

Information You Have a Right to Know

When you come for therapy, you are buying my professional services. Therefore, you need information to make a good decision about entering therapy with me. Below are some questions you might want to ask. You can ask me any of these questions, and I will give you the best answers I can. If my answers are not clear or not complete enough, please ask me again.

1. Tell me about yourself.

- a. Are you a social worker? Psychologist? Psychiatrist? Family therapist? Counselor?
- b. What are some of the advantages and limitations of your profession?
- c. What is your training and experience? Are you licensed by the state?
Supervised?
Board-certified?
- d. What is the name of your therapy?
- e. How did you learn how to do this therapy? Where?
- f. How many people like me have you worked with? Clients with my cultural or ethnic background? Clients of my sexual orientation or gender identity? Clients with my kind of problem or diagnosis?

2. Tell me about therapy.

- a. How does your kind of therapy work?
- b. What percentage of clients improve? In what ways? How do you know?
- c. What percentage of clients get worse? How do you know?
- d. What percentage of clients improve or get worse without this therapy? How do you know?
- e. Are there negatives or possible risks in this therapy?
- f. About how long will therapy take?
- g. What will I notice when I am getting better?
- h. What should I do if I feel like therapy isn't working?
- i. Is there someone I can talk to if I have a problem or complaint about therapy that we can't work out?
- j. Will I have to take any kind of tests or answer questionnaires?
- k. Do you follow a therapy manual with planned steps?
- l. Do you do therapy over the phone? Over the internet?
- m. Who else should be involved in my therapy?
- n. Are there any things I should do to help with my problem?

3. Tell me about other kinds of therapy and help.

- a. What other types of therapy or help are there for my kind of problems?
- b. How does your kind of therapy compare with other kinds of therapy?
- c. How often do they work? How do you know?
- d. What are the risks and benefits of these other approaches?
- e. What are the risks and benefits or not getting therapy?
- f. Will I have to take medications? Do you prescribe them? Do you work with others who do that?

4. Tell me about appointments.

- a. How do we arrange appointments?
- b. How often do we meet?
- c. How long are sessions? Do I have to pay more for longer ones?
- d. How can I reach you in an emergency?
- e. If you are not available, is there someone I can talk to?
- f. What happens if the weather is bad and I can't come to your office, or if I'm very sick?

5. Tell me about confidentiality.

- a. What kinds of records do you keep?
- b. Can members of my family, or the group (in group therapy), see my records?
- c. Who else will see my records or know about me?
- d. When do you have to tell others about things we discuss?
- e. What do the laws and government regulations, like HIPAA, say about the privacy of my records?

6. Tell me about money matters.

- a. What is your fee?
- b. Will you ever charge me more?
- c. How do you want to be paid?
- d. Do I need to pay for cancelled or missed appointments?
- e. Do I need to pay for telephone calls, letters, or emails?
- f. If I lose my job or have less income, can my fee be lowered?
- g. If I do not pay the fee, what will you do to collect?

7. Tell me about health insurance and managed care.

- a. What kind of information do you have to give my health insurance company about me?
- b. What will the insurance company decide about my therapy?
- c. What if you or I disagree with the insurance company about the best treatment?
- d. How would therapy be different if I did not use insurance and just paid you myself?

We have now talked about some aspects of our work together, and I expect that this should have answered most of your questions. I will be happy to answer other questions you have as we go along. This will help make your decision a good one.

I have also given you some written information. This has included a Notice of Privacy Practices, the consent form, my information for Clients brochure, and other papers. You can keep these, and please read them carefully at home.

I, the client (or his or her parents or guardian), have gone over this list with the therapist, and I understand these questions and the therapist's answers.

Signature of Client (or parent or guardian)

Printed Name

Date

Signature of Client (or parent or guardian)

Printed Name

Date

I, the clinician, have discussed these issues with the client (and/or his or her parent or guardian). I believe this person fully understands the issues, and I find no reason to believe that this person is not fully competent to give informed consent to my treatment.

M. Joan McCloskey MS LMFT, License #: 22594

Date

Copy accepted by client or Copy kept by therapist