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Consent to Treat, Agency Policies, and General Information Agreement for Psychotherapy Services for Students

Mentis: Napa's Center for Mental Health Services is dedicated to the emotional health and wellness of our community through accessible and affordable mental health services. Our programs serve close to 1,000 people each year, spanning the age, ethnicity, geographical location, and economic status of the local population. To learn more about Mentis, please visit our website: www.mentisnapa.org.

INDIVIDUAL THERAPY INFORMATION AND WHAT TO EXPECT

School can be both a rewarding and a challenging experience for students. At times, social/emotional issues may affect your child's performance in school. Many children benefit from individual and/or group counseling services. Counseling services are currently being offered on the school site, at no cost to you.

Clients seen by a Mentis school-based therapist typically have weekly or bi-weekly appointments for psychotherapy, with each appointment lasting between 30-50 minutes. Clients are allotted up to 15 sessions upon beginning therapy. If there is a clinical need for extended therapy, the decision to continue will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis, in consultation with the clinical supervisor and Schools Program Manager.

Psychotherapy is the process of developing a safe, supportive, and trusting relationship with a therapist to heal from painful past experiences, explore solutions to current problems/issues, develop new skills to assist in daily living, improve mood, or work on areas of personal growth. Participation in psychotherapy can result in several benefits, including: improved interpersonal relationships, resolution of the specific concerns/issues that led you to seek therapy, and better daily functioning.

Working toward these benefits requires your effort and commitment, as well as honesty and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings and/or behavior. Much of what you get out of therapy depends upon what you put into it. Your consistent attendance, completion of "homework assignments," and willingness to try new ways of thinking and behaving will help you to reach your goals.

Your therapist will ask for your help in developing treatment goals that will serve as the focus of your work together, and for your feedback and views on your therapy as it progresses. During therapy, remembering or talking about difficult events, feelings, or thoughts can result in you experiencing considerable discomfort or unpleasant feelings, which may affect your mood or behavior. Your therapist may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions, or suggest different ways of looking at situations, events, or issues in your life. This process may produce intended or desired changes or it can also cause you to feel upset, angry, depressed, anxious, or disappointed.

Psychotherapy may lead you to consider, or make, significant changes in your life. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but can also be slow or frustrating. **There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results.** Your therapist will utilize various psychological approaches in working with you that are consistent with his/her education and training, and based upon an assessment of the situation/problem/issue that

led you to seek treatment. Therapists are not permitted to maintain personal friendships with clients either during or after termination of therapy, in efforts to maximize the benefits of the therapeutic relationship.

Should you feel dissatisfied with the therapeutic services being provided, we encourage you to take the matter up with your therapist and (if necessary) their supervisor. The Board of Behavioral Sciences receives and responds to complaints regarding services provided within the scope of practice (marriage and family therapists, licensed educational psychologists, clinical social workers, or professional clinical counselors). You may contact the board online at www.bbs.ca.gov, or by calling (916) 574-7830.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Mentis requests that clients call to cancel appointments with at least 24 hours notice. Clients will be charged for missed appointments or appointments cancelled less than 24 hours in advance (except in emergency situations). We have a voicemail system that clients may access 24 hours a day if an appointment needs to be cancelled. If two consecutive appointments are missed without being cancelled by the client in advance, the case may be closed per Clinical Director discretion. It is expected that clients have a phone number available that can be used to communicate directly with their therapist. Mentis requests that clients do not communicate with their therapist via e-mail.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Mentis' policy is that all information and communication disclosed during sessions between the therapist and the client, and in written records pertaining to those sessions, remain private and confidential. No one else has access to client files from a psychotherapy session other than the therapist, his or her clinical supervisor, or other authorized agency personnel including the School Programs Manager and Director of Programs. Clinical case information can be exchanged with other people or agencies only with the client or client's legal guardian's written permission, except where disclosure is required or permitted by law. *According to state law, information must be exchanged with other people or agencies in some specific situations, including:*

- Reasonable suspicion of child abuse, elder abuse, or dependent adult abuse.
- A client presents as being a danger to oneself, or others, or to the property of another and the disclosure is necessary to prevent the threatened danger. This exception includes suicidal and homicidal threats.
- Court ordered release of information.

