



211 S. Primrose Ave.
Monrovia CA 91016
(626) 359-4330

Consent for Services

Welcome to The Place Within. This document outlines the policies and guidelines we follow. Please make sure you read through this entire document and understand the terms.

In your first session, your therapist will spend some time going through *key points* highlighted below to make sure you both have an understanding of how you can work together considering these terms. The below list is *not* a substitute for all policies included in the following pages.

We welcome any questions from you in your first meeting and *any time following*. We understand the paperwork can seem long and tedious but this will help us understand how best to serve you and help you know what to expect from your therapist.

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, licensed educational psychologists, clinical social workers, or professional clinical counselors). This includes unlicensed and unregistered therapists and counselors at The Place Within. You may contact the board online at www.bbs.ca.gov, or by calling (916) 574-7830.



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Summary of Policies

Confidentiality: We have the utmost respect for your privacy and will keep all information about your treatment confidential unless one of the situations listed in the *Statement of Confidentiality* section (next page) occurs.

Process of Therapy: Therapy is not a treatment that can be predicted. However, one of the greatest predictors for “success” in therapy is connection with your therapist. Therefore, we encourage you to discuss any concerns along the way and will let you know if we think we may not be the best fit for your needs.

Appointments: At the end of each session we will make sure to have the following session scheduled. All cancellations require 24 hour notice or you will be billed for the full session.

Communication: The most secure form of communication is by phone or voicemail. If you need to reach your therapist outside of your session time, we encourage you to call their listed phone number. *Please let your therapist know if you prefer to use text or email for communication regarding appointments.*

Payment: We require payment at the beginning of each session. You may pay via cash, check or credit card. Your fee will be determined with your therapist and is based on a sliding scale.

Insurance: We can provide you with a monthly statement to present to your insurance company for possible reimbursement. If you choose to use your insurance to help pay for services, *please be aware they may request information about your treatment and even deny paying for services.* If you lose coverage at any time, we will discuss the best possible options for you.



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Statement of Confidentiality

Trust is an important aspect of the therapeutic relationship. Your confidentiality is of utmost importance for maintaining this trust. However, there are times when we are legally and ethically required to break confidentiality.

In such circumstances we only disclose the least amount of information necessary to meet legal and ethical guidelines. If this occurs, and if it is safe for your therapist to do so, she/he will inform you of any breaches of your confidentiality as soon as possible.

Below are situations in which your therapist is required to release information to a necessary entity:

1. If you may be a danger to yourself or to another identified person or persons
2. If there is suspicion of abuse of any child under the age of 18 (this includes the involvement of children under the age of 18 in pornography or sexually explicit materials)
3. If there is suspicion of abuse of any dependent and/or elder adult
4. By order of a judge or at request of a subpoena

Please also note that if you choose to use your insurance for payment or reimbursement, your insurance company will be able to access your treatment records. More information on this is in the Insurance section.

Therapists/Counselors in Training

Services are provided by therapists/counselors who are in training to become licensed Marriage and Family Therapists. These therapists/counselors in training are supervised weekly by a licensed mental health professional. All information regarding treatment is accessible to the licensed supervisor.

The name of your therapist's licensed supervisor is:

Contact Information:



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Process of Therapy

Scope of Practice

Marriage and Family Therapists (both licensed and in training) are governed by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. Their scope of practice is limited to therapeutic services and they are not medical professionals. Your therapist's priority is to ensure you receive the appropriate services and this means they may need to refer you to adjunctive or other services if they feel that may be necessary and outside their scope of practice.

Risks and benefits of therapy:

We cannot guarantee that you will see improvement in your relationships or emotions as a result of working together. Therapy requires multiple things in order to be considered "successful." These include involvement from you and a comfortable connection between you and your therapist, as well as clear expectations for what may be possible as a result of the work together.

We encourage you to discuss your goals, expectations and concerns at all points during work together. We will continue to discuss how treatment is working for you throughout and if at any time your therapist feels that treating you may be detrimental then they will recommend you discontinue treatment and provide you with appropriate referrals.

There are times when therapy may bring up unexpected emotions or reactions to relationships. Some things we discuss may surprise you as you learn more about yourself and gain insight. It is possible that you may actually start to feel "worse" before feeling you have attained your goals. If that is the case, it's important we discuss these feelings along the way.

