

DISTANCE COUNSELLING CONTRACT

Internet Counselling Informed Consent

Studiesⁱ have shown that distance counselling can be as effective as face-to-face counselling. You understand that while results are not guaranteed, distance counselling can help you to understand yourself better, improve your relationships, develop skills to address problems you encounter, reduce stress, and give you a better quality of life. Best progress occurs when appointments are scheduled and kept at regular intervals.

Client Name: _____

Therapist: Jonathan Wieser, M.A.-M.F.T., R.C.C.

SECTION A: CLIENT'S COMMITMENT

This section outlines the responsibility of "you" as the client. Please place your initials in the right column if you understand & agree to the terms & conditions.

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| • A minimum of 48 hours notice is required for canceling or changing my online appointment. | |
| • As a client, you understand that you will be charged the entire full session fee if you were to give less than 48 hours notice for cancellation, change the appointment time, or forget your appointment. | |
| • Although I utilize email or telephone reminders, you understand that you are responsible to remember and be online for your scheduled appointment, even in the event that the reminder technology fails. | |
| • Complete payment of the session is required 48 hours in advance. Your appointment will not proceed unless this payment has been made. If payment has not been received, your appointment time may be scheduled for another client. | |
| • You understand that online counselling may not be appropriate if you are experiencing suicidal or homicidal thoughts. Internet counselling is not a substitute for medical care provided by a physician. | |
| • Please communicate with me (your therapist) if you become dissatisfied with your treatment and I will work with you to discover what might be preventing progress, modify goals, or refer you to another therapist. | |
| • You understand that you may experience increased discomfort in your personal life and relationships resulting from psychotherapy. | |

END OF SECTION A

SECTION B: CONFIDENTIALITY

This section outlines the conditions of "you" as the client, and "I" as Jon Wieser. Please place your initials in the right column if you understand and agree to the terms & conditions.

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| • Information you disclose will be kept private, unless you give me written consent to release it to a specified health professional. | |
| • If you state or suggest that you are abusing a child (or vulnerable adult) or have recently abused a child or vulnerable adult, or a child or vulnerable adult is in danger of abuse, I am required by law to report this information to the appropriate social service and/or legal authorities. | |
| • If you disclose intentions or a plan to harm another person, I am legally required to warn the intended victim and report this information to legal authorities. | |

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SECTION B: CONFIDENTIALITY *(continue)*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you disclose or imply a plan for suicide, I am required by law to notify legal authorities and make reasonable attempts to notify your family. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am legally obligated to release case notes of your sessions if they are subpoenaed by a court of law. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Therapeutic communication will be restricted to Skype, Hushmail, or any other encrypted email or chat service determined to be acceptable by Jonathan Wieser. I keep encrypted case notes of all our sessions on digital file on a password protected computer for seven years, after which they will be deleted. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email is not entirely secure and therefore confidentiality in this format may not be protected. Please keep personal email communication restricted to content related to appointment scheduling and refrain from revealing personal information. For your protection, I will not respond to any email content beyond scheduling, unless via Hushmail. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unless we are both using land lines, privacy of our telephone conversations cannot be protected. Text messages are not confidential. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For our therapeutic communication, I recommend you use a personal computer with restricted access. I ask that you determine who might have access to your computer and electronic information from your location, which might include supervisors, co-workers, family members, and friends. If your computer is networked with other computers, know that unless precautions are taken, the information on your computers may be accessed by others on the network. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After our session, please ensure you complete the logout procedure. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need to communicate with me in an alternate way at anytime during our Skype session, Skype chat is encrypted and very secure. | |

END OF SECTION B

SECTION C: DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

A dual relationship is one in which participants have two or more roles such as in the examples of a boss who is also a friend, and a spouse who is also a coworker. Not all dual relationships are unethical or avoidable.

This section outlines the state of "you" as the client, and "I" as Jon Wieser. Please place your initials in the right column if you understand and agree to the terms & conditions.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will endeavor to ensure dual relationships do not compromise my therapeutic judgement, objectivity, or effectiveness. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will never acknowledge our clinical relationship without your written consent, and in some cases, even with your permission I will preserve the nature of our working relationship. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will not respond to invitations from clients to connect on social networking sites, nor will I respond to internet postings of my clients. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please understand that if you post or "Like" on my Facebook business page you may imply that you are or have been a client of mine and thereby may compromise your confidentiality. | |

END OF SECTION C

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SECTION D: EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

This section outlines the responsibility of “you” as the client. Please place your initials in the right column if you understand & agree to the terms & conditions.

- In the case of a life-threatening emergency, you agree to contact an Emergency Hotline*, 9-1-1, or go to a hospital emergency room.

END OF SECTION D

Please print, sign, and email (using encrypted email), to **counsellinggroup@hushmail.com**, a file of this form prior to our first appointment or therapeutic correspondence.

By signing you are indicating that you understand and agree to the above terms and conditions.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

*For Crisis Situations, you may contact Vancouver Crisis Centre

Distress Line at: 604-872-3311 or toll free at 1-800-784-2433.

For Online Distress Services, visit www.youthinbc.com or www.crisiscentrechat.ca

For Seniors' Distress Line, contact 604-872-1234

ⁱ To gain understanding on the process, effects and impact on distance counselling, you may consider reading Kate Dunn's studies entitled "A qualitative investigation into the online counselling relationship: To meet or not to meet, that is the question, 2012" or Amy Callahan & Kay Inckle's "Cybertherapy or psychobabble? A mixed methods study of online emotional support, 2012". Alternatively, you may also access Derek Richard's "Features and Benefits of Online Counselling at University Trinity College Online Mental Health Community, 2009" online.