

## **Informed Consent**

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The purpose of this document is to give you some sense of what you can expect to happen during your counseling sessions, as well as the options available to you if you feel at any time that you are not getting what you are looking for from our sessions.

## **My Approach to Counseling**

It's no simple thing to describe what happens in the process of counseling, but here's a start:

I believe counseling is best viewed as a collaborative process. We will work together to identify what in your life has been getting in the way of real thriving, and together, we will seek to discover new paths to freedom and deep aliveness. Because of the collaborative nature of counseling, the relationship between us is very important: My job is to learn to see you well and to develop an understanding of what matters to you. Therapy is to be a safe place for you to speak up and be heard, for you to be known and challenged.

And the most important work that happens in counseling is the work that you choose. You are giving me the honor of walking with you down the path of healing, but the most important steps will be taken by you. My focus in this work is not on telling you what to believe or what to do, but, rather, helping you to clarify and discover what is happening within you and what choices you want to make. This includes your choices about what role you want spirituality and existential matters to play in your counseling.

Because of this, you are the one who determines whether the treatment you are receiving is appropriate and ultimately helpful. You get to decide what we will focus on during our times together and how long treatment will last. If you are unsure what you want, we can discuss this as well. I invite you to make your desires known at any time, especially if you feel you are not getting the kind of help that you want.

## **My Training and Background**

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Michigan. I have been practicing counseling for 12+ years, and have worked in agency, private practice, and church settings. I have a Master's (MA) in Counseling from Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando. I also received the "Advanced Counseling Certificate" in Trauma-Focused Narrative Therapy from The Allender Center, and I am EMDR certified.

## **My Theoretical Orientation (If you're interested in the technical stuff)**

I am primarily influenced by humanistic and existential counseling theories in my practice, though I adjust my approach according to your preference and need. I place a particular importance on you developing the capacity to practice kindness and care toward the parts of you that have long been disowned, unacknowledged, or feared. Through kindness comes experiential self-awareness that brings integration to the discordant elements of self. This includes exploration of details of your life story and your patterns of relating, both in the past and in the present.

I understand that some people may be looking for something different than what I bring to the table. You may seek a second opinion from another counselor at any time. *Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions or express any concerns you have about my professional background, my approach to counseling, or the specific nuts and bolts of the work we are doing together.*

## **Legal and Ethical Considerations**

In the interest of providing you with the best possible care, I am legally permitted to consult with other counselors about the work we do together. In any such discussions, every effort is made to avoid personally identifying information.

Because of the complex, personal, and individualized nature of counseling, it cannot come with a promise of any particular result. Further, counseling can be difficult, sometimes stirring up uncomfortable and painful emotions. By agreeing to receive counseling, you are taking a (hopefully gentle) step into the unknown in your heart and in your life; you are choosing to take on any risk of pain or distress that may arise as a result of the counseling process. In signing this form, you agree not to sue or hold me legally liable for any and all claims, demands, damages, actions, causes of action, or judgements whatsoever related to the counseling process.

In the event that you feel I have acted in an unethical manner, I welcome you to discuss this with me so that we can come to a resolution. At any point, you have the right to file a complaint with the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. You can find information on how to do this at [www.michigan.gov/bpl](http://www.michigan.gov/bpl). (Click on "File a complaint".) You can also contact them directly at:

**Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs**  
**Bureau of Professional Licensing**  
**Investigations & Inspections Division**  
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**Lansing, MI 48909-8170**  
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