

## Practice Policies Consent for Treatment

**SARAH BROWNLEE, LCSW, LMBT, NCTMB**

North Carolina Clinical Social Work License: C006045

North Carolina Massage and Bodywork License: 6005

National Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork Certification: 293526-00

**THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE:** Consultations and treatment can result in a number of benefits to you, including improving interpersonal relationships and resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek services. Working toward these benefits, however, requires effort on your part. Consultation and treatment requires your very active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings and/or behavior. I will ask for your feedback and views on your treatment, its progress, and other aspects of the treatment and will expect you to respond openly and honestly. Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful in dealing with a certain situation. During evaluation or treatment, remembering or talking about unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts can result in your experiencing considerable discomfort or strong feelings of anger, sadness, worry, fear, etc, or experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. I may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations, which can cause you to feel very upset, angry, depressed, challenged, or disappointed. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to BALANCE Integrative Care, PLLC in the first place may result in changes that were not originally intended. Consultations and treatment may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing or relationships. Sometimes a decision that is positive for one family member is viewed quite negatively by another family member. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and even frustrating. There is no guarantee that consultation and treatment will yield positive or intended results. During the course of treatment, I am likely to draw on various psychological approaches according to the problem that is being treated and assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include, but are not limited to, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, cognitive, psychodynamic, existential, system/family, developmental (adult, child, family), humanistic, and psycho-educational. I do not provide custody evaluation recommendation, medication or prescription recommendation, or legal advice, as these activities do not fall within my scope of practice.

**Discussion of Treatment Plan:** Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, I will discuss with you my working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives and view of possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your treatment, their possible risks, my expertise in employing them, or about the treatment plan, please ask and you will be answered fully. You also have the right to ask about other treatments for your condition and their risks and benefits. If you could benefit from any treatment that I do not provide, I have an ethical obligation to assist you in obtaining those treatments.

**Termination:** If at any point during our time together, I assess that I am not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals, I am obligated to discuss it with you and, if appropriate, to terminate treatment. In such a case, I would give you a number of referrals that may be helpful to you. Upon your request and authorization in writing, I will talk to the provider of your choice in order to help with the transition. If at any time you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another provider, I will assist you in finding someone qualified, and if I have your written consent, I will provide her or him with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate therapy at any time. If you choose to do so, I will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your (client's) written permission, except where disclosure is required by law.

**When Disclosure Is Required By Law:** Some of the circumstances when disclosure is required by the law are: when there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent, or elder abuse or neglect; when a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property or is gravely incapacitated or when client's family members communicate to me (Sarah Brownlee, LCSW, LMBT, NCTMB) that the client presents a danger to others.

**When Disclosure May Be Required:** Disclosure may be required pursuant to a legal proceeding by or against you. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain records and/or testimony by me. In couple and family consultations, or when different family members are seen individually, even over a period of time, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members, unless otherwise agreed upon. I will use my clinical judgment when revealing such information. I will not release records to any outside party unless I am authorized to do so by all adult family members who were part of the treatment.

**Emergencies:** If there is an emergency during our work together, and I become concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of your injuring someone else, or about your receiving proper care, I will do whatever I can within the limits of the law, to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive the proper medical care. For this purpose, I may also contact the person whose name you have provided on the intake sheet.

**Litigation Limitation:** Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves full disclosure regarding many confidential matters, should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), I will not testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will I release records unless otherwise agreed upon.

**Consultation:** In order to ensure high standard of care, I consult regularly with other professionals regarding clients; however, client's identity remains completely anonymous, and confidentiality is fully maintained during consultation conversations.

**Cell phones and e-mail:** It is very important to be aware that e-mail communication can be relatively easily accessed and hence privacy and confidentiality of such communication may be compromised. Please do not use e-mail for emergencies or to communicate sensitive information.

**Records and Your Right to Review Them:** As a client, you have the right to review or receive a summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when I assess that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. If it is appropriate, upon your request, I will release information to any agency/person you specify unless I assess that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. When more than one client is involved in treatment, such as in cases of couple and family consultations, I will release records only with the signed authorizations from all the adults (or all those who legally can authorize such a release) involved in the treatment.

**TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** If you need to contact me between sessions, please leave a message on the answering service at 910-232-5778, and your call will be returned as soon as possible. I check messages a few times during the daytime only, unless I am out of town. If an emergency situation arises during office hours, indicate it clearly in your message; in the event that an emergency situation arises after office hours, please consult emergency services at the hospital or 911.

**PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT:** Clients are expected to pay fees at the time of service unless other arrangements have been made. Please notify me if any problems arise during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. If your account is overdue (unpaid), and there is no written agreement on a payment plan, I may refuse to continue providing services and can use legal or other means (courts, collection agencies, etc.) to obtain payment.

**CANCELLATION:** Since the scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24 hours (1 day) notice is required for re-scheduling or cancelling an appointment. Unless we reach a different agreement, \$35.00 will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Insurance companies will not be billed for sessions missed without sufficient notification; it will be the client's sole responsibility to pay this missed session fee. After failing to provide sufficient notice for two (2) missed appointments, clients will be restricted to a same-day appointment for which I will contact clients when space is available.

**DUAL RELATIONSHIPS:** Consultations and treatment will not involve any other relationship that impairs my objectivity, clinical judgment, or that can be exploitative in nature. Wilmington is a small community and many clients know each other and know me. Consequently, you may see someone you know in the waiting room or you may see me in the community. I will not acknowledge working with anyone without his/her written permission.

**MEDIATION & ARBITRATION:** All disputes arising out of or in relation to this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediation, before, and as a pre-condition of, the initiation of arbitration. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Sarah Brownlee, LCSW, LMBT, NCTMB and client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally between client(s) and Sarah Brownlee, LCSW, LMBT, NCTMB unless otherwise agreed upon. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in New Hanover County, NC.

**Please take this page with you for your records.**