

**David J. Bookbinder, LMHC**  
**Licensed Mental Health Counselor**  
**85 Constitution Lane, Suite 300-C2/C3**  
**Danvers, MA 01923**  
**transforming@verizon.net**  
**(978) 395-1292**

## **Information for Clients**

Welcome to my practice. I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to be of help to you.

This brochure answers some questions clients often ask about any therapy practice. It is important to me that you know how we will work together. I believe our work will be most helpful to you when you have a clear idea of what we are trying to do. This brochure talks about the following:

- The risks and benefits of therapy.
- The goals of therapy and what my methods of treatment are like.
- How long therapy might take.
- How much my services cost, and how I handle money matters.
- Other important areas of our relationship.

After you read this brochure we can discuss, in person, how these issues apply to your own situation. This brochure is yours to keep and refer to later. Please read all of it and mark any parts that are not clear to you. Write down any questions you think of, and we will discuss them at our next meeting.

### **About Psychotherapy**

Because you will be putting a good deal of time, money, and energy into therapy, you should choose a therapist carefully. I strongly believe you should feel comfortable with the therapist you choose, and hopeful about the therapy. When you feel this way, therapy is more likely to be very helpful to you. Let me describe how I see therapy.

I come to psychotherapy from a background in writing, teaching, and photography, and a life-long fascination with the workings of the human mind and the power of the human spirit. I believe that people are naturally inclined to growth and self-fulfillment.

I am trained and experienced in doing one-on-one, couples, and group therapy. In the therapeutic relationship, I foster a dynamic, supportive environment in which my clients can work creatively with present challenges, free themselves from blocks and self-defeating patterns, heal old wounds, retrieve lost parts of themselves, and grow into the fullest versions of themselves. I am a companion on my clients' journeys, encouraging their innate creativity as a means to helping create the lives they wish to live. My influences include Rogerian person-centered, Gestalt, solution-focused, Focusing-oriented, and Buddhist methods; Irving Yalom's work with groups; and non-directive play therapy.

I view therapy as a partnership between us. I expect us to plan our work together. From time to time, we will look together at our goals and progress. If we think we need to, we can then change our treatment plan, its goals, and its methods. I do not take on clients I do not think I can help. Therefore, I will enter our relationship with optimism about our progress.

An important part of your therapy will be practicing new skills that you will learn in our sessions. I will ask you to practice outside our meetings, and we will sometimes work together to set up "homework" assignments for you. You will probably have to work on relationships in your life and make long-term efforts to get the best results. These are important parts of personal change.

Most of my clients see me once a week for three to four months, then we re-evaluate. Some clients stop therapy at that point, while others choose to continue. The process of ending therapy, called "termination," can

be a very valuable part of our work. Stopping therapy should not be done casually. Usually, it is a decision that client and therapist come to together. If you decide on your own to stop therapy at any time, I ask that you agree now to meet for at least one session following your decision to review our work together.

### **What to Expect from Our Relationship**

Because of the nature of therapy, our relationship has to be different from most relationships. It may differ in how long it lasts, in the topics we discuss, or in the goals of our relationship. It must also be limited to the relationship of therapist and client *only*. I cannot be your supervisor, teacher, or evaluator. I cannot have any other kind of business relationship with you. I cannot give legal, medical, financial, or any other type of professional advice. I cannot have any kind of romantic or sexual relationship with you or any people close to you.

As your therapist, I cannot be your friend. There are important differences between therapy and friendship. A therapist offers you choices and helps you choose what is best for you. A therapist helps you learn how to solve problems better and make better decisions. A therapist's responses to your situation are based on tested theories and methods of change. Friends may see you only from their personal viewpoints and experiences. Friends may want to find quick and easy solutions to your problems so that they can feel helpful; these short-term solutions may not be in your long-term best interest. Friends do not usually follow up on their advice to see whether it was useful. They may *need* to have you do what they advise. Friendships are vitally important -- but they are not the same thing as therapeutic relationships.

### **Consultations**

If you could benefit from a treatment I cannot provide, I will help you to get it. You have a right to ask me about such other treatments, their risks, and their benefits. Based on what I learn about your problems, I may recommend a medical exam or use of medication. If I do this, I will fully discuss my reasons with you, so that you can decide what is best. If you are treated by another professional, I will coordinate my services with him or her.

