

Merrett Sheridan, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, License# 49177
AGREEMENT FOR SERVICE / INFORMED CONSENT

408.410.8786/merrettsheridan@gmail.com

This Agreement is intended to provide_____ (herein "Client") with important information regarding the practices, policies and procedures of Merrett Sheridan, LMFT (herein "Therapist"), and to clarify the terms of the professional therapeutic relationship between Therapist and Client. Any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this Agreement should be discussed with Therapist prior to signing it.

Risks and Benefits of Therapy

Psychotherapy is a process in which Therapist and Client discuss a myriad of issues, events, experiences and memories for the purpose of creating positive change so Client can experience his/her life more fully. Progress and success may vary depending upon the particular problems or issues being addressed, as well as many other factors. Participating in therapy may result in a number of benefits to Client, including, but not limited to, reduced stress and anxiety, a decrease in negative thoughts and self-sabotaging behaviors, improved interpersonal relationships, increased comfort in social, work, and family settings, increased capacity for intimacy, and increased self-confidence. Such benefits may also require substantial effort on the part of Client, including an active participation in the therapeutic process, honesty, and a willingness to change feelings, thoughts and behaviors. There is no guarantee that therapy will yield any or all of the benefits listed above. Participating in therapy may also involve some discomfort, including remembering and discussing unpleasant events, feelings and experiences. The process may evoke strong feelings of sadness, anger, fear, etc. There may be times in which Therapist will challenge Client's perceptions and assumptions, and offer different perspectives. The issues presented by Client may result in unintended outcomes, including changes in personal relationships. Client should be aware that any decision on the status of his/her personal relationships is the responsibility of the client.

Confidentiality

The information disclosed by Client is generally confidential and will not be released to any third party without written authorization from Client, except where required or permitted by law. Exceptions to confidentiality, include, but are not limited to, reporting child, elder and dependent adult abuse, when a client makes a serious threat of violence towards a reasonably identifiable victim, or when a client is dangerous to him/herself or the person or property of another.

Client Litigation

Therapist will not voluntarily participate in any litigation, or custody dispute in which Client and another individual, or entity, are parties. Therapist has a policy of not communicating with Client's attorney and will generally not write or sign letters, reports, declarations, or affidavits to be used in Client's legal matter. Therapist will generally not provide records or testimony unless compelled to do so. Should Therapist be subpoenaed, or ordered by a court of law, appear as a witness in an action involving Client, Client agrees to reimburse Therapist for any time spent for preparation, travel, or other time in which Therapist has made him/herself available for such an appearance at Therapist's usual and customary hourly rate of \$120/hour for individuals and \$150/hour for couples.

Psychotherapist-Client Privilege

The information disclosed by Client, as well as any records created, is subject to the psychotherapist-client privilege. The psychotherapist-client privilege results from the special relationship between Therapist and Client in the eyes of the law. It is akin to the attorney-client privilege or the doctor-client privilege. Typically, the client is the holder of the psychotherapist-client privilege. If Therapist receives a subpoena for records, deposition testimony, or testimony in a court of law, Therapist will assert the psychotherapist-client privilege on Client's behalf until instructed, in writing, to do otherwise by Client or Client's representative. Client should be aware that he/she might be waiving the psychotherapist-client privilege if he/she makes his/her mental or emotional state an issue in a legal proceeding. Client should address any concerns he/she might have regarding the psychotherapist-client privilege with his/her attorney.

Fee and Fee Arrangements

The agreed upon fee between Therapist and Client is \$120/hour for individuals and \$150/hour for couples. Sessions longer than 50-minutes are charged for the additional time pro rata. Therapist reserves the right to periodically adjust this fee. Client will be notified of any fee adjustment in advance. Therapist reserves the right to periodically adjust fee. Client will be notified of any fee adjustment in advance. From time-to-time, Therapist may engage in telephone contact with Client for purposes other than scheduling sessions. Client is responsible for payment of the agreed upon fee (on a pro rata basis) for any telephone calls where clinical issues are discussed (excludes calls to schedule appointments or discuss operational issues which are no charge). In addition, from time-to-time, Therapist may engage in telephone contact with third parties at Client's request and with Client's advance written authorization. Client is responsible for payment of the agreed upon fee (on a pro rata basis) for any third-party contact. Clients are expected to pay for services at the time services are rendered. Therapist accepts cash, checks, and major credit cards, including VISA, Mastercard, AMEX and PayPal.

Insurance

Therapist is a contracted provider with a select insurance companies and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). Should Client choose to use his/her insurance in which Therapist is not contracted, Therapist will provide Client with a statement of services which Client can submit to the third-party of his/her choice to seek reimbursement of fees already paid. If Client is using EAP or insurance coverage that Provider contracted with, Client is responsible to submit confirmation of eligibility to Therapist prior to the start of treatment which includes the number of sessions covered. Therapist will then direct bill for services rendered.

Cancellation Policy

Client is responsible for payment of the agreed upon fee for any missed session(s). Client is also responsible for payment of the agreed upon fee for any session(s) for which Client failed to give Therapist at least 24 hours notice of cancellation. Cancellation notice should be left on Therapist's voice mail at 408-410-8786 or via email merrettsheridan@gmail.com.

Therapist Availability

Therapist's has a confidential voice mail that allows Client to leave a message at any time. Therapist will make every effort to return calls within 24 hours (or by the next business day), but cannot guarantee the calls will be returned immediately. Therapist is unable to provide 24-hour crisis service. In the event that Client is feeling unsafe or requires immediate medical or psychiatric assistance, he/she should call 911, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255, or go to the nearest emergency room.

Termination of Therapy

Therapist reserves the right to terminate therapy at his/her discretion. Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to, untimely payment of fees, failure to comply with treatment recommendations, conflicts of interest, failure to participate in therapy, Client needs are outside of Therapist's scope of competence or practice, or Client is not making adequate progress in therapy. Client has the right to terminate therapy at his/her discretion at any time. Upon either party's decision to terminate therapy, Therapist will generally recommend that Client participate in at least one, or possibly more, termination sessions. These sessions are intended to facilitate a positive termination experience and give both parties an opportunity to reflect on the work that has been done. Therapist will also attempt to ensure a smooth transition to another therapist by offering referrals to Client.

Notice to Clients

The Board of Behavioral Sciences receives and responds to complaints regarding services provided within the scope of practice of marriage and family therapists. You may contact the board online at www.bbs.ca.gov, or by calling (916) 574-7830.

Acknowledgement

By signing below, Client acknowledges that he/she has reviewed and fully understands the terms and conditions of this Agreement. Client has discussed such terms and conditions with Therapist, and has had any questions with regard to its terms and conditions answered to Client's satisfaction. Client agrees to abide by the terms and conditions of this Agreement and consents to participate in psychotherapy with Therapist. Moreover, Client agrees to hold Therapist free and harmless from any claims, demands, or suits for damages from any injury or complications whatsoever, save negligence, that may result from such treatment.

Client Name (please print)

Signature of Client (or authorized representative) Date

Client Name (please print)

Signature of Client (or authorized representative) Date