

The King's Forge Counseling Informed Consent for Psychotherapy

The King's Forge Counseling

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Professional Disclosure Statement and Informed Consent:

Nature and Purpose of Counseling

Counseling is a unique and professional relationship between a client and a counselor in which both parties collaborate to help the client grow, mature, and overcome difficulties in his/her life. Counselors at The King's Forge Counseling utilize Cognitive Behavioral, Interpersonal, Gestalt, Motivational Interviewing, Emotion Focused, DBT, EMDR and a variety of other established counseling theories and techniques to promote positive change in their clients. Counselors at The King's Forge Counseling operate from a Christian worldview which influences their understanding of the healing process. The King's Forge Counseling does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. Ethically, however, they cannot help clients accomplish goals or behaviors that are contrary to their beliefs. Should such a conflict arise please speak with your counselor, and if the situation cannot be resolved they will provide referrals for other treatment options that could better meet your needs.

Limits on Confidentiality

Information discussed in the counseling office is considered private and confidential much in the same way as a doctor/patient relationship. There are, however, circumstances when disclosure can occur without your prior consent. The following are typical, but not exhaustive, examples of situations and circumstances under which information may be disclosed without prior consent:

- o Your counselor assesses that are a danger to yourself or someone else

- o In situations of suspected child abuse, elder abuse, or abuse of a disabled person
- o Upon disclosure of sexual contact with another mental health professional
- o Your counselor is ordered by the court or otherwise legally required to disclose information
- o Your counselor is discussing aspects of your records with other professionals to determine the best course of treatment
- o The handling of scheduling and filing of your records by clerical staff

Confidentiality in Couple's or Family Counseling

If you enter therapy as a couple or family, it is important that you understand that the couple or family and not the individuals within the system, is considered the client. As such, it is standard practice for all concerned parties to be present during counseling, as much as possible. In the course of treatment, there may be situations in which one party or another meets with the therapist individually. In such circumstances the following conditions will be in place:

- o Other members involved in counseling will be made aware of the individual session and have the opportunity to respond
- o Individual sessions will be added as needed to benefit the system as a whole
- o Individual sessions, even if beneficial to you on the one hand, do not become a hindrance to your overall ability to take hold of, organize, and manage your own personal growth while in the presence of others in therapy

If therapy is started for a couple or family and one person chooses to disclose secret, personal information (such as an affair, mismanagement of financial resources, etc...) in an individual session, that information will be held in confidence between that person and the counselor with the following provisions:

- o Ramifications of the disclosed information will be examined
- o Options as to what to do with the disclosed information in relationship to the marriage or family will be examined

- o You will be encouraged to take personal responsibility and proceed with integrity as this information is processed and applied to the growth process of the marriage or family

Because family systems cannot thrive when secrets are present, your therapist will ask that information pertinent to the health of the marriage or family be disclosed in a timely and appropriate manner. If you are not willing to do this and the withholding of this information creates a block in the process of marriage or family counseling your therapist may suggest termination of the counseling and provide referrals for other therapeutic options.

Benefits and Risks of Counseling

Therapy can have many benefits and risks. Change is difficult. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of life, at times you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, anger, guilt, shame, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, counseling often brings greater freedom, increased happiness, restored relationships, deeper friendships, increased confidence, and spiritual transformation. It is, however, impossible to guarantee specific results regarding your therapeutic goals.

Course of Treatment

During the initial visit, your counselor will seek to understand your situation and help clarify your goals. On approximately your second visit, your counselor will provide you with a plan of care outlining the working understanding of the problem, a treatment plan, and therapeutic objectives. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of therapy or about the treatment plan, your counselor will explain them to you. You have the right to decline any services provided by The King's Forge Counseling or request alternative treatment options. It is important that you are engaged in the treatment process because the degree of your participation will affect the degree of success you experience. It is also very important that you complete the entire course of treatment, not circumventing the full therapeutic process. Sometimes people experience a high degree of relief early on in therapy. Other times, change is slower and the process may not be pleasant. People in both situations may be tempted to end counseling prematurely. If you find yourself wanting to stop counseling before completing your plan of care it is extremely important that you discuss this with your counselor. Failure to do so increases the risk that your situation may worsen. Please notify your counselor at the beginning of

treatment if you are currently receiving therapy from another professional. Your counselor may ask you to discontinue therapy elsewhere if you decide to begin therapy at The King's Forge Counseling. If you begin individual counseling and then choose to add co-therapy (co-therapy is a kind of couples counseling in which both the individuals' counselors jointly perform the couples therapy) then some of your treatment will include your spouse or significant others' counselor.

