

INSTITUTE FOR COUPLE AND FAMILY ENHANCEMENT

THErapy INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO TREATMENT BY ICFE THERAPIST-INTERN

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all participants in the therapeutic process are aware of their rights and responsibilities when entering into a therapeutic relationship. We encourage you to ask questions about any of these topics at any point during the time that you are working with your ICFE therapist-intern.

SAFETY IN THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

Research has found that the best outcomes occur in therapy when all members of a client system develop a positive relationship with their therapist. Your therapist-intern's first priority is to establish a relationship with each individual, partner, or member of a family, allowing them to feel comfortable and safe discussing and processing any situation. We seek a collaborative relationship with you in which you not only feel understood and valued, but also feel ownership in your therapeutic process. We will regularly discuss the goals of therapy with you to ensure that we are in agreement, and I will work to ensure that you are comfortable with any planned or suggested intervention approach. You are invited to share with any questions, concerns, or suggestions during the course of our work together.

Also related to safety for all parties, the ICFE has a strict policy of prohibiting weapons of any kind into our office during the psychotherapy process. If you are licensed to carry a weapon or are coming to therapy from a job that requires you to be armed, please make plans to secure your weapon outside of our office.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality means that your therapist-intern and the ICFE have a responsibility to you to safeguard information obtained during treatment. It is important that you understand that all identifying information about your assessment and treatment is kept confidential. In order to protect your confidentiality, any written, telephone, or personal inquiries about clients will not be acknowledged unless a written release of information is received from you. In the event that your treatment needs to be coordinated with other mental health or medical professionals, you will be asked to sign a release of information to allow your therapist-intern and/or his or her ICFE supervisor to talk or correspond with other professionals who may play a role in meeting your needs (such as physicians, school officials, legal system representatives, or family members not participating in therapy with you).

It is important that you understand that the laws of the State of Texas allow exceptions to confidentiality. In certain situations, as a mental health professional, mental health professionals are required by law to reveal information obtained during your sessions to other persons or agencies without your permission. Also, in these situations we are not required to inform you of my actions:

1. We are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect and to report suspected abuse of the disabled or elderly to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
2. We may disclose information to law enforcement personnel in order to protect you or others when there is a probability of imminent physical injury. We may be required to disclose information to law enforcement personnel in order to protect you when there is a probability of immediate mental or emotional injury.
3. A mental health professional may be required by the court to disclose treatment information in proceedings affecting the parent-child relationship.
4. A mental health professional may disclose confidential information in proceedings brought by a client against a professional.
5. There is no confidentiality of mental health information in connection with criminal proceedings, except communications by a person voluntarily involved in a substance abuse program.
6. In the treatment of a minor client, a mental health professional may advise a parent, managing conservator or guardian of a minor with or without minor's consent, of the treatment needed by or given to the minor.

7. A health care provider, including a mental health care provider, may submit a collections claim or lawsuit against a client or former client for failure to pay for services received.

In the process of couple or family therapy, we also have unique confidentiality responsibilities when working with couples, families, and children because the family as a whole may be considered the client. When working with families, therapists have an obligation to more than one person. Your therapist-intern may share information disclosed to him/her in individual sessions, phone conversations, or written messages with those family members who have consented to treatment. **We have a strict policy of not keeping potentially hurtful or damaging secrets from other family members who are also participating in therapy.**

Clients often prefer to communicate with their therapists via email or text message to schedule or confirm appointments, as well as provide updates regarding their situations. While we have a duty to act with professionalism and diligence to protect your information, we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of email correspondence and text messages due to the logistics of these types of communication. We will comply with your informed requests as described in the Communications Form regarding use of texts, emails, or other communications outside of face to face communication in our office. However, please be aware that text messaging can only be used to confirm, reschedule or cancel an appointment.

