



Campbell Teen & Family Therapy

Sharmaine Cardenas, ACSW, #97169

Associate Clinical Social Worker

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AGREEMENT FOR SERVICE / INFORMED CONSENT

Introduction

This Agreement has been created for the purpose of outlining the terms and conditions of services to be provided by Sharmaine Cardenas, ACSW, for [name of patient:] _____ (herein “Patient”) with important information regarding the practices, policies and procedures of Sharmaine Cardenas, Associate Clinical Social Worker (ACSW #97169) (herein “Therapist”), and to clarify the terms of the professional therapeutic relationship between Therapist and Patient. The name of this practice is Campbell Teen and Family Therapy and the individual therapist that operates this practice is Ingrid Higgins, MFT (LMFT #43950). Any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this Agreement should be discussed with Therapist prior to signing it.

Therapist Background and Qualifications

At an appropriate time, your therapist will discuss her professional background with patient and representative and provide both with information regarding her experience, education, special interests, and professional orientation. Patient and representative are free to ask questions at any time about your therapist’s background, experience and professional orientation.

Sharmaine Cardenas is an Associate Clinical Social Worker. She graduated from California State University, Northridge with a Masters in Social Work. She completed her undergraduate work also with California State University, Northridge earning a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with an emphasis in Social Justice and Social Welfare. Prior to her registration as an associate clinician, she worked for a year from 2017-2018 as a Registered Behavioral Technician for youth on the

Autism Spectrum. She did volunteer work for several non-profits serving children from 2015-2017 as well. From 2018-2019 she also worked as a Psychiatric Social Worker Intern for Los Angeles Unified School district and from 2019-2020 she took on a Social Work role with both Kaiser Permanente and Healthcare Partners(later Optum Care).

Sharmaine has experience working with individuals who have experienced varying degrees of trauma and is able to work with a variety of issues including: depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, self-injuring behaviors, family problems, grief and loss, and support families with life skills in managing Autism Spectrum Disorder. She is passionate about helping navigate youth and their families towards a path of healing and fulfillment.

Sharmaine's therapeutic style is integrative, she draws from different disciplines to provide my clients with a customizable treatment plan that is unique as the individual who comes in seeking her help wholeheartedly. She draws heavily from Family Systems Theory, Solution-Focused methods, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. She keeps a person first language and strengths-based perspective while holding space in a way that is safe and full of cultural humility when providing services. She incorporates mindfulness, meditation, and empathy and works hard to match a therapeutic style to the needs of her clients.

Risks and Benefits of Therapy

Psychotherapy is a process in which Therapist and Patient, discuss a myriad of issues, events, experiences and memories for the purpose of creating positive change so Patient can experience his/her life more fully. It provides an opportunity to better, and more deeply understand oneself, as well as, any problems or difficulties Patient may be experiencing. Psychotherapy is a joint effort between Patient and Therapist. Progress and success may vary depending upon the particular problems or issues being addressed, as well as many other factors.

It is your therapist's intention to provide services that will assist you in reaching your goals. Based upon the information that you provide to your therapist and the specifics of your situation your therapist will provide recommendations to you regarding your treatment. We believe that therapists and patients are partners in the therapeutic process. You have the right to agree or disagree with your therapist's recommendations. Your therapist will also periodically provide feedback to you regarding your progress and will invite your participation in the discussion.

Your therapist will work with you to develop an effective treatment plan. Over the course of therapy, your therapist will attempt to evaluate whether the therapy provided is beneficial to you. Your feedback and input is an important part of the process. It is the goal of your therapist to assist you in effectively addressing your problems and concerns. However, due to the varying nature and severity of problems and the individuality of each patient, your therapist is unable to predict the length of your therapy or to guarantee a specific outcome or result.

Participating in therapy may result in a number of benefits to Patient, including, but not limited to, reduced stress and anxiety, a decrease in negative thoughts and self-sabotaging behaviors,

improved interpersonal relationships, increased comfort in social, work, and family settings, and increased self-confidence. Such benefits may also require substantial effort on the part of Patient, including an active participation in the therapeutic process, honesty, and a willingness to change feelings, thoughts and behaviors. There is no guarantee that therapy will yield any or all of the benefits listed above.

