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Please read this carefully and refer to it going forward. It has information pertinent to what to expect, social media, medication, emailing, phone calls, being the “other spouse,” how and when to pay, and more.

Description of Services & Philosophy

The Therapy Relationship

My objective is to draw on your own resources to search for areas of strength and accomplishment in order to help you to correct what troubles you today. I believe that you are the expert  your own life and I am neither your leader nor your follower. I offer you my perceptions based on 30 years experience. We may focus on many aspects of your life, including your connections with others—your spouse, your child, your family-of-origin, your friends, your community, your co-workers—and within yourself. Therapy may include focused conversation, guided imagery, hypnosis, homework assignments, outside reading.

Although I am, of course, here to listen to you, it won't help you much if *all* I do is listen to complaints about your spouse. Once I have a complete picture of your situation, I prefer to be constructive: Let's look for solutions!

The Therapy Process

Therapy can take time. Ordinarily, one doesn't just come to me once or even a couple of times and presto! Long-standing problems that took years to develop will go away. There are, however, individuals and families who have benefited from only one session. Others require 8 – 12 sessions. As long as 6 months to a year in situations involving long-term distress is not unusual. In cases where emotional abuse has played a role, one to two years of therapy is the norm and after the therapy is finished, it is advisable to check in at various intervals (say, every 3-6 weeks) to maintain gains and not backslide into old habits. As much as one wants to keep costs down, studies show that longer therapy has more lasting results where great emotional pain had been suffered prior to starting.

There will be days when the process of learning new ways to think and behave—and feel—will be so frustrating or depressing that you will want to give up. Don't. If you keep at it, trying to apply all the tools I give you, you will be more likely to succeed. You will be happy, satisfied, contented. You will get along. You will not be lonely and miserable any more. But it is entirely up to you to keep at it. Therapy doesn't help everybody. Studies show that therapy is effective where the therapeutic relationship is strong and the client and family are motivated for change. I can only give you the tools and coach you to learn to use them. Using them is in your hands.

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The “Tools”

Usually, I give you some homework that may feel very healing and liberating *or* may make you a little uncomfortable, taking you out of your comfort zone. You may find it difficult to do; you may wonder why I didn't give other family members the same thing. Please ask! Discuss it with me. I will not look down on you for not liking or not doing my homework (if that should be the case). Bring the problems back to the therapy session so that we can shed more light on what's going on. That is part of the process. Little by little things will get better.

An especially important tool that I would like you to commit to trying involves de-stressing through such things as yoga or the audio I created. Let me know today if there may be problems with doing this.

The “Other” Person

If you came in with a spouse who, in your opinion is “the problem,” or, if, as a parent, you feel your child is “the problem,” please remember that however much that may or may not be the case, you are reacting and your reactions may have room for change. Relationships are like dance, with each person's movements somewhat dependent on the other person's. Therefore, it will be absolutely necessary for you to examine your own feelings and behavior as much as that of your other family member.

Medication

Research has not made the case for medicines over therapy for depression and anxiety. In fact, any clear advantage of medication could be the placebo affect. My approach is to help you gain control over your own brain chemistry through the therapeutic process and homework that I give. The goal is to not have to rely on medication which can be disempowering. Therefore, it is unlikely that you will receive a recommendation for medication or a referral for it from me. However, in keeping with my belief that you, indeed, are in the driver's seat, if you are taking medication, all I need from you is permission to coordinate with your prescribing doctor.

Video-Therapy

To work at a distance, you would need a webcam and the application with which to run it. Logitech is good and Skype is another option. When family members are not going to be together for the session, please download ooVoo which permits several screens at once.

The biggest drawback to video-therapy is that I am not able to contain or control arguments between members of a couple. If you have the tendency to get into heated arguments, video-therapy will not work for you.

The Possibility of Divorce

If you go back to the paragraph above under "Therapy Process" you will note that it could take TWO years of work to rebuild oneself and one's relationship if there has been emotional and verbal

abuse. People don't necessarily realize that their behavior has been hurtful. They may only see that they feel angry. However, under the anger is their own unrecognized pain. And the anger hurts the other person.

Therefore, if the reason for the possibility of divorce is that there has been much hurt and pain in the relationship, it will not help to come in for one or two sessions or even one or two months in order to make this extremely painful decision. If you would like to see this person who has hurt you change, then you must allow the full therapy time for that to happen. If you feel too impatient to wait it out and work on your own reactions in the meantime, you will be faced with more of the same anger and pain during and after the divorce process anyway. It seems logical to me if you are going to suffer anyway, to first set aside the time to see if the relationship can be rebuilt before pursuing divorce.

Confirming Appointments

To be sure that there are no communication mixups, I will send you an "invitation" in Outlook to confirm our appointment. In order for you to read it, you would need Outlook also.

Between-Visit Contacts and Emergencies

1) The number on my card and on this page are the only numbers you should use to contact me: 646-54-DRDEB

2) You may call between visits and we can talk for **five** or so minutes without charge. This is a courtesy, but it is expected not to be needed more than once in a while. Kindly leave your phone number.

3) Email may become an essential part of the therapy process. You may have a question for me—or I may have a thought that I want to share with you between sessions.

I use a double spam protection. Begin by going to <http://drdeb.com> and on the contact page, you will see a captcha code. This screens out non-humans. I also use Spam Arrest. This is how they explain their system:

" When an email arrives from an Unauthorized (unknown) sender, an automated verification email is sent from Spam Arrest asking the sender to verify him or herself by clicking on an included link. This link will direct the sender to a webpage which states that Spam Arrest is being used to block unwanted emails, and instructs the sender to type in a short verification word clearly displayed on the page. Once a sender successfully completes this quick and easy process, all future emails from that sending address are Authorized and will be met with no further verification requests from Spam Arrest."