Another important element of confidentiality is the expectation that participating parties respect the privacy of other participating family members by refraining from sharing contents of the sessions with outside parties. **Further, recording devices of any kind (audio, video, or photographic) are not allowed in the therapy sessions without written consent of all parties attending, including your therapist.** In order to achieve your therapeutic goals, it is essential for all parties to experience trust and personal safety during therapy sessions.

THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

One major benefit that may be gained from participating is the resolution of concerns. Other possible benefits may be a better ability to cope with marital, family, and other interpersonal relationships, as well as a greater understanding of personal goals and values. However, seeking to resolve concerns between family members, marital partners, and other persons can also lead to discomfort as well as relationship changes that may not have been originally intended. The greatest risk of psychotherapy is that it may not by itself resolve your concerns. You may also experience discomfort such as anger, depression, or frustration during your treatment as you remember and resolve unpleasant events. We will do our best to assess progress on a week-to-week basis, and you are encouraged to notify your therapist-intern of any changes in your condition. If a situation fails to improve or a situation deteriorates, we will provide referral to another professional for consultation or treatment.

Please know, too, that we do not provide emergency mental health services. Your therapist-intern may not be able to return your calls immediately or schedule you for immediate treatment. In the event of an emergency, you have several options. You may go to the nearest emergency room, call 911 for emergency assistance, or contact the Crisis Stabilization Unit of the Center for Health Care Services at 225-5481 (M-F, 8-5), after-hours emergency, call 531-7826. You may also call the United Way HELP Hotline by dialing 227-4357 (HELP).

FEEES AND APPOINTMENTS

A standard therapy hour consists of approximately 50 minutes for the therapy session and 10 minutes to allow me to complete necessary paperwork and prepare for my next client. **The fee for a standard therapy hour with an ICFE therapist-intern is \$40.** You may pay by cash, personal checks, and major credit cards (including Health Savings Accounts). Additional services such as court testimony, reports, or consultation with legal professionals will be conducted for a fee of \$250 per hour, and will include the time of the therapist-intern as well as the involvement of his or her ICFE supervisor. Payment for additional services is due prior to the service being rendered.

Payment for psychotherapy is due at the time services are rendered. To avoid accumulation of a balance, clients are asked to complete a Billing Agreement and provide credit card information to remain on file during the time they are active clients. Credit cards will only be

billed for services provided, returned check fees, or no-show/late cancellation charges. Credit card information is securely destroyed 60 days after your last session or immediately upon your communication that you are terminating the therapeutic relationship. Clients who do not wish to leave credit card information on file may elect to instead make a retainer payment of \$80, advanced payment for 2 sessions, when scheduling the second therapy session. A \$30 fee is charged for each returned check. Services provided by therapist-interns are not eligible for coverage by insurance companies.

Sessions are by appointment only. If you must cancel or reschedule an appointment, we require at least 24 hours notice so that we may have the opportunity to schedule another client during the appointment time. Clients who do not provide 24 hours notice that they will not be attending a scheduled session will be billed the full fee for the therapy hour.

At various points in treatment, we will discuss progress that has been made, remaining goals, and the expected time frame for treatment. Your participation in therapeutic services, though, is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time.

PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION AND SHARED OFFICE SPACE

Your therapist-intern is a Graduate Student providing clinical services under the supervision of Jason Northrup, Ph.D., LMFT, LPC. northrup@icfetx.com. Her/his status as a therapist-intern means that he/she has completed prerequisite courses to prepare for clinical practice. Upon program completion, the therapist-intern will pursue licensure as a mental health professional (eg, LMFT, LPC, Psychologist). To fulfill the requirements of the graduate school internship/practicum program, therapist-interns meet weekly with their ICFE supervisor for clinical supervision, including discussion and direction for their work with clients. As a function of her role as my clinical supervisor, Dr. Northrup will have full access to your clinical records and private health information, sometimes including video recordings of sessions.