Concerns or Complaints

If you have a complaint or concern, we strongly encourage you to inform your counselor. Your counselor will work hard to understand and resolve any differences you may encounter. Furthermore, working through a conflict can be of tremendous therapeutic benefit. If, however, you cannot resolve the issue, and wish to discontinue therapy, as per your right, your counselor will be happy to provide referrals for other treatment options. If you feel you must make a formal complaint you may do so by contacting the Texas Board of Licensed Professional Counselors in one of the following ways: By mail at Management and Investigative Section P.O. Box 141369 Austin, Texas 78714-1369 or by calling 1-800-942-5540.

Scheduling, Fees, and Payment

Counseling sessions are scheduled by calling the primary office number (682-261-0320) or contacting your counselor on their direct line. The standard session length at The King's Forge Counseling is 45 minutes. The fee for these sessions will vary slightly based on the counselor you are seeing. It is your responsibility to verify the fee for your sessions prior to beginning counseling. In order to facilitate payment, The King's Forge Counseling requires that a credit card number be kept on file to process all charges. The credit card information is stored on your patient portal securely. Your card will be run for charges on the morning of your session or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Should you wish to avoid charging your card please notify your therapist 24 hours in advance of your session. You are then welcome to pay with cash, check (made payable to "The King's Forge Counseling"), Venmo, Apple Pay, or an alternate card at the beginning of your session. **Please note that returned checks will incur an addition \$35.00 fee.** In some cases, a third-party may be paying for counseling sessions. If this is the case, please discuss this arrangement with your counselor at the beginning of the counseling process. It is important to note that regardless of the third-party involvement you, the client, are ultimately financially responsible for the counseling fees.

Cancelling a Session

If you must reschedule or cancel a session, please inform The King's Forge Counseling at least 24 hours in advance. **If you fail to cancel your session 24 hours in advance or you fail to attend your session entirely you will be charged the full fee of your session. You may schedule a make-up session during the same calendar week at no additional charge.** If you are more than 20 minutes late and do not notify your counselor of your delay, you will be considered "no show," and your session will be cancelled and you will be charged the full fee for the appointment. If your counselor is unable to attend your session, they will attempt to notify you as soon as possible concerning the cancellation. If your counselor will be unavailable for longer than one week, they will discuss this absence with you in advance and provide you with the name of an alternate counselor with whom you may meet should you feel the need to see someone during their absence

Inclement Weather Policy

The King's Forge Counseling does not cancel individual or couples' sessions due to inclement weather. If you do not feel comfortable traveling to the office your counselor may be able to host your session via HIPAA compliant video conference call via Telehealth platform. If you cancel due to inclement weather your cancellation will fall under the regular cancellation policies discussed above.

Electronic Communication and Emergency Procedures

Counselors at The King's Forge Counseling strive to be available to their clients as often as possible; however, please understand that they may not always be available by phone or email outside of sessions. Emails, texts, and phone calls that are brief (under 5 minutes) and are focused on scheduling will not incur a charge. Emails and phone calls requiring therapeutic support, advice or communication with other professionals will be charged the rate listed below:

Phone call lasting 11-15 minutes

Charge of 1/3 your session fee

Phone call lasting 16-30 minutes

Charge of 2/3 your session fee

Phone call lasting 31-45 minutes

Charge of your full session fee

Email and text services are not encrypted and therefore we cannot guarantee security when communicating via email unless using a specially designated end-to-end encryption service. For this reason, we request that you not communicate confidential information or suicidal/homicidal ideation in emails or texts. Should you need to transmit confidential information you must make arrangements with your counselor on how to do this securely. Furthermore, we ask clients to read and acknowledge the following information for how texting and voicemails may be used at this practice.

