

Therapy Services Disclosure Statement

Melissa C. Miller, LCSW

Client Number: _____

Client Name: _____

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as your counselor. The following information is designed to let you know about my educational and professional background, and to ensure that you understand our professional relationship. I am committed to providing you with quality, professional counseling, and your questions or comments are encouraged.

Education and Credentials

I received the Master of Social Work degree from Syracuse University in 1994. I took the optional post-graduate examination and was awarded my Certified Social Worker (CSW) credential. Currently, the licensure designation for CSW's with more than 6 years of experience is "LCSW."

I am licensed in both New York and Florida.

Prior to joining the staff of Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast I worked for the Samaritan Counseling Center of the Mohawk Valley, in Upstate New York. I spent almost 12 years there as a therapist; 5 of them also as the Clinical Director.

In 1995 I enrolled in a specialized professional training program with the organization now called The Sensorimotor Processing Institute, in Boulder, Colorado. I received their diploma, a certificate of completion, in 1997. Sensorimotor processing is especially useful for character analysis, assessing and working with issues stemming from difficulties in personality development, and in trauma work. Using this somatic model has become an enriching and meaningful part of my work with clients.

I provide counseling services that adhere to the highest standards of professional ethics, research, and applied knowledge. I work with adults (people over 18) on an individual basis, as well as in couples for relationship issues. I enjoy working with couples who are experiencing difficulties in their committed relationship and want to stay together, as well as with those who need to part and wish to do so as well as possible. In another form of relationship work, I have consulted with members of family owned businesses who want to assess their communication skills, work out differences amicably, and talk through the growth and development of the business.

I do not offer business advice; I offer time tested methods to help family members learn to "brainstorm" more effectively, thereby enhancing their business focus and their bottom line.

I have experience working with people who are in the midst of grief, depression, and anxiety which can strike for a number of reasons; and in all areas of my practice I am committed to assisting those of my clients who desire a faith-based approach to draw upon religious and spiritual resources for their personal healing and growth.

My Therapeutic Orientation

I am trained to view the problems people face in life through the lens of the systems in which they find themselves. Examples of systems are families, couples, colleagues at work, members of a church group or congregation, an academic class, and so on.

I have augmented that outlook with the somatic training I received in Colorado, as well as with workshops and trainings in psychodynamic psychotherapy, narrative therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy. I also have experience using the techniques of emotional freedom therapy (EFT) for defusing traumatic memories. EFT is also useful for treating personality traits that are no longer helpful.

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I believe that the reason to have therapy is to get to know yourself. This is not selfish or indulgent, because its sole purpose is to enable you to relate to others in the best, most effective, most God centered way, possible. Therefore, the foundation of my work is spiritual:

"The greatest science for man is to know himself, because if he knows himself, he will know God." (Clement of Alexandria) "When a man knows himself, the knowledge of all things is granted to him, for to know one's self is the fullness of the knowledge of all things" (Saint Isaac the Syrian). Without knowledge of one's self, any other knowledge remains detached and without purpose. But when a man knows himself, he recognizes the nature, the limits and possibilities of his existence, and he can locate himself correctly before God, his neighbor, and his own self." (Giorgios I. Mantzarides, *Orthodox Spiritual Life*, 1994, Holy Cross Orthodox Press).

As my client you do not have to share this view, and I will not speak of spiritual matters unless you and I agree they will be part of your therapy, but it is important for you to know that my spiritual understanding of life informs all of my work.

During your first three or four sessions I will carefully evaluate the issues that concern you, and will choose the appropriate combination of methods so I can help you meet the goals we set together as efficiently as possible. Your active involvement in setting and realizing goals is vital to your success. My role as your therapist is to offer my knowledge, training and expertise in guiding the process of your therapy. Your role is equally vital to your success and involves your commitment to prepare for, attend, and participate fully in all of your sessions. Together we will establish a therapeutic contract that specifies the goals, issues, potential benefits and risks, commitments, costs, and other factors pertaining to our work together.

Through periodic evaluations for therapeutic progress we will monitor and adjust our therapeutic strategy as needed to insure the therapy remains properly focused and effective. As with any successful form of therapeutic intervention, there are both benefits and risks associated with counseling. Risks may include experiencing uncomfortable levels of feelings such as sadness, guilt, shame, anxiety, anger, or frustration, or conflicts with others. Some changes may, in fact, seem to lead to your feeling worse in the short run. With your faithful commitment to the therapeutic process, however, you should see the desired benefits of relief, healing and growth that you seek.