It is also possible that as a result of working together, you may wish to adjust how you interact with people in your life. That may mean engaging in some relationships more or disconnecting from other relationships. It is important you discuss with your therapist any concerns about these things if they arise.



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Course of treatment:

Your therapist will spend the first 1-4 sessions deciding if you are a good fit and determining your needs. You will identify your goals and revisit these goals throughout working together, as these often change over time.

Once you and your therapist mutually agree that your goals for treatment have been met you will determine an appropriate timeframe for ending work together. Many clients prefer to do this slowly by reducing the number of sessions and some return periodically during stressful times later in life. Please know this process will be very transparent and you will work together with your therapist to determine what is best for you.

Medications:

Therapists are not medical providers and do not provide medical advice or prescriptions for medication. However, we do coordinate care with applicable medical professionals and may ask about basic medication compliance. We will always let you know before communicating with any other professionals and request you provide their contact information on the Intake Assessment form. *Any changes in your medication should always be first discussed with and approved by your prescribing physician.*

Appointments

Cancelled appointments:

All cancellations require 24 hour notice by phone or you will be billed for the full session. We may choose to make exceptions for extenuating circumstances.

Missed appointments:

All missed appointments (no show, no cancellation) will be billed at the agreed upon regular session rate and will be due prior to your next session.

If your therapist does not hear from you after a missed appointment and has reason for concern, they may reach out to your identified emergency contact to ensure your well-being.



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Late appointments:

All sessions begin at the scheduled time and last 50 minutes. If you arrive late, you will meet until 50 minutes after your scheduled session time.

Please note that multiple missed/cancelled appointments and late arrivals may require us to discontinue treatment. In this circumstance, we will discuss with you in person or by phone how to proceed.

Communication

Your main form of communication with your therapist outside the office will be via phone. If you are distressed and feel the need to call outside of your regular meeting time, please know that your therapist is only available Monday-Friday during typical business hours. Your therapist will return your call within one business day.

E - Mails:

Email is a popular, yet insecure form of communication. When you send an email it has the potential to be seen by many people prior to reaching its destination. For this reason, your therapist will never discuss anything clinical with you via email and we ask you to refrain from doing so, as well. We will never send you an email that contains extensive amounts of what is considered Personal Health Information (PHI). These include things such as social security number or health insurance member ID.

Email may be appropriate for communication regarding appointments, but please be aware the above warning still applies. If you would like to use email communication, please discuss with your therapist.

Cell phones:

If you have a cell phone that provides alerts on your home screen, consider who may easily see notifications of contact with your therapist. This means how you enter the therapist's name in your phone as a contact and which form of communication you would like to have with them (email, text, etc.). You may also choose to turn off certain notifications in your settings for increased privacy.

Texting:

Texting uses similar communication as email and is also, therefore, not secure. For this reason, your therapist will never discuss anything clinical with you via text and



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we ask you to refrain from doing so, as well. We also will never send you a text message that contains extensive amounts of what is considered Personal Health Information (PHI). These include things such as social security number or health insurance member ID.

Texting may be appropriate for communication regarding appointments, but please be aware the above warning still applies. If you would like to use texting, please discuss with your therapist.

Social Media

The Place Within maintains social media accounts for promotion of the agency and education of the public. These accounts serve to offer encouragement and resources. They are not a substitute for treatment by a licensed mental health professional and nothing shared should be interpreted as a personal message.

Therapists at The Place Within do not interact with clients via social media. If you choose to follow an account and reach out to your therapist via that method, they are unlikely to see that message.

Payment

We offer sessions based on a sliding scale fee and re-evaluate these fees every twelve months, or sooner if there is a significant life circumstance.

Your fee for one 50 minute therapy session is: \$_____

We accept cash or check as payment for services. All payment is due at the time of service. You may receive a receipt for your payments upon request.

If, at any time, you are having difficulty paying your fee please discuss this with your therapist as soon as possible.



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Insurance Reimbursement

The Place Within is not an in-network provider for any insurance company. Some insurance companies will reimburse you for costs related to attending therapy. If you would like to seek reimbursement with your insurance company we will provide you with a monthly statement of fees paid and services provided.

Please note that when you choose to allow your insurance company to contribute payment to your treatment you do allow them access to your clinical records. If you have questions or concerns about this, please speak with your therapist before submitting any forms to your insurance company.

Court Policy

Please be advised that should your therapist be requested to write a letter on any court related matter, they will NOT be stipulating in writing or in person as to an *opinion*. As your therapist, they may only provide observations and feedback (fact-based information). *At no time will your therapist make a recommendation in regards to custody or any other court related matter.*

If a court order (subpoena) is served and is requesting that your therapist be present in person and/or there is a request for records, your therapist will request your consent before turning over confidential information. They will discuss with you exactly what has been requested by court and *there is no guarantee that the information will be kept confidential*. This information includes mental health history, current status and inclusive records and may not be in your best interest. The therapist-client relationship does not render your therapist as your advocate. They will withhold any opportunity to engage in a dual relationship in this way.

Fees:

Should your therapist be ordered by court to write a letter to the court, the time shall be billed at your regular hourly rate.

Should your therapist be court ordered to appear in court, the fee stipulation is as follows:

- \$750 per day (this includes travel to and from court)
- Regular hourly rate for preparation



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The Place Within holds the right to waive these fees, depending upon circumstances and at the discretion of the agency.

Your therapist will not be on-call at any time. Should a case be trailed, they will be paid in full for each day as it hinders their ability to be available to other clients.

All court fees must be received by cashier's check 14 days prior to the court date. Should the court calendar the hearing for another date, your therapist must be re-issued a court order with the new court hearing date.

Should your therapist be on vacation, the party initiating the court order must take reasonable steps to avoid imposing undue burden or expense on a person subject to the subpoena.

Consultation Disclosure

There are times when your therapist consults with other mental health professionals about cases or during team consultations. During these discussions, your therapist will make sure to disclose as little information as possible in order to protect your confidentiality. If they feel there is an instance when consultation may require more information and may be helpful for your work together, your therapist will talk with you beforehand about how to proceed.

Please note this disclosure does not include regular supervision of cases, as described above in the section "Therapists/Counselors in Training."

Your therapist may also consult with other professionals about your case (for example, teachers or social workers). However, your therapist will never consult with anyone outside of The Place Within without your prior and written consent.

Collateral Involvement

At times it is helpful to involve important people in your life during the counseling process. If this is something that you and your therapist both feel may be helpful, the two of you will discuss how much information you may be comfortable disclosing and in what way. For all adult clients, your therapist will never speak with any of your family members about your treatment, or even confirm whether or not you are a



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client, without first having your written consent. One exception may be if your therapist is concerned about your safety.

Medical Records and Your Right to Review Them

As a mental health professional, your therapist keeps records about your work together. This includes notes on sessions, meetings, phone calls and any other communication with or about you. Unless your therapist feels it would be significantly harmful to you, you are able to access your records at any time.

Your therapist requires 5 days of notice prior to allowing you to *view* your records. If you would like a copy of your records, your therapist requires 15 days of notice and will charge a fee of 0.25¢ per page, plus postage fees if you would like your copies mailed.

Oftentimes, clients request copies of records with the intent of securing a treatment summary for an outside entity. Requesting a summary from your therapist is often in your best interest, as it protects your confidentiality. This is often preferable to giving someone access to your entire treatment record.

If that is the case, your therapist is happy to provide such a summary, billed at their regular hourly rate. Your therapist will require 10 business days to prepare your summary. If this is related to a court matter, please see the "Court Policy" above.

Governing Body

Your therapist is a Marriage and Family Therapist Associate (unlicensed practitioner in training) and is governed by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. You may reach the Board at the contact information below:

California Board of Behavioral Sciences

1625 N Market Blvd., #S200

Sacramento CA 95834

<https://www.bbs.ca.gov/>



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Agreement to Terms and Conditions

I agree to the above listed terms and conditions for services. I acknowledge that I have read and understood these terms and that my therapist has reviewed them with me, allowing for questions and discussion.

Please note that you may request a copy of this agreement.

Client Signature **Date**

Parent/Guardian Signature (if applicable) **Date**