of benefit to you Zaneta Ellison, LMHC does not work with clients who, in his opinion, he cannot help. In such a case, if appropriate, he will give you referrals that you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy Zaneta Ellison, LMHC either assesses that he is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals or perceived you as non-compliant or non-responsive, and if you are available and/or it is possible and appropriate to do, he will discuss with you the termination of treatment and conduct pre-termination counseling. In such a case, if appropriate and/or necessary, he would give you a couple of referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, Zaneta Ellison, LMHC will talk to the psychotherapist of your choice in order to help with the transition. If at any time you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another therapist, Zaneta Ellison, LMHC will give you a couple of referrals that you may want to contact, and if he has your written consent, he will provide her or him with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate therapy and communication at any time. If you choose to do so, upon your request and if appropriate and possible, Zaneta Ellison, LMHC, will provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

**CANCELLATION:** Since the scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 48 hours (2 days) notice is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless we reach a different agreement, the full fee will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions.

I have read the above Office Policies and General Information, Agreement for Psychotherapy Services or Informed Consent for Psychotherapy carefully; I understand them and agree to comply with them:

**Client's Name (print)**

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Client's Name (print)**

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Psychotherapist's Name (print)**

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_