

**DENISE R. MCGUINESS, PH.D.**

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(360) 750-6868

**INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT**

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

**MY BACKGROUND**

I earned my BA in Psychology from Miami University in 1974. I earned both my MS and Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Georgia. I completed my internship at the Portland Veterans Administration Hospital. I have been in private practice since 1981.

My therapeutic approach involves exploring underlying causes of current problems and symptoms. I also recommend alternative ways of handling the situation. My training is broad based and includes behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, systemic, and psychodynamic theories and techniques.

I have taken a two-year course at Shalom Prayer Center in the practice of spiritual direction, obtaining certification in April 2002. I received my Masters of Divinity at

Methodist Theological School in Ohio in May 2004. I am an ordained minister of the United Methodist Church.

I am licensed both in Oregon and Washington State. Psychologists are licensed for the protection of their clients. Licensing ensures that the psychologist has a doctoral degree from an accredited university and has passed a national written examination and an oral examination. It also guarantees complaint/discipline recourse. If you need more information, you may contact the Department of Licensing at:

Department of Health  
Examining Board of Psychology  
1300 Quince Street SE  
Olympia, WA 98504-7869  
Inquiries: (360) 236-4910

As a result of new state regulations adopted by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), I am required to report myself to DOH in the event of an act of unprofessional conduct, a determination of risk to patient safety due to a mental or physical condition, or disqualification from participation in the federal Medicare or Medicaid programs.

I am also required to report other health care providers if I have actual knowledge of a finding, conviction or determination of an act constituting unprofessional conduct or if the health care provider may be unable to practice his or her professional with reasonable skill and safety due to a mental or physical condition.

If you have any questions or concerns about these requirements, please feel free to discuss them with me.

### **PROFESSIONAL FEES**

My fees are as follows:

**Initial Interview (60min).....\$180**  
**Psychotherapy (20-30min).....\$75**  
**Psychotherapy (45-50min).....\$140**  
**Psychotherapy (75-80min).....\$215**  
**Family Therapy (45-50min).....\$150**  
**Psychological Testing: MMPI.....\$120**  
**Return Check Fee.....\$35**

In addition to weekly appointments, I charge \$140/hour for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 5 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$180 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

### **APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS**

I normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 4 sessions. During this time, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to

meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, I will usually schedule one 50-minute session (one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent.

Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. **One half of the fee will be charged for an appointment cancelled with less than 24 hours notice. Full fee will be charged for an appointment broken without notice.** Only under special extenuating circumstances will payment be waived for late cancellations or missed appointments. Messages of cancellation may be left with my voice mail 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **(360) 750-6868. INSURANCE WILL NOT COVER CHARGES FOR MISSED APPOINTMENTS.**

If it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment.

### **BILLING AND PAYMENTS**

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage, which requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

### **INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. **It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.**

You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, **call your plan administrator.** Of course I will provide you with whatever information I can based on my experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, I will be willing to call the company on your behalf.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. "Managed Health Care" plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. **It is your responsibility to check whether I am in your network. If I am out of network, it is your responsibility to pay my fee as arranged with me.** Your insurance may cover part of this but I will not necessarily adjust my fee to meet their mandates.

Managed care plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. Some managed-care plans will not allow me to provide services to you once your benefits end. If this is the case, I will do my best to find another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. I will provide you with a copy of any report I submit, if you request it.

Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end our sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above unless prohibited by your contract.

### **CONTACTING ME**

I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am usually in my office between 8 AM and 6 PM on Tuesdays/Thursdays and Wednesday afternoon, I probably will not answer the phone when I am with a patient. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail that I monitor frequently. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you will be available. You can contact me by email at [livingtreecs@comcast.net](mailto:livingtreecs@comcast.net) but be aware that email is not a secure or confidential means of communication. Please keep emailing to a minimum.

If you need to reach me for a problem of urgent or emergency nature, please send the message marked urgent when you call my voice mail. You can also try me at my cell number, (360) 903-6105. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychiatrist on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

### **PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless I believe that seeing them would be emotionally damaging, in which case I will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent in preparing information requests.

