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Agreements and Policies

Welcome. I appreciate your allowing me the opportunity to serve you. The following agreements and policies are to help ensure that our work together proceeds smoothly, with the high level of mutual respect that is essential in order best to serve you. Please read this form carefully. Your attendance at appointments indicates your understanding of these agreements and your consent to receive treatment within these guidelines.

APPOINTMENTS

All services are provided by appointment. Treatment needs vary, and I will work with you to set up the most appropriate schedule. I generally schedule appointments of either 45-50 minutes or 20-25 minutes; intervals vary widely depending on your needs. Currently, I am in the office full days on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and afternoons on Thursday. I will make sure that timely appointments are available.

CONTACT OUTSIDE OF APPOINTMENTS

Questions and concerns occasionally arise that can be addressed in a brief telephone conversation. For concerns that cannot or should not wait until our next appointment, I encourage the use of the telephone during regular business hours, Monday through Friday. I consider occasional brief phone calls to be part of the ordinary course of treatment, and do not bill separately for them. There may be a charge for extended telephone time. If you normally block calls from numbers that do not display on caller ID, you must disable this feature if you want me to call you outside of normal office hours.

I provide after-hours coverage for urgent concerns 7 days a week, 365 days a year, by retrieving messages from my voice mail several times each evening and weekend day. Non-urgent after-hours messages will be responded to during regular business hours. If you have an emergency that cannot wait for my call, please seek help from an Emergency Room and have the ER staff contact me. If I am out of town, the name and number of the covering psychiatrist will be on my voice mail.

I make limited use of email during regular business hours for administrative, non-clinical, non-urgent matters such as appointment scheduling. For any clinical or urgent issues, please do not use email, as the security and timeliness of email cannot be guaranteed. I do not use email after hours.

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

I provide sufficient refills until the *latest* time that we should meet to re-assess your need for medication. If you don't have more refills, you need an appointment. I do not honor refill requests from pharmacies. If you are in dire need, Maryland law allows a pharmacy to dispense a 3-day emergency supply of medication in anticipation of a prescription.

CANCELLATIONS AND MISSED APPOINTMENTS

Just as you expect me to be present at all appointments, I expect you to attend all appointments that you schedule. If you must reschedule, please give as much notice as possible so the time can be used by someone else. Email is fine for appointments more than 3 business days in the future; **for cancellations/rescheduling with less than 3 days notice, please call instead of using email.** Appointments canceled with less than **24 hours notice by phone**, or missed without notice, will be billed the full fee.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All spoken and written information related to your care is held in strictest confidence. In order to ensure confidentiality, I do not use a billing or transcription service, written records are kept under lock and key, and all computer files are offline and password-protected. I will not provide information to any third party without your consent, except when required by law. Legal exceptions include potential harm to yourself or others, suspected child abuse, and some court orders. If you wish information released to a third party, please request the release in writing, authorized by your signature.

FEES

Fees are based on the type of service. If you feel unable to meet the standard fee schedule, please discuss your circumstances with me. For extended telephone consultations and document preparation, there may be a charge prorated by time spent.

INSURANCE AND MANAGED CARE

In order to ensure confidentiality and to minimize intrusion into your treatment by parties whose priorities conflict with your best interests, I do not participate in any managed care panels or insurance networks. Most insurers provide out-of-network benefits. Please contact your insurance company to determine your benefits and to obtain preauthorization if necessary. If you wish, I will complete treatment plans if your insurance company requires them. I currently do not charge for this service, but reserve the right to do so if the paperwork burden becomes excessive.

BILLING AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In order to devote my time to providing clinical care, I do not do direct insurance billing. Payment in full is due at the time of service, or at the last meeting of the month if so arranged. A \$25.00 fee will be charged for returned checks. I will provide an invoice at the time of payment or at an interval of your choosing. You may submit the invoice for insurance reimbursement; a simple cover sheet with demographic and policy information, available from your employer or insurer, should accompany the invoice. Please remember that insurance is a contract between you and your insurance carrier. You are responsible for all charges and for corresponding with your insurance carrier to obtain reimbursement.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have about these policies or your responsibilities. Your attendance at appointments indicates that you have read and understood and will abide by these Agreements and Policies. Thank you - I look forward to working with you.