

Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC

Couples Therapy Agreement

ABOUT COUPLES THERAPY AT PATHWAYS

The Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board, under which all of Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC psychotherapists are independently licensed, has a distinct licensure for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs).

While none of the psychotherapists in our office hold an MFT license, we are each trained in marriage and couples counseling and it is within the scope of the licensure of each of our independent therapists under the provisions of The Board.

Please speak with your psychotherapist **immediately** if you prefer to engage with a MFT and we will direct you on how to find an MFT outside of our organization.

“GROUND RULES” FOR COUPLES THERAPY

The function of couples counseling is to create a **safe environment** in which the couple can communicate differences to and with each other **safely and without hostility**. While the subjects discussed in couples therapy are often the source of hurt and anger you must both agree to be respectful to your psychotherapist and especially each other. Verbal, emotional or physical abuse will not be tolerated in your sessions and can and probably will lead to the termination of therapy by your psychotherapist. Domestic violence within the therapy session will be reported to local authorities.

While you are in couples counseling, your psychotherapist may occasionally arrange to see one or both individuals in individual sessions. These individual sessions are conducted under the rule that there will be no secrets from the absent partner, and that anything spoken in the individual sessions may and probably will be discussed in joint counseling.

If your therapist believes either or both person(s) has the sort of psychological problems that are preventing effective couples counseling, individual psychotherapy may be warranted. In this case the individual(s) will be referred to a separate psychotherapist who has no connection to couples counseling. If you chose to see an individual psychotherapist(s) associated with Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC, your individual therapist(s) cannot confer with each other or your couples counselor without a release of information being signed by each party.

SCOPE OF COUPLES COUNSELING

In couples therapy, you may work on issues such as these - effective communication patterns, assertiveness skills, listening skills, acceptance of differences, anger management and other issues that may be important in your relationship.

INSURANCE BILLING

If a third party such as an insurance company is paying for all or part of your bill, one partner will be identified as the “client”, that is, the party responsible for insurance billing and payment

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for your couples counseling. We are normally required to give a “diagnosis” regarding the responsible party to the insurance company in order to be paid. Diagnoses are technical terms that describe the nature of mental and/or behavioral health problems. All diagnoses come from a book published by the American Psychiatric Association titled The Diagnostics and Statistical Manual (DSM). Identifying and diagnosing the “client” **is not an indication the partner identified as the “client” is somehow at fault for the problems in the relationship or that the “client” has a severe mental illness.** If you have questions about this process or your diagnosis, your therapist will discuss it with you.

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COUPLES THERAPY AGREEMENT/CONSENT TO TREAT

By signing this document, we both agree and understand:

We have reviewed and understand to the best of our ability Pathways of Ohio Counseling's basic framework for delivering psychotherapy services, including but not limited to our client's rights and responsibilities; HIPAA privacy rules and client contact and social media guidelines and accept them as conditions for entering into couples therapy with Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC.

While the hope of couples therapy is it will be helpful in solving our relationship problems, it is not possible to guarantee any outcome. During couples therapy, one partner may decide that the issues in the relationship will not be resolved to his or her satisfaction, and may decide to dissolve the relationship. We understand that, while this is not the hoped-for outcome, we accept this as a possible outcome of treatment.

Early in therapy we may need to assist our therapist in giving him/her a history of our family, our important life events, our past relationships and any emotional difficulties that we have now or have had in the past. We understand that if our therapist asks for this information, he/she considers it essential to understand our relationship. We also understand that both our therapist and each partner may need to this information in order for our therapy to be more effective.

We agree to share responsibility with Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC for the therapy process by abiding by the ground rules described in this document which include being respectful to our psychotherapist and each other, being active, honest participants, including setting goals for our treatment.

By entering into couples therapy, we both understand and accept that working toward change may involve experiencing difficult and intense feelings, some of which may be painful, in order to reach our therapy goals, and as with any type of health care, there are risks involved in treatment.

We understand that the changes one or both of us may make could have a significant impact on our relationship, our partner and on others around us. We accept that such changes can have both positive and negative effects and agree, to the best of our ability, to clarify and evaluate potential effects of changes before undertaking them.

If one partner is experiencing any emotional problems, in addition to the couples issues for which we have sought services, our therapist may recommend individual treatment which may be considered essential for effective progress and for treatment to continue.

We acknowledge we have asked Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC to provide couples therapy and agree as a couple we have joint ownership of the information we share in couples

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and individual sessions. There will be no secrets between one partner of the couple and our psychotherapist.

We understand that information discussed in couples therapy is for therapeutic purposes and is not intended for use in any legal proceedings involving the partners. We agree not to subpoena Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC or our couples psychotherapist or, if appropriate our individual psychotherapist(s) at Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC to testify for or against either party or to provide psychotherapy records in a court action.

We agree to pay for all services provided by Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC, including any charges not fully reimbursed by the insurance company such as copay amounts, deductible amounts and miscellaneous fees.

By signing below, we are in agreement with the rules and guidelines set forth in this document and we have requested