Confidentiality

I regard the information you share with me with the greatest respect, so I want to be as clear as possible about how it will be handled. Generally, I will tell no one what you tell me. The privacy and confidentiality of our conversations, and my records, are your privilege and are protected by state law and my profession's ethical principles, in all but a few circumstances: 1) If I believe you intend to hurt yourself or another person; 2) if I believe a child or elderly person has been or is in danger of being abused or neglected; 3) if a judge subpoenas my records – a rare but possible circumstance if you are involved in or become involved in litigation; and 4) if I speak with my professional consultant about your case. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) requires that all clinical social workers participate in individual or group consultation to ensure the objectivity and quality of the therapy. Such consultation is thematic in nature and no personal identifying information is used. Otherwise, I will not disclose anything about your therapy or even that you are in therapy without your written permission, provided in advance.

Explanation of Dual Relationships

Although our sessions may be very intimate psychologically and spiritually, it is important that you be assured that we have a professional relationship rather than a social one. Our contact will be limited to the sessions you arrange with me. I respect your privacy, so I will not speak to you in public unless you speak first.

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Length of Sessions

My services will be rendered in a professional manner consistent with accepted ethical standards. Sessions are 45-50 minutes long. We will schedule your sessions by mutual agreement. If you are unable to keep an appointment, call my office (941-926-2959) to cancel and reschedule at least 24 hours in advance. **If I do not receive 24 hours notice you will be responsible for paying the full session fee, since insurance companies do not reimburse me for missed sessions.** If you have had an emergency, or suddenly become ill, let me know as soon as possible so we can discuss whether or not you will be charged for the session you missed.

Fees/Method of Payment

In return for a fee of \$115 for the initial session and \$100 for each subsequent session, I agree to provide counseling services for you. I prefer that you pay at the beginning of the session, by cash or personal check. I will give you a receipt if you ask for one. If for financial reasons you are unable to pay the full fee, please request an Application for Fee Subsidy form, fill it out completely, and return it to me by mail or at your next session. The office address is: Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast, 3224 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, FL 34239.

Billing/Insurance Reimbursement

If you wish to seek reimbursement from your health insurance company I will complete any reasonable forms to enable you to do so. You are expected to pay co-pays or deductibles at the time of your session. *It is your responsibility to determine whether or not your company will reimburse you and at what rate.* You must sign a release allowing me to disclose any information your insurance company requests in order for them to process your claim.

Telephone Availability

For canceling and rescheduling appointments, please call the office at 941-926-2959. You may leave a message on my voicemail if you are calling after hours.

Rarely, you may need to call me between sessions.

My cell phone number is 941-993-7132. Please leave a message if I do not answer; I will make every reasonable effort to call you back within 24 hours.

Please limit your use of this number to serious but not life-threatening emergencies.

If you are in a crisis, please call the Bayside Center for Behavioral Health of Sarasota Memorial Hospital: 1-800-764-8477 or 917-6770.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE CAN BE OBTAINED 24 HOURS A DAY BY CALLING 911 OR YOUR LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Vacation and Illness

From time to time I will be out of contact due to such things as continuing education seminars, vacations, illness, family emergencies, etc. Counseling is a uniquely personal service and your counseling may be briefly interrupted at those times. I will give you advance notice whenever possible. If an emergency arises when I am unavailable, please call the Bayside Center for Behavioral Health of Sarasota Memorial Hospital: 1-800-764-8477, or 941-917-7760.

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Complaint Procedures

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of my work please inform me immediately. This will make our work together more efficient and effective. If you think you have been treated unfairly or unethically, and cannot resolve this problem with me, you may contact Rev. Rick Howell, Th.M., Executive Director of Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast, 3224 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, Florida, 34239, or by phone at 941-926-2959. You can lodge a complaint or receive clarification of your rights with Rev. Howell.

I look forward to our continued meetings, to learning more about you and your hopes and aspirations, and to helping you refine them and make them a reality.

Please sign and date both copies, and return one to me.

Client's Signature and Date

Counselor's Signature and Date