If for some reason treatment is not going well, I might suggest you see another therapist or another professional in addition to me. As a responsible person and ethical therapist, I cannot continue to treat you if my treatment is not working for you. If you wish for another professional's opinion at any time, or wish to talk with another therapist, I will help you find a qualified person and will provide him or her with the information needed.

### **About Our Appointments**

I usually schedule 50-minute sessions once a week. We can schedule meetings for both your and my convenience. I will tell you at least a two weeks in advance of my vacations or any other times we cannot meet. Please ask about my schedule in making your own plans.

An appointment is a commitment to our work. We agree to meet here and to be on time. If I am ever unable to start on time, I ask your understanding. I also assure you that you will receive the full time agreed to. If you are late, we will probably be unable to meet for the full time, because it is likely that I will have another appointment after yours.

A canceled appointment delays our work. I will consider our meetings very important and ask you to do the same. Please try not to miss sessions if you can possibly help it. When you know you must cancel, please give me at a week's notice. Your session time is reserved for you. I am rarely able to fill a canceled session unless I know a week in advance. If you miss a session without notifying me at least 24 hours in advance, for other than the most serious reasons, I will have to charge you for the lost time. If I miss a session without notifying you at least 24 hours in advance, then I will not charge you for our subsequent session.

## **Fees, Payments, and Billing**

Payment for services is an important part of any professional relationship. You are responsible for seeing that my services are paid for. Meeting this responsibility shows your commitment.

*Regular sessions:* If I can use your health insurance, I will bill your health insurance and will expect a co-payment at the time of each session. If you are a self-pay client, we will determine a fee at the first session. This will be your fee for each subsequent session unless your financial circumstances change significantly, in which case we will revisit the fee-setting process. I will not charge you for the time we spend determining your fee.

*Telephone consultations:* I believe that telephone consultations may be suitable or even needed at times in our therapy. If so, I will charge you our regular fee, prorated over the time needed. If I need to have long telephone conferences with other professionals as part of your treatment, you will be billed for these at the same rate as for regular therapy services. If you are concerned about all this, please be sure to discuss it with me in advance so we can set a policy that is comfortable for both of us. Of course, there is no charge for calls about appointments or similar business.

*Extended sessions:* Occasionally it may be better to go on with a session, rather than stop or postpone work on a particular issue. When this extension is more than 10 minutes, I will tell you, because sessions that are extended beyond 10 minutes will be charged on a prorated basis.

Please pay for each session at the beginning of the session. I have found that this arrangement helps us stay focused on our goals, and so it works best. It also allows me to keep my fees as low as possible, because it cuts down on my bookkeeping costs. I suggest you make out your check before each session begins, so that our time will be used best. Other payment or fee arrangements must be worked out before the end of our first meeting. Because I expect all payment at the time of our meetings, I usually do not send bills. However, if we have agreed that I will bill you, I ask that the bill be paid within five days of when you get it. If there is any problem with my charges or any other money-related point, please bring it to my attention. Such problems can interfere greatly with our work. They must be worked out openly and quickly.

## **If You Need to Contact Me**

I cannot promise that I will be available at all times. I usually do not take phone calls when I am with a client. You can always leave a message on my voice mail or send me an e-mail, and I will return your call or e-mail as soon as I can.

If I will be unavailable for an extended period of time (for example, if I am traveling or on vacation), I will give you the name and telephone number of a colleague whom you can speak to or see in an emergency. I will also give you the name and telephone number of an appropriate hospital you can call if you are unable to reach either me or my colleague.

## **Statement of Principles and Complaint Procedures**

Problems can arise in our relationship, just as in any other relationship. If you are not satisfied with any area of our work, please raise your concerns with me at once. Our work together will be slower and harder if your concerns with me are not worked out. I will make every effort to hear any complaints you have and to seek solutions to them. If you feel that I have treated you unfairly or broken a professional rule, please tell me. You can also contact the state or local counseling association and speak to the chairperson of the ethics committee. He or she can help clarify your concerns or tell you how to file a complaint.

In my practice as a therapist, I do not discriminate against clients because of any of these factors: age, sex, marital/family status, race, color, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, place of residence, veteran status, physical disability, health status, sexual orientation, or criminal record unrelated to present dangerousness. This is a personal commitment, as well as being required by federal, state, and local laws and regulations. I will always take steps to advance and support the values of equal opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic/cultural diversity. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please bring this matter to my attention immediately.