Therapist-interns also share office space with several other therapists who are independent contractors providing services at the ICFE. Our clinical records are stored in a common area, which means that these other therapists may have access to your confidential information. Anyone affiliated with the ICFE who has access to clients' private and confidential information is obligated by law and professional ethics to protect clients' confidentiality.

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

Therapist-interns providing therapeutic services at the ICFE are supervised administratively by Becky Davenport, Ph.D., LMFT-S, ICFE Owner. She may be contacted directly at (210) 602-1898 or davenport@icfetx.com. However, you are invited and strongly encouraged to first talk directly with your therapist-intern about any concerns or complaints if appropriate. We will make every effort to address the issues professionally and collaboratively with you.

Clients who choose to file a complaint against licensed therapists for violations of state laws and regulations or my professional ethics code should contact:

Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists
Complaints Management and Investigative Section
P.O. Box 141369
Austin, Texas 78714-1369
Phone: 1-800-942-5540

PLEASE READ AND INITIAL THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

I/we grant my/our permission for any therapy, testing, or diagnostic evaluation may be deem necessary in individual, marital, or family psychotherapy. I/we understand the potential for emotional discomfort and relationship changes not originally intended. I/we understand that neither the ICFE nor the therapist-intern guarantees any particular results or outcome from the psychotherapy process.

I/we understand and agree to the confidentiality policies stated above. These include the exceptions to confidentiality mandated by state law, as well possibility of sharing information shared in individual sessions, phone conversations, or written messages with those family members who have consented to treatment information.

I/we understand the risks of psychotherapy as explained above. I/we understand that neither the ICFE nor the therapist-intern provides emergency services and in the event of an emergency I/we agree to go to the nearest emergency room, call 9-1-1, or contact the Crisis Stabilization Unit of the Center for Health Care Services at 225-5481 (after hours 531-7826) or the United Way Help Hotline at 227-4357 (HELP).

I/we agree to pay the fee of \$40 per therapy hour. I agree to give 24-hour notice for cancelled appointments if at all possible by calling my therapist directly at the number provided. I understand that failure to cancel or reschedule an appointment with less than 24 hours notice will result in my being charged the full fee for the appointment.

I/we agree to pay the fee of \$250 per hour for any legal involvement that is requested of the therapist-intern and Dr. Northrup as a clinical supervisor, including but not limited to, writing reports for submission in court proceedings, communication with legal counsel, or testimony in a court case. I understand that ICFE therapists may refuse to participate in a legal case, including providing subpoenaed medical records, without a court order.

I/we have been provided a copy of the ICFE Privacy Policies in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, and have had the opportunity to have my/our questions about the management of private health information (PHI) answered.

I/we grant permission for my/our therapy sessions to be recorded for the purposes of training and supervision. I/we understand that recordings are deleted/destroyed within 1 month and are not kept as part of our clinical records.

Signed	(Client/Minor Client Guardian)	Date
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Signed	(Client/Minor Client Guardian)	Date
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Signed	ICFE Therapist-Intern	Date
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CONSENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS

As per the Notice of Privacy Practice, you have the right to request that I only communicate with you about your health information in a certain way or at a certain location. Please indicate where you would like to be contacted:

I prefer to be contacted by (select all that apply): Phone Email Texting Mail

I prefer to be called and/or texted at the following number: _____

I DO DO NOT want messages to be left at this number.

Please only call at these times: _____

I prefer emails to be sent to: _____

I prefer texts to be sent to: _____

I prefer mail to be sent to: _____

Specific instructions for calls, texts, emails, or other communication: _____

Email, Texting, Online Platforms, and Applications

Your protected health information must be kept private and secure according to federal and state laws and professional ethics codes. Email and texting (as well as some online platforms and applications) are convenient ways to communicate for treatment purposes (such as discussing your current symptoms or concerns) and administrative purposes (such as appointment scheduling and billing). Reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of communications via email, texting, online platforms, and applications will be taken. **However, it is impossible to guarantee the security and confidentiality of communication via email, texting, online platforms, and applications.** Should confidential information be improperly disclosed, through no fault of mine or other ICFE clinicians, I am not liable for such disclosures.