In other words, people may either write me through the website or directly from their own email and they should have no problems or hurdles to jump through (other than the captcha code on the web site.)

Social Media and the Internet

(The following is provided with the permission of the author, Keely Kolmes, Psy.D., 220 Montgomery Street, Suite 400. • San Francisco, CA)

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship.

I publish a blog on my website and I post clinically relevant news on Twitter. I have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow my blog or Twitter stream. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on Twitter and I happen to notice that you've followed me there, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship.

My primary concern is your privacy. If you share this concern, there are more private ways to follow me on Twitter (such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate your having a public link to my content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me.

Note that I will not follow you back. I only follow other health professionals on Twitter and I do not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. My reasoning is that I believe casual viewing of clients' online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion in regard to whether it's being done as a part of your treatment or to satisfy my personal curiosity. In addition, viewing your online activities without your consent and without our explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on our working relationship. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with me, please let me know.

I do not accept clients as Fans of my Facebook Page. I believe having clients as Facebook Fans creates a greater likelihood of compromised client confidentiality and I feel it is best to be explicit to all who may view my list of Fans to know that they will not find client names on that list.

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) or messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me. These sites are not secure and I may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with me in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with me this way could compromise your confidentiality. It may also create the possibility that these exchanges become a part of your legal medical record and will need to be documented and archived in your chart.

You may find my psychology practice on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Yahoo Local, Bing, or other places which list businesses. Some of these sites include forums in which users rate their providers and add reviews. Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality, I cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or

negative. I urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as I take my commitment of confidentiality to you. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with me about your feelings about our work, there is a good possibility that I may never see it. If you do choose to write something on a business review site, I hope you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. I urge you to create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection.

Your Rights

Confidentiality

I take lots of notes but these notes are mine alone. No one has or can ever have access to them. By law, if a Judge orders a subpoena of my records, that request for documentation does not include these therapy notes.

If both parties sign a waiver of confidentiality or if ordered by a Judge, I may be required to submit records indicating date you came for therapy, payment, and so forth. Please note that if both parties do not sign waivers, I will not violate your privacy.

When family members enter therapy together, there is a presumption of **no secrets**. If there is something troubling you that you need to discuss with me privately and don't want your spouse to hear, please tell me that this part of our session is confidential from your spouse. If you want to hurt yourself, hurt someone else, or commit a crime, I will **not** keep confidentiality. By law, I am required to report child abuse.

If you are a minor child, I may want to see your entire family once or twice so as to help all of you relate to one another better. Your family should understand that I will only tell them what I think they ought to know **with your permission** – with the exception, again, of harm to self or others.

Regarding email, I maintain the confidentiality of email therapy (e-therapy) as follows: (a) I copy your emails into my computer and I delete your emails from my server immediately. (b) I will never give out or sell your email address. (c) I will never use your name in any way. (d) I will not use our emails on my website for self-promotion purposes, even without your name or email address.

Treatment Decisions

All personal decisions regarding treatment are yours alone: the decision to end therapy is always yours and you have the right to ask questions about my ideas and methods. Feel free to ask me questions and to share your opinions.

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Your Obligations

1) The first visit, in particular for couples, is recommended to be 1½ hours. The cost is \$360. After that, the fee for one hour is \$250, and, if you come together as a couple or require extra time for other reasons, the fee is \$360 for 1½ hours.

2) Please have Outlook on your computer so that I can confirm our appointments by Outlook “invitations.”

3) Payment is made **at the time the appointment is made**. Please pay online through my website. If you cancel within 24 hours, I will refund your payment.

4) Note that **I only check my email twice a week**. For this reason, you cannot cancel sessions by email.

5) Generally, an email does not take more than a few minutes and I won't charge for writing it. However, for longer emails that you send, I put the start times and end times of my reading and responding on the reply email. At the end, you will see the total time spent. Please pay me for this amount of time on an on-going basis, as you receive the replies. You can use PayPal for this. On my website, where you would normally make a payment, click “other.”

In addition, for each 12 emails that we exchange, there is an additional one-hour charge to cover administrative time in saving and backing up the emails. This does not include emails regarding scheduling (unless scheduling becomes an issue in therapy).

6) If we speak longer than 5 minutes on an unscheduled phone call, the charge is \$50/fifteen min.

7) I am not covered as an insurance provider. As a courtesy, I will help you fill out a form for your insurance company one time. We will need about ten or fifteen minutes of your session for this. You should copy the first form to use as a template so that you can fill out additional forms yourself in the future. I cannot write letters or treatment plans to insurance companies nor can I phone them.

Please note that this process will require that you have a diagnosis; that is their requirement, not mine.

8) If you should need my services in court or my records or for a deposition, I require my per-hour cost, estimated at \$2,000/day up front to cover preparation, commuting, waiting, and appearance (assuming, on average 2 hours preparation, 2 hours in the courthouse and one hour round trip commute). I will refund balances or apply toward office visits.

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9) Please inform me with 24 hours notice BY PHONE if you cannot make an appointment; otherwise, you are responsible for the fee for that session. (**Please give me a verbal acknowledgement that you read and understand this item at our first session.**).

10) If we have no sessions for three months, your file will be closed. If you wish to restart therapy, we will start over at my current rate at that time.

11) As the prevailing rates for top-quality therapy increase, I retain the right to raise my fees.

I understand the therapy process, my rights, my benefits, and my obligations for this service:

signature (first person)

date

please print your name

signature (second person)

date

please print your name

signature (third person)

date

please print your name