Participating in therapy may also involve some discomfort, including remembering and discussing unpleasant events, feelings and experiences. The process may evoke strong feelings of sadness, anger, fear, etc. There may be times in which Therapist will challenge the perceptions and assumptions of the Patient and offer different perspectives. The issues presented by Patient may result in unintended outcomes, including changes in personal relationships. Patient should be aware that any decision on the status of his/her personal relationships is the responsibility of Patient.

During the therapeutic process, many patients find that they feel worse before they feel better. This is generally a normal course of events. Personal growth and change may be easy and swift at times but may also be slow and frustrating. Patient should address any concerns he/she has regarding his/her progress in therapy with Therapist.

Professional Consultation

Professional consultation is an important component of a healthy psychotherapy practice. As such, Therapist participates weekly in clinical, ethical, and legal consultation with appropriate professionals. During such consultations, Therapist will not reveal any personally identifying information regarding Patient.

Records and Record Keeping

Therapist may take notes during session and will also produce other notes and records regarding Patient's treatment. These notes constitute Therapist's clinical and business records, which by law, Therapist is required to maintain. Such records are the sole property of Therapist and her supervisor. Therapist will not alter his/her normal record keeping process at the request of any patient. Should Patient request a copy of Therapist's records, such a request must be made in writing. Therapist reserves the right, under California law, to provide Patient, with a treatment summary in lieu of actual records. Therapist also reserves the right to refuse to produce a copy of the record under certain circumstances, but may, as requested, provide a copy of the record to another treating health care provider. However, after ten years, Patient's records will be destroyed in a manner that preserves Patient's confidentiality.

Confidentiality

All communications between patient and therapist will be held in strict confidence unless you

provide written permission to release information about patient's treatment. If patient participates in marital or family therapy, your therapist will not disclose confidential information about patient's treatment unless all person(s) who participated in the treatment with you provide their written authorization to release. (In addition, your therapist will not disclose information communicated privately to him or her by one family member, to any other family member without written permission.)

The information disclosed by Patient is generally confidential and will not be released to any third party without written authorization from Patient, except where required or permitted by law. Exceptions to confidentiality, include, but are not limited to, reporting child, elder and dependent adult abuse, when a patient makes a serious threat of violence towards a reasonably identifiable victim, or when a patient is dangerous to him/herself or the person or property of another.

Patient Litigation

Therapist will not voluntarily participate in any litigation, or custody dispute in which Patient, and another individual, or entity, are parties. Therapist has a policy of not communicating with Patient's attorney and will generally not write or sign letters, reports, declarations, or affidavits to be used in Patient's legal matter. Therapist will generally not provide records or testimony unless compelled to do so. Should Therapist be subpoenaed, or ordered by a court of law, to appear as a witness in an action involving Patient, Patient agrees to reimburse Therapist for any time spent for preparation, travel, or other time in which Therapist has made him/herself available for such an appearance at Therapist's usual and customary hourly rate of \$500.00.

Our fee for any work related to court matters, including but not limited to letters to the court, or communication with lawyers or evaluators, is \$500 per hour, billed in increments of 5 minutes.

Psychotherapist-Patient Privilege

The information disclosed by Patient, as well as any records created, is subject to the psychotherapist-patient privilege. The psychotherapist-patient privilege results from the special relationship between Therapist and Patient in the eyes of the law. It is akin to the attorney-client privilege or the doctor-patient privilege. Typically, the patient is the holder of the psychotherapist-patient privilege. If Therapist receives a subpoena for records, deposition testimony, or testimony in a court of law, Therapist will assert the psychotherapist-patient privilege on Patient's behalf until instructed, in writing, to do otherwise by Patient or Patient's Representative.

Patient, should be aware that he/she might be waiving the psychotherapist-patient privilege if he/she makes his/her mental or emotional state an issue in a legal proceeding. Patient, should

address any concerns he/she might have regarding the psychotherapist-patient privilege with his/her attorney.

Fee and Fee Arrangements

The fee for service is \$240 per intake session.

The fee for service is \$160 per 45-50-minute therapy session.

The fee for service is \$50/per session for 12-week group therapy session.

Sessions longer than 50-minutes are charged for the additional time pro rata. Therapist reserves the right to periodically adjust this fee. Patient will be notified of any fee adjustment in advance. In addition, this fee may be adjusted by contract with insurance companies, managed care organizations, or other third-party payors, or by agreement with Therapist. Fees are payable at the time that services are rendered. Please ask your therapist if you wish to discuss a written agreement that specifies an alternative payment procedure. Therapist accepts cash, checks, and major credit cards.

The agreed upon fee between Therapist and Representative is \$160.00/45-50 minute session. Therapist reserves the right to periodically adjust fee. Patient will be notified of any fee adjustment in advance.

From time-to-time, Therapist may engage in telephone contact with Patient for purposes other than scheduling sessions. Patient is responsible for payment of the agreed upon fee (on a pro rata basis) for any telephone calls longer than ten minutes. In addition, from time-to-time, Therapist may engage in telephone contact with third parties at Representative's request and with Patient's advance written authorization. Patient is responsible for payment of the agreed upon fee (on a pro rata basis) for any telephone calls longer than ten minutes.

Insurance

Patient is responsible for any and all fees not reimbursed by his/her insurance company, managed care organization, or any other third-party payor. Patient is responsible for verifying and understanding the limits of his/her coverage, as well as his/her co-payments and deductibles.

Therapist is not a contracted provider with any insurance company, managed care organization. However, if you have a PPO with out of network benefits, Therapist will provide you with a monthly statement called a "Superbill", which you can submit to the third-party of his/her choice to seek reimbursement of fees already paid. The amount of reimbursement and the amount of any co-payments or deductible depends on the requirements of your specific insurance plan. The "Superbill" is not a bill, it will have one column with the amount paid and one column with the amount charged. This is sent out at the end of the month and typically takes 5-7 business days to be sent out.

You should be aware that insurance plans generally limit coverage to certain diagnosable mental conditions. You should also be aware that you are responsible for verifying and understanding the limits of your insurance coverage. Although your therapist is happy to assist your efforts to seek insurance reimbursement, we are unable to guarantee whether your insurance will provide payment for the services provided to you. Please discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about this with your therapist.

If for some reason you find that they are unable to continue paying for your therapy, you should inform the therapist. Your therapist will help you to consider any options that may be available to you at that time.

Cancellation Policy

Sessions are typically scheduled to occur one time per week at the same time and day if possible. Your therapist may suggest a different amount of therapy depending on the nature and severity of your concerns. Your consistent attendance greatly contributes to a successful outcome. In order to cancel or reschedule an appointment, you are expected to notify your therapist at least 48 hours in advance of your appointment. If you do not provide your therapist with at least 48 hours' notice in advance, you are responsible for payment for the missed session. Please understand that your insurance company will not pay for missed or cancelled sessions.

Cancellation notice should be left on Therapist's voice mail at (408) 548-7546.

Therapist Availability

You are welcome to phone patient's therapist in between sessions. However, as a general rule, it is our belief that important issues are better addressed within regularly scheduled sessions.

You may leave a message for your therapist at any time on her confidential voicemail. If you wish your therapist to return your call, please be sure to leave your name and phone number(s), along with a brief message concerning the nature of your call. Therapist will make every effort to return calls within 24 hours (or by the next business day), but cannot guarantee the calls will be returned immediately. Non-urgent phone calls are returned during the therapist's normal workdays within 24 hours. If you have an urgent need to speak with your therapist, please indicate that fact in your message and follow any instructions that are provided by your therapist's voicemail. Therapist is unable to provide 24-hour crisis service. In the event of a medical or psychiatric emergency or emergency involving a threat to your safety or the safety of others, the patient should call 911 and request emergency assistance, or go to the nearest emergency room.

You should be aware that your therapist is generally available to return phone calls within approximately 24-48 hours.

Your therapist is not able to return phone calls after 7:00pm (PST)

Your therapist is not available to return phone calls on Saturday.

You should also be aware of the following resources that are available in the local community to assist individuals who are in crisis:

Uplift Crisis Line-24 hours (408) 379-3790

Bill Wilson Center-resource for teens (408) 243-0222

Next Door-resource for domestic violence (408) 501-7550

Other: 911

Internet policy

Sensitive, clinical information is to be discussed over the phone or in-person as deemed appropriate by the therapist. For appropriate e-mail or text communication therapist will respond to your e-mail or text within 24 hours. Potential risks of using electronic communications may include but are not limited to; inadvertent sending of email or text containing confidential information to the wrong recipient, theft or loss of the computer, laptop or mobile device storing confidential information, and interception by an unauthorized third party through an unsecured network. E-mail messages may contain viruses or other defects and it is your responsibility to ensure that it is virus-free. In addition, e-mail or text communication may become part of the clinical record. You may be charged for time the therapist spends reading and responding to email or text messages.

Our concern for our clients regarding the use of the Internet to communicate, especially within social media sites, is the potential loss of privacy and blurring of the therapeutic relationship. For this reason, we try to minimize contact on the web with both current and former clients.

Friending: We do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social media site. We also don't search for or "friend" our clients. Let's meet and talk in person, or send personal emails, not through Facebook.

Fanning and Business Review Sites: The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists Ethics Code prohibits our soliciting testimonials from our clients. We can't stop you from "liking" us, but you should be aware that if you do so, you will be compromising your own privacy.

Texting: Our online scheduling software has the capability of sending appointment reminders via text messages or email or both. We will ask you in advance whether you would like us to do this. Please be aware that texting is neither secure nor private. Because of this, we prefer to keep text messages to a minimum and we discourage you from texting any confidential information.

Messaging: Please do not message us on sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn. These sites are not secure, we may not see the messages in a timely fashion, and messages on Wall posts compromise your confidentiality in a very public way. If you need to contact us between sessions, please call or send a direct email to sharmaine@campbellteenfamilytherapy.com.

Please notify your therapist if you decide to avoid or limit in any way the use of any or all communication devices, such as e-mail, cell-phone or faxes. If you communicate confidential or highly private information via e-mail, your therapist will assume that you have made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and she/he will honor your desire to communicate on such matters via e-mail. Please do not use e-mail or Faxes for emergencies.

Termination of Therapy

The length of your treatment and the timing of the eventual termination of your treatment depend on the specifics of your treatment plan and the progress you achieve. It is a good idea to plan for your termination, in collaboration with their therapist. Your therapist will discuss a plan for termination with you as you approach the completion of your treatment goals.

You may discontinue therapy at any time. If you or their therapist determines that they are not benefitting from the treatment, either of you may elect to initiate a discussion of your treatment alternatives. Treatment alternatives may include, among other possibilities, referral, changing your treatment plan, or terminating your therapy.

Therapist reserves the right to terminate therapy at his/her discretion. Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to, untimely payment of fees, failure to comply with treatment recommendations, conflicts of interest, failure to participate in therapy, Patient needs are outside of Therapist's scope of competence or practice, or Patient is not making adequate progress in therapy. Patient has the right to terminate therapy at his/her discretion. Upon either party's decision to terminate therapy, Therapist will generally recommend that Patient participate in at least one, or possibly more, termination sessions. These sessions are intended to facilitate a positive termination experience and give both parties an opportunity to reflect on the work that has been done. Therapist will also attempt to ensure a smooth transition to another therapist by offering referrals to Patient.

Acknowledgement

By signing below, Patient acknowledges that he/she has reviewed and fully understands the terms and conditions of this Agreement. Patient has discussed such terms and conditions with Therapist and has had any questions with regard to its terms and conditions answered to Patient's satisfaction. Patient agrees to abide by the terms and conditions of this Agreement and consents to participate in psychotherapy with Therapist. Moreover, Representative agrees to hold Therapist free and harmless from any claims, demands, or suits for damages from any injury or complications whatsoever, save negligence, that may result from such treatment.

Your signature indicates that you have read this agreement for services carefully and understand its contents.

Please ask your therapist to address any questions or concerns that you have about this information before you sign.

Patient Name (please print)

Signature of Patient (or authorized representative)

Date

I understand that I am financially responsible to Therapist for all charges, including unpaid charges by my insurance company or any other third-party payor.

Name of Responsible Party (Please print)

Signature of Responsible Party (and relationship to Patient)

Date