Potential risks of communicating by email or text may include:

- Misdelivery of emails or texts to an incorrectly typed address or number.
- Email and online accounts and phones can be hacked.
- Email is easier to falsify than handwritten or signed documents.
- Backup copies of email, texts, and online platform or application data may exist even after the sender or the recipient has deleted his/her copy.
- Employers and on-line services have a right to archive and inspect emails, texts, online communications and application data transmitted through their systems.
- Information sent via emails, texts, online platforms, and applications can be intercepted, altered, forwarded, or used without authorization or detection.
- Emails, online platforms, and applications can be used to introduce viruses into computer systems.
- Emails, texts, and online platform and application data can be used as evidence in court.

All emails and texts to or from clients concerning diagnosis or treatment will be filed as part of the patient record. Since the information will be considered part of the record, other individuals authorized to access the record will also have access to those emails. Note that all email may be retained in the record of the system sending the email.

COMMUNICATION VIA EMAIL, TEXT, ONLINE PLATFORM, OR APPLICATION SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES.

You have the option of choosing whether to communicate with me via email, texting, online platforms and/ or applications and what information you wish to communicate. **You do not have to consent to**

communication via email, texting, online platforms, or applications and communication can be handled in person or via phone call or mail. You may revoke any permission at any time in writing.

By consenting to communicate through email, text, online platform or application, you also agree to the following responsibilities:

- If you send a communication that requires or invites a response, and one is not given within a reasonable time frame, it is your responsibility to notify me that the communication was not received. You cannot assume that because it was not returned that it was received.
- It is your responsibility to schedule, confirm, reschedule, or cancel appointments.
- To the extent possible you should NOT use email, texting, online platforms, or applications to make disclosures about sensitive medical information such as: mental health treatment, drug, alcohol or substance abuse, information related to AIDS and HIV, and genetic information.
- It is your responsibility to inform me of any changes to your communication preferences including changes in mailing address, phone number, email address, or online account usernames.

Email: I DO DO NOT consent to use **email** for
 Administrative Purposes and/or Treatment purposes.
Other Conditions for **emailing**: _____

Texting: I DO DO NOT consent to use **texting** for
 Administrative Purposes
Other Conditions for **texting**: _____

Social Media Requests to connect from current or former clients on social networking sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+ or other sites or apps, will not be accepted. Adding clients as friends on these sites and/or communicating via such sites is likely to compromise privacy and confidentiality. Please do not communicate with me via any social networking sites. The ICFE has a professional Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/pages/Institute-for-Couple-and-Family-Enhancement. This account used to share general information related to mental health, parenting, romantic relationships, and couple or family therapy. If you choose to “like” our Facebook page we assume that you are making an informed decision about how this may compromise your confidentiality. The fan list on the ICFE Facebook page is public information and easily accessed by anyone on the internet. The vast majority of our followers are not clients; however, there is a small risk that you could be identified as a client simply based on your decision to follow our page.

Business Review Sites

I may have listings on Google Place, Yelp, or other similar online services which include options for users to rate their providers and add reviews. These listings are not requests for testimonials, ratings, or endorsement from you as a client. You have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality laws, I cannot respond to any review on any site whether it is positive or negative. And like blog comments and other online communications, there are privacy risks. **Please sign below to confirm your acknowledgements of the risk or text, email, and other communication tools, as well as your consent to communicate with you in the means you indicated above.**

I recognize that technology is ever-evolving and that electronic communications cannot be fully protected from unauthorized interception. Understanding the risks of electronic communication via email or texting, I have indicated my preferences and consent for communications.

Client Signature

Date

Personal Representative Signature (if applicable)

Relationship to Client/Patient

Minor Signature (if applicable)

Date