



## RED CLIFF COUNSELING AND WELLNESS INFORMED CONSENT

Welcome to Red Cliff Counseling and Wellness (RCCW). RCCW provides confidential services for individual, couples, group, and family counseling. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. It also contains summary information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law that provides privacy protections and client rights with regard to the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) used for the purpose of treatment, payment, and health care operations. HIPAA requires that we provide you with a Notice of Privacy Practices (the Notice) for use and disclosure of PHI for treatment, payment and health care operations. The Notice, which is attached to this Agreement, explains HIPAA and its application to your personal health information in greater detail. The law requires that I obtain your signature acknowledging that I have provided you with this information. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is very important that you read them carefully and we can discuss any questions you may have about our procedures. When you sign this document, it will also represent and agreement between us. You may revoke this Agreement in writing at any time. That revocation will be binding on me unless I have taken action in reliance on it; if there are obligations imposed on me by your health insurer in order to process or substantiate claims made under your policy; or if you have not satisfied any financial obligations you have incurred.

**COUNSELING/THERAPY PROCESS AND SERVICES.** Psychotherapy is an alliance between client and therapist to increase understanding and bring about change. The therapy process varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and client and the particular problems you are experiencing. There are many different methods RCCW may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will need to work on the things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, difficulty concentrating, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have many benefits including the goal to seek joy in your daily life. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. Therapy can help individuals change patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving, so they can create a life that is more satisfying and fulfilling. Although there are no guarantees of what you will experience, I will devote my attention to ensure that we maintain a safe and respectful environment that can maximize the possibilities for you to achieve positive growth and healing. We will work together to determine the pace and form of treatment.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs, goals, and circumstances. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have any questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion or referral.

**THERAPY SESSIONS / MISSED APPOINTMENTS.** If psychotherapy is begun, 50-minute sessions will be scheduled at a frequency that is mutually agreed upon. We may also decide to change the length and frequency of sessions at any time during the course of your therapy. ***Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for the full fee unless you provide 24-hours (1-day) advance notice of cancellation.*** I understand illnesses, accidents, and other beyond-our-control situations occur, and with these events, there will be no charge as long as you contact the office of such an issue. If you arrive to the session under the influence of alcohol or other substances, then I will cancel the session, find you a safe ride home, and require you to pay for the session. ***It is important to note that insurance companies do not provide reimbursement for cancelled or missed sessions.***

**Confidentiality.** In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and counselor are protected by law; we can only release information about our work to others with your written consent. There are a few exceptions to the confidentiality laws and standards, as follows:

- If your counselor believes that you or someone else is in clear and eminent danger of harm, your counselor is legally obligated to inform proper authorities and others in order to help prevent the harm from occurring.
- If you provide information indicating that someone is being abused, your counselor is legally obligated to notify proper authorities.
- In rare cases a court may order your counselor to disclose information about you.
- If you are under 18 years old, your parents or legal guardian may have access to your treatment records.
- Our professional team meets regularly to provide peer consultation and in servicing to improve quality of care.
- If a collection agency becomes necessary due to nonpayment.

Additionally, most insurance agreements require personal information regarding diagnosis, treatment plan and goals, as well as any additional clinical/demographic information needed to facilitate payment. It is also possible that at some point in the future you will be required by an outside agency to sign a release allowing the agency to review your treatment records. This may occur, for example, if you apply for life insurance, licensure or certification in some professions, or if you require a security clearance.

**Treatment records.** Records of any services you receive at Red Cliff Counseling and Wellness are maintained in password-protected computer files and in paper files locked within filing cabinets in a locked records room. Access to these files is limited to professional and administrative staff. Any request to release your records to outside agencies, insurance companies etc. extend beyond Red Cliff Counseling and Wellness’s ability to protect confidentiality.

**Professional Consultations.** In an effort to provide you with the best possible service, your counselor may choose to consult with other professional staff or colleagues that are subject to the same confidentiality constraints that your counselor is.

**Research.** From time to time Red Cliff Counseling and Wellness uses aggregate information gathered for research projects. These projects serve to enhance our services. No identifying information about any individual is ever disclosed in such projects.

**Risks of Counseling.** Research indicates that most people who engage in counseling benefit from the experience; even so, it is possible for things to get worse before they get better. For example, it isn’t uncommon for clients to make changes in their interpersonal relationships as a result of counseling, and such changes can sometimes be difficult. In addition, some clients who work on especially troubling issues may find it difficult to concentrate. You and your counselor will work together to determine the pace and form of treatment so as to minimize the risks while maximizing the benefits of counseling.

**Missed Appointments.** Please give us as much notice as possible if you have to miss an appointment. Should you miss an appointment without calling 24 hours in advance the regular hourly fee will still be charged.

**Billing and payments.** Payment is expected prior to each session. If you anticipate the need of utilizing your insurance, it is encouraged that you contact your insurance mental health provider and coordinate treatment with your preferred provider. If your account is more than 60 days past due and suitable arrangements have not been agreed to, Red Cliff Counseling and Wellness may use any legal means to secure payment and services will be terminated.

**Technology and Social Networking :** RCCW advises clients that use of e-mail or text messaging has a number of risks and RCCW cannot guarantee confidentiality of this type of communication. Therefore the client should not use email or text for communication regarding sensitive medical or mental health information. RCCW provides a professional Facebook page and newsletter with resources about wellness but RCCW does not accept “friend requests” from current or former clients on their social networking sites due to the fact that these sites can compromise client’s confidentiality and privacy. For the same reason, RCCW requests that clients do not communicate with RCCW via any interactive or social networking sites.

**Hours of Operation.** You may contact your counselor between 9 am and 5 pm Monday through Friday excluding holidays by calling (801)725-8431. If it is an emergency, you should go to the local emergency room.

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the above information and concur with the terms and conditions throughout my involvement with Red Cliff Counseling and Wellness. I have also received a copy of the Privacy Practices and have read and understand the Privacy Practices regarding my health information.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of client

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Initials \_\_\_\_\_