If our agency needs to release information for any of the above-stated reasons, therapists will attempt, to the best of their ability, to inform clients first. If you have any questions about confidentiality or the release of information, please speak to your therapist. For returning clients, please note that your new therapist will have access to your personal information from previous service received at the agency.

- ☐ If this box is checked, your therapist is a registered associate. This means he/she has a Master's degree and is working to gain clinical hours for licensure, and is under the supervision of a licensed clinician. Confidential information is discussed during clinical supervision with associates; however, the clinical supervisor, and other authorized staff including the Schools Program Manager and the Director of Programs, are bound to legal and ethical standards of confidentiality required by state law. Client cases, with identity protected, are also discussed during clinical team meetings for educational purposes; identifying information is protected during these meetings.

TELEHEALTH

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (abbreviated "COVID-19") pandemic, we may modify our services while striving to provide support to our community during times of disaster. This may include delivery of services utilizing telehealth services which are HIPAA compliant. Please note that the following will apply:

- Client should engage in video session in a confidential space,

- Mentis cannot guarantee that the session will not be overheard in client's environment,
- The video session shall not be recorded or retained on either end of the transmission,
- Client has the right to end the telehealth session at any time

TREATMENT OF MINORS

When treating minors whose parents are divorced or separated, a copy of the legal custody agreement must be on file and the agency needs the written consent of both parents before psychotherapy can begin. It is the responsibility of the parent seeking treatment to obtain the consent of the other parent. If one parent has sole custody, then he or she can sign and consent to treatment *if* documentation is provided demonstrating this legal arrangement. Legal guardians must provide documentation of their guardianship before they can consent to therapy of a minor.

LIMITS ON LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Due to the nature of psychotherapy often involving the disclosure of personal information regarding matters which may be of a sensitive nature, it is agreed that should there be legal proceedings such as, but not limited to, divorce and custody disputes, neither you nor your lawyer, or anyone else acting on your behalf will call on a Mentis therapist to testify in court or request the release of the psychotherapy records for the purpose of a legal proceeding. Mentis does not accept court ordered cases.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Mentis believes in providing excellent service. In general, this is best accomplished when a client is not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Thus, we ask that clients do not come to therapy appointments under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If this appears to be the case, we will ask the client to reschedule their appointment for another time.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) CONDUCT POLICY

At Mentis, we strive to be a champion of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We ask our staff and our clients to refrain from speaking/behaving toward other people and/or groups in a derogatory manner. Any communication that is perceived as derogatory and detrimental by either the client or the clinician will not be tolerated as the benefits of treatment lie in the therapeutic relationship of trust and safety. Any Mentis staff who behave in this way should be immediately reported to their supervisor. Should a client engage in this manner of behaving, the clinician will remind the client of this policy and explore ways to allow client expression while preserving trust and safety during sessions to continue with treatment. Clients who persistently disregard reminders may be terminated and referred to an alternative provider.

CONSENT FOR TREATMENT OF MINOR:

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I am the parent or legal guardian of the below named minor child and consent to the provision of psychotherapy or counseling services to the child through Mentis. *Please note: If there is a legal custody arrangement between parents, both parents must legally consent to a minor's mental health treatment.*

Name of Minor Client

Relationship to Minor

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

(If applicable per parental custody agreement)

Schools Informed Consent (Individual) – English 06-29-22

EMAIL: Therapists are not able to answer treatment related e-mails.

GIFTS: Your therapist is bound by professional legal and ethical standards, which means that clients are not expected or required to give any type of gift to the therapist. It is agency policy that therapists should not accept gifts from clients.

TERMINATION: Participation in therapy at Mentis is voluntary and can be ended at any time by the client. It is the expectation of the agency that clients notify their therapist of their intention to stop therapy. Mentis also has the right to terminate therapy based upon client noncompliance with agency policies. Your therapist will attempt to notify you if there are any changes in the service arrangement.

EMERGENCIES: All clients experiencing a crisis after business hours should contact the Emergency Response Team at Napa County Crisis. They are open and available to assist Napa County residents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **Their phone number is 253-4711.**

If you want to know more about these policies or have any questions about the information in this document, please speak to your therapist.

I have read the above Agency Policies and General Information Agreement carefully; I understand them and agree to comply with them:

Client Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature
(If applicable per parental custody agreement)

Date

Therapist Signature

Date