- In this practice we may use texting for making / confirming appointments.
- In this practice texting will NOT be used to provide any counseling services.
- In this practice we highly recommend you NOT text or leave a voicemail with any personal information / personal health information because the privacy of this information cannot be guaranteed. Instead, we recommend you leave brief voicemails or texts requesting a call to transmit your information more securely.

If you experience a medical or mental health emergency please call 9-1-1 or a suicide hotline immediately. The phone number for the National Suicide Crisis Center is 1-800-273-8255.

Dual Relationships and Social Media

In order to protect your confidentiality and ensure the quality of the counseling relationship it is important that counselors not interact with their clients in a manner that is non-counseling in nature (social acquaintance, business partner, etc...). In order to ensure this does not happen, your counselor will not initiate a greeting or spend time with you socially outside the counseling office. In addition, they will not be able to connect with you via social networking sites like Facebook.

Court Testimony

In regards to legal matters, counselors at The King's Forge Counseling will not testify or discuss the content of any session with any legal representative unless compelled to do so by a court order. Even then, they will only share very specific content pertinent to the case. An hourly fee of \$300.00 may be charged for any preparation time for the court appearance and for the court appearance itself (beginning from the time of departure from the office to the time of release by the court) with a minimum of 6 hours for each day of the court proceedings. A non-refundable retainer fee for a minimum of six (6) hours must be paid in advance of the actual court appearance.

Your Records and Right to Review Them

Documentation of sessions consists of a summary of each meeting and may include general issues addressed, possible symptom presentation or change, level of functioning, mental status, diagnosis and treatment plans. Texas law requires that your counselor maintain appropriate treatment records for at least 7 years from the last date of service. If the client is a minor child, your counselor must maintain treatment records for 5 years from the date the child turns 18. As a client, you have the right to obtain a copy of your records upon submission of a written authorization. The records of your treatment will contain confidential information about you. Texas law requires that all requests to review or obtain copies of your records must be made in writing. The King's Forge Counseling requires that clients sign an appropriate authorization before releasing any records to them. Records of therapy can be misinterpreted and/or can be upsetting to lay readers. If you request a copy of your records, your counselor will provide them to you within 15 days of receiving the request unless they believe that to do so would endanger your life or the life of another person. If your counselor believes that they must withhold the records due to a situation involving life endangerment, they will write you a letter to explain the reasons for withholding the records and your options. The King's Forge Counseling has determined that a reasonable, cost-based charge for providing you with a copy of your records will be \$25.00. By law, The King's Forge Counseling is not required to provide copies of requested records until the fee is paid.

Termination Upon Death or Disability

In the event of the death of your counselor arrangements have been made for another therapist to take over their practice, meet with clients, make appropriate referrals to other providers, if necessary, and take all reasonable steps to manage the practice for the benefit of the clients. By your signature below, you authorize the designee to contact you directly, and use and disclose your confidential mental health information and records for the stated purposes.

Termination of Treatment

We hope you and your counselor will mutually agree about when you have met your treatment goals, so they can schedule final sessions to review your progress and develop a plan to help protect your relationship from future distress. However, there are a few instances in which your counselor may terminate your work together before reaching that point. If your counselor believes that their approach and training is no

longer appropriate for your specific concerns, or that you are not benefitting from treatment, they will inform you that they can no longer provide services and give you referrals to other mental health professionals who may be better suited to meet your needs. We understand that any termination may be difficult, but your counselor's decision on this matter will be final. If you request and authorize it in writing, your counselor will confer with your new therapist to help with the transition. Upon termination of therapy for any reason, the termination will be confirmed in writing.

If you choose to involve the legal system in the therapeutic work you are doing with your counselor by issuing a subpoena for your treatment records or testimony in court, this may represent a conflict of interest, and your counselor may terminate your therapeutic relationship and provide referrals to other providers. In addition, if you schedule an appointment and then "no show" the appointment and do not contact your counselor within 7 days of that appointment, we will understand that as a termination in our services. If you wish to resume services after this occurs, please feel free to contact The King's Forge Counseling.

Consent to Enter Treatment

I have read the above statements and understand the nature of services provided, the potential benefits and risks of treatment, the availability of alternative treatments, and the limits of confidentiality outlined above. Understanding these statements I fully consent to treatment.