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Informed Assent for the Provision of Psychological Services to Minors

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(the “Psychologist” or “Psychological Associate”)

What to expect

The purpose of meeting with a psychologist is to get help with problems in your life that are bothering you, or that are keeping you from being successful in important areas of your life. You may be here because you wanted to talk to a psychologist about these problems. Or, you may be here because your parent, guardian, doctor or teacher had concerns about you.

When we meet, we will discuss these problems. I will ask questions, listen to you and suggest a plan for improving these problems. It is important that you feel comfortable talking to me about the issues bothering you.

Privacy

Sometimes these issues will include things you don't want your parents or guardians to know about. For most people, knowing that what they say will be kept private helps them feel more comfortable and have more trust in their counselor or therapist. I have an agreement with your parents or guardians to keep information you share with me private, except for certain situations which are discussed below.

Privacy, also called confidentiality, is an important and necessary part of psychological treatment. As a general rule, I will keep the information you share with me in our sessions confidential, unless I have your written consent to disclose certain information.

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Exceptions to Privacy

There are, however, important exceptions to my keeping our discussions private. You should understand this before you share personal information with me in a therapy session. In some situations, I am required by law or by the guidelines of my profession to disclose information whether or not I have your permission. I have listed some of these situations below. I cannot maintain confidentiality when:

- You are planning to harm yourself: If you tell me you plan to cause serious harm or death to yourself, and I believe you have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future, I must inform your parent or guardian of what you have told me and how serious I believe this threat to be. I must make sure that you are protected from harming yourself.
- You are planning harm to another: If you tell me you plan to cause serious harm or death to someone else who can be identified, and I believe you have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future, I must inform your parent or guardian, and I must inform the person who you intend to harm.
- You are engaging in activities which may harm you or another: If you are doing things that could cause serious harm to you or someone else, even if you do not intend to harm yourself or another person, I will need to use my professional judgment to decide whether a parent or guardian should be informed.
- You make a disclosure of abuse: If you tell me that you are being abused, or that you have been abused in the past, physically, sexually or emotionally, I am required by law to report the abuse to the proper authorities.
- You are involved in a court case: If you are involved in a court case and a request is made for information about your psychological treatment, I will not disclose information without your written agreement unless the court orders me to. I will do all I can within the law to protect your confidentiality, and if I am required to disclose information to the court, I will inform you that this is happening.

Communicating with your parent(s) or guardian(s)

Except for situations such as those mentioned above, I will not tell your parent or guardian specific things you share with me in our private therapy sessions. This includes activities and behavior that your parent/guardian would not approve of, or would be upset by, but that do not put you at risk of serious and immediate harm.

If, however, you tell me about serious risk-taking behaviour, then I will need to use my professional judgment to decide whether you are in serious and immediate danger of being harmed. If I feel that you are in such danger, I will communicate this information to your parent or guardian. Here are some examples:

1. If you tell me that you have tried alcohol at a few parties, I would keep this information confidential. But if you tell me that you are drinking and driving, or that you are a passenger in a car with a driver who is drunk, I would not keep this information confidential from your parent/guardian. If you tell me, or if I believe based on things you have told me, that you are addicted to alcohol, I would not keep this information confidential.
2. If you tell me that you are having protected sex with a boyfriend or girlfriend, I would keep this information confidential. If you tell me that, on several occasions, you have engaged in unprotected sex with people you do not know, or in unsafe situations, I would not keep this information confidential.

You can always ask me questions about the types of information I would disclose. You can ask in the form of "hypothetical situations," in other words: "If someone told you that they were doing _____, would you tell their parents?"

Even if I have agreed to keep information confidential – to not tell your parent or guardian – I may believe that it is important for them to know what is going on in your life. In these situations, I will encourage you to tell your parent/guardian, and will help you find the best way to tell them. Also, when meeting with your parents, I may sometimes describe problems in general terms, without using specifics, in order to help them know how to be more helpful to you.

Communicating with other adults

School: Except for situations such as those mentioned under the Exceptions to Privacy above, I will not share any information with your school unless I have your permission and permission from your parent or guardian. Sometimes I may request to speak to someone at your school to find out how things are going for you. Also, it may be helpful in some situations for me to give suggestions to your teacher or counselor at school. If I want to contact your school, or if someone at your school wants to contact me, I will discuss it with you and ask for your written permission.

Doctors: Sometimes your doctor and I may need to work together; for example, if you need to take medication in addition to seeing a counselor or therapist. I will get your written permission and permission from your parent/guardian in advance to share information with your doctor. The only time I will share information with your doctor even if I don't have your permission is if you are doing something that puts you at risk for serious and immediate physical/medical harm.

Your Assent: By signing this form, you are indicating that you understand everything in the form and wish to begin psychological treatment. If you wish to stop psychological treatment at any time, all you have to do is tell me. If you do not understand anything on this form, please ask and I will be happy to explain it to you.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Date of Birth: _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Witness: _____

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Private and Confidential