

## GROUP THERAPY AGREEMENT

Welcome to Group Therapy! Group therapy is an important part of recovery and differs from 12-step meetings because dialogue and cross-talk are encouraged in group. This allows for a broader more inclusive foundation and intimacy among members. Even though group is open and ongoing, new members are asked to make a 3 month commitment to group which affords a specific chunk of concentrated energy towards intra-psychic change and solution focused life shifts. Being seen and heard as your authentic self by contemporaries with similar struggles can be a very powerful intervention. So often loneliness and psychological change go hand and hand; the old patterns have fallen away or no longer work and new ways of being, new connections have yet to manifest. Group will be held at the same time each week with an opening and closing format. Each member is of vital importance to the group and you are a member of group whether you are absent or present. Being accountable for your actions, keeping commitments, and prioritizing recovery is absolutely crucial to the health of the group and conversely for individual healing.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is perhaps the most important aspect of your therapy group. It is necessary to establish trust and cohesion in the group, and all must assume this responsibility for the group to be functional and healthy. Please do not share what goes on in group treatment with family, partners or friends. If you do share about group to those closest to you, discussions about group need to be limited to what *you* have shared with the group. Group needs to be a safe place. Violations of confidentiality will not be tolerated.

### **Time Commitment**

A personal commitment to a group is made for a minimum period of 3 months. However, if in that time you consider leaving the group, it is strongly advised that you discuss this with the group leader and members of the group before making a decision. This is important for both you and the group as a whole.

### **Fees, Billing and Insurance**

*Fees:* Please call my office to find out about fees. At least 30 days notice will be given for any fee changes.

*Billing/Payment:* You may pay by cash, check or credit card. You are expected to remain current with payment; therefore, credit card information will be kept on file in order for billing to remain current. You are billed for absences, except for hospitalization for medical or rehabilitative purposes. Payment for group is billable on a monthly basis at the beginning of each month.

*Statements:* Statements can be provided if requested and may be used to submit to your insurance carrier. Statements reflect all session charges, treatment service and code, all payments made, diagnostic code, provider TIN and license number.

### **Absences**

Absences are an important issue since the absence of one group member affects the group far more deeply than that group member may realize. Therefore, your presence is important for each weekly session. This commitment is made in order to foster and promote group bonding and support, which are crucial in order to benefit from this type of therapy.

Advanced notice given to the group facilitator and/or discussion with the group (while *in* group) about a

future absence would be considered an excused absence. However, repeated excused absences over a period of time may become a matter of concern to your therapist and/or other group members and may be addressed with you in your group.

You are still responsible for payment of group session even for an excused absence.

### **Cancellations**

If a group is scheduled to meet during a commonly recognized holiday, it is strongly recommended that the group move to an alternate, convenient time for that week, since holiday times are normally a period of stress for recovering people. Maximum effort must be made to find a time, convenient to all, so the process of the group will not be interrupted. If the group meeting is moved and a member has previous obligations, you will not be charged for that group. In the event that group is cancelled by the group leader, then the fee for that group will be waived.

### **Outside Relationships With Group Members**

Support among members is encouraged. However, fragmentation of the group can undermine the work of the group as a whole. Examples of fragmentation are engaging in a sponsor-sponsee relationship within the group, the discussion of *group issues* outside of group, and dating/sex among members. All of these divisions are referred to as “sub-groups” and can be destructive because they can lead to secrets or withholding of information from other group members. Secrets affect everyone. Recovery requires rigorous honesty and without it, the integrity of the group can be affected. Such occurrences must be discussed in group and resolved in favor of the integrity of the group.

### **Respect the Process.**

Any concerns should be communicated directly with your group leader. Please refrain from devaluing or gossiping about your group facilitator or other group members. This is to help protect the safety of the group.

### **Treatment Concerns**

For the benefit of the individual and the group, the following conditions will be treated seriously:

1. Unusual or dangerous behavior;
2. Repeated breaches of commitments and group boundaries;
3. Other marked psychiatric symptoms, including suicidal ideation;
4. Perpetration toward others. Reporting laws will be observed.

### **Outside Evaluations & Referrals**

When warranted, group members may be asked to consult with a psychologist, psychiatrist, or obtain a physical evaluation. If a group member is found to be unable to maintain the goals of the recovery group, appropriate referrals will be made to a more intensive program.

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**I have read, understand and agree to the information and guidelines stated in this two page Group Therapy Agreement.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_