

## Client's Rights and Information

Effective communication between the client and the therapist is an important part of the therapy process. The following information covers many of the questions that may arise about therapy and includes a listing of the client's rights and obligations. Any questions you may have that are not covered may be brought to the attention of your therapist.

1. *The Bill of Rights* of clients obtaining psychological services is as follows. It is not a legal bill of rights but a statement of what you can reasonably expect from a therapist.

### YOU HAVE THE RIGHT

- to ask questions at any time
- to know when a therapist is available to see you, or if not, how long the waiting period would be
- to be informed of the therapist's areas of specialization and limitations
- to ask questions about issues relevant to your therapy
- to ask questions about written materials regarding your treatment
- to negotiate therapeutic goals and to renegotiate when necessary
- to be informed regarding fees for therapy and method of payment, including insurance reimbursements
- to refuse a specific intervention or treatment strategy
- to discuss aspects of your therapy with others outside the therapy situation, including consulting with another therapist
- to request the therapist to send a written report regarding services rendered to a qualified therapist or organization on your written authorization
- to know the ethics code to which the therapist adheres
- to solicit help from the ethics committee of the appropriate professional organization in the event of doubt or grievance regarding the therapist's conduct
- to terminate therapy at any time

2. *Psychotherapy* can involve some risk for the client in certain situations.

Sometimes the client will not obtain the desired results or goals from psychotherapy in the time period expected. This can result in frustration and dissatisfaction. During the process of the therapy, psychological pain and distress can arise as difficult issues are addressed and worked through. The therapist may recommend referral for supplemental care when appropriate. If adequate progress is not being made in therapy or if it becomes apparent that the therapist does not have the skills necessary to address the client's issues that have emerged during therapy, the therapist may either refer for more specialized care or discontinue therapy and assist with a referral to an appropriate therapist, health care professional or therapy program.

3. *Confidentiality*: Confidentiality is maintained for all clients except in the following cases:

- You are in danger to yourself or others
- You seek treatment to avoid detection or apprehension or enable anyone to commit a crime.
- Your therapist was appointed by the courts to evaluate you.
- Your contact with your therapist is for the purpose of determining sanity in a criminal proceeding.
- Your contact is for the purpose of establishing your competence.
- The contact is one in which your psychotherapist must file a report to a public employer or as to information required to be recorded in a public office, if such report or record is open to public inspection.
- You are under the age of 16 and are the victim of a crime.
- You are a minor and your psychotherapist reasonably suspects you are the victim of child abuse.
- You are a person over the age of 65 and your psychotherapist believes you are the victim of physical abuse.
- You die and the communication is important to decide an issue concerning a deed or conveyance, will or other writing executed by you affecting an interest in property.
- You file suit against your therapist for breach of duty or your therapist files suit against you.
- You have filed suit against anyone and have claimed mental/emotional damages as part of the suit.
- You waive your rights to privilege or give consent to limited disclosure by your therapist.
- Your insurance company paying for services has the right to review all records.