

Narissa L. Harris, LMFT #79076
3150 Hilltop Mall Rd. #29
Richmond, CA. 94806

INFORMED CONSENT FOR THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies and how they may affect you. Please read it carefully and make note of any questions you want to discuss with me. By initialing and signing this document, it becomes a binding agreement between us and will also act as the consent you give to begin therapy with me.

About Therapy

Therapy is a unique and individual experience with the outcome determined by the effort and motivation you bring to work towards a change in yourself. It can result in a number of benefits to you and can potentially help in your ability to identify, challenge, and change beliefs and attitudes which create the unwanted feelings that have you seeking therapy. Therapy also has the potential to help you gain new or deeper understandings about the issues you are facing and can help you learn new ways of coping with them.

There is no guarantee that therapy will yield the positive or intended results you are seeking. Because feelings will be explored, you may experience a range of emotions that can be intense and uncomfortable at times. During the course of therapy, some of your assumptions, perceptions, or behaviors may be challenged. You may also experience unintended changes in your personal and interpersonal relationships, as you work towards resolving the issues that originally brought you to therapy. These challenges and changes may cause you to feel upset, angry, depressed, uncomfortable, confused, or disappointed. I encourage you to explore those feelings with me during our sessions, as they are part of the therapeutic process.

Our therapeutic relationship is strictly voluntary. At any time during our work together, you have the right to decide to end treatment. If you are thinking about ending therapy, I encourage you to discuss it with me, and if you wish, I will be glad to provide you with the names of other mental health providers. During the course of therapy if I assess that I am either unable or not effective in helping you reach your therapeutic goals, I will discuss this with you, and if appropriate terminate treatment. I will provide you with appropriate referrals and assist you in the transition to a new therapist if you so desire.

About Your Therapist

Since 2004 I have worked in a variety of settings including community based settings, schools, and clinics. I received a Master's degree in Counseling from California State University, Hayward in 2008 and completed 3000 supervised hours of training prior to becoming a licensed therapist. In 2014, I began practicing as a **licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT)** in the state of California working with youth, adults, couples, and families. I utilize Cognitive Behavioral and Psychodynamic therapy techniques and approaches in my practice. I also have a strong foundation in cultural awareness, which I often incorporate into my work.

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Fees and Payment

Your session fee is \$_____. Payment is expected at the beginning of each session. Cash or credit/debit card is the preferred method of payment. If you would like to use your credit card as a method of payment, the Payment Authorization form needs to be completed. Session fees are subject to change, in the event of any fee changes, you will be notified at least 14 days prior to such changes.

From time-to-time, I may engage in telephone contact with you for purposes other than scheduling sessions. For any telephone calls that are 10 minutes or longer, you may be charged a full or pro-rated fee, in which you are responsible for the payment of the agreed upon amount. In addition, I may engage in telephone contact with third parties at your request and with your advance written authorization. These third party contacts can also result in a full or pro-rated fee if they are 10 minutes or longer. Also, if you request a letter or documentation of attendance in therapy that requires a significant time investment, I may charge for the time at the same rate as your regular fee. If you ever have difficulties with your bill, please discuss your finances with your therapist as soon as possible. By your initial on this page, you agree that you are financially responsible to Narissa L. Harris, LMFT for all charges, including unpaid charges by your insurance company or any other third-party payer.

For sessions covered under an insurance company, please know that your insurance company will be billed for all services I provide to you. This includes, but is not limited to, the above mentioned services.

Session Times, Cancellations, and Rescheduling

Sessions are held once a week (unless other arrangements have been made and agreed upon). The length of each session is between 45 to 50 minutes. If you show up late to your session, please note that the session will still end at the regularly scheduled end time. **If you are more than 15 minutes late to your session, please understand that the session will not take place.** In order for therapy to be effective, it is important for sessions to be attended on a consistent and timely basis. Too many missed and/or cancelled sessions lead to ineffective treatment and the inability to reach the established goals. Additionally, missed and/or cancelled sessions result in my inability to use the time for another client who may be in need of treatment. If you need to cancel or reschedule a session, please notify me **at least 24 hours** in advance of our scheduled meeting **or you will be responsible for an administrative fee in the amount of \$_____**. If you miss two or more scheduled appointments within a 30 day period, without cancelling within the 24 hour cancellation period, please note that your services will be terminated. If you are on an every other week schedule, and you miss more than one session within a 30 day period, without cancelling in the 24 hour cancellation period, your services will be terminated. Even with 24 hour notice, if too many cancellations begin taking place, you will be at risk of losing your scheduled time slot and may face termination of services. There is no guarantee that I can reschedule you for a different time during the week, in the event that this is the case, you are still responsible for the administrative fee if you cannot make the originally agreed upon session time. The card you provided on the payment authorization form will be charged on the day of the missed session if 24-hour notice was not provided.

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Contacting me

You may contact me at 510-417-1597 Monday through Friday between 9am and 4pm. I will try my best to reach you within 3 business days of your phone call. On weekends and/or holidays, I will not be available. Please contact one of the numbers provided in the emergency section if you need assistance on the weekends or holidays.

Time Away From The Office

There are times throughout the year that I will be away from the office and will not be available to you. You will be notified of any vacations or time away from the office that I plan to take in advance. If I take an extended period of time off, and you feel that you will need services during that time, I will assist you in finding another therapist through providing you with referrals and will help you in transitioning to a new therapist if you so desire.

Emails, Text Messaging, and Social Media

Therapy is confidential. You can have the confidence that your insights, vulnerable experiences, and feelings will not be repeated outside the therapeutic relationship and what we have agreed upon regarding limits to confidentiality and/or signed releases of information. However, there are some forms of communication in which confidentiality is not guaranteed.

Emails and text messaging, and social media correspondence is NOT confidential. Though Internet and phone security measures can be effective, it is never 100% seal proof. My policy regarding email and text message usage is as follows:

- **Please do not contact me through text message, as it is the least secure therefore I do not interact (or respond) in this form of communication.**
- Because email is also not secure, please only contact me with information regarding scheduling or rescheduling your appointment. Please note that limited communication will be through email to protect your confidentiality.
- Email and/or text correspondence is NOT a substitute for person-to-person therapeutic treatment.
- Email and/or text correspondence will not play a part in your therapy.
- In the event that a face to face session is not possible, information will be relayed through a phone conversation or voicemail.
- Email and/or text correspondence is NOT to be used in the case of an emergency to contact me. If you cannot reach me directly by a phone conversation, please call 911 or go to the emergency room.

Social Media Communication is NOT confidential therefore I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social media networking site. I also do not follow current or former clients on social media. I believe that accepting, or following, clients as friends or contacts on social media can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. Please note that in an effort to protect your confidentiality, I also do not interact with current or former clients on any of my social media platforms for any reason, and only communicate with other professionals on these platforms for business purposes.

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Emergencies

If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency and need to talk to someone immediately, you can call 911, your local police department, or visit your local hospital emergency room. You can also contact the Suicide Prevention Hotline at (800) 273-TALK (8255) or Contra Costa County crisis support services at 1-800-833-2900. All of the above references are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Privilege and Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a foundation of the therapist-client relationship. It is important to know that the law protects confidential communications between a client and their therapist. The protection, known as a “privilege,” applies to any confidential communication between therapist and client (e.g. anything you tell the therapist during sessions or what you might text or email them) or information that your therapist obtains about you during professional consultation. You, as the client, hold the privilege. This means that your therapist cannot share your confidential information (whether verbal or written) with anyone else unless you, the client, consent to the disclosure.

There are, however, certain limited exceptions to the privilege, wherein a therapist may break confidentiality, or is required by law to break confidentiality, and disclose client information. If this becomes the case, your therapist will make every reasonable effort to discuss this with you, before such disclosure, unless prohibited by time, urgency or the law. These exceptions include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Child Abuse, Elder Abuse, or Dependent Adult Abuse:** Therapists are mandated by law to report cases of suspected child abuse (of children and youth under age 18), elder abuse (of adults over age 65), or dependent adult abuse (adults between the age of 18 and 64) to the appropriate authorities.
- **Suicide:** If you are in imminent danger of killing yourself, your therapist will need to breach confidentiality in order to keep you safe. This may include informing your family member(s) or taking action to see that you are admitted to a hospital.
- **Homicide:** If you disclose to your therapist that you are planning to kill or hurt someone, they are required by law to inform the police, inform your intended victim(s), and inform any other necessary individuals in order to prevent loss of life.
- **As Mandated by Law:** For example, if your therapist receives a subpoena, they may be required to submit your records as part of a legal proceeding.

Limits on the Intent of Treatment

I do not engage in treatment services for the purpose of custody evaluations, immigration evaluation, disability evaluation, mediating divorce/separation disputes or for the purpose of making recommendations regarding employment, disability, placement, custody or caregiver competency. **I do not provide any written or verbal information for any of the above mentioned situations.** If you have concerns or questions about any of these topics, please address this with me immediately. You will be given referrals to qualified providers who are more experienced at handling these issues and who can better assist you with your needs.

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Professional Consultation

Professional consultation is an important component of a healthy psychotherapy practice and I regularly participates in clinical, ethical, and legal consultation with appropriate professionals. During such consultations, there might be discussion of the content of your therapy, but no personally identifying client information will be revealed. With your consent, I may videotape your sessions, in order to assist with therapy, for supervision/consultation purposes or for training and education purposes.

Record Keeping

The laws and standards of the profession require every therapist to keep treatment records. These may include information about your diagnosis, therapy goals, progress in treatment, documentation of mandated disclosures (e.g., report of child abuse), and other information. You have a right to view your records or receive a treatment summary by making a request in writing. Under California law, the therapist reserves the right to provide a treatment summary or to refuse to produce a copy of the record, under certain circumstances where the therapist believes that doing so would be likely to cause you substantial harm, endanger your life or physical safety, or pose a significant risk of harm to another individual. Therapist will maintain an adult client's records for seven years following termination of therapy or as required by law. However, after seven years (or the required legal duration), the client records will be destroyed in a manner that preserves your confidentiality. I keep records via electronically and physically, with both forms of record keeping being secure and HIPPA compliant.

HIPPA Acknowledgement of Receipt

By initially this page, and signing at the end of this document, you agree that you have received the Notice of Privacy Practices and that **Narissa L. Harris, LMFT** can use and disclose your protected health information in accordance with HIPPA. This Notice of Privacy Practices, among other points, explains how I plan to use and disclose your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations. This applies to the privacy practices of mental health treatment and information provided by **Narissa L. Harris, LMFT**. You have the right to review the Notice of Privacy Practices prior to initially this page, and signing this document. It provides more detail on how your information may be use and disclosed. The Notice of Privacy Practices is subject to change, at which point you will be updated on any changes that affect you and/or your treatment.

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Your initials on each page, along with your signature at the end of this document indicate that you have reviewed, understand and agree the limits of confidentiality and the informed consent, acknowledging that you understand their meanings and ramifications.

Client's Name

Date of Birth

Client's Name
(For Couple's or Family Therapy Only)

Date of Birth

Client Signature
(Client or Parent/Legal Guardian Signature if applicable)

Date

Client Signature
(Client or Parent/Legal Guardian Signature if applicable)

Date

Therapist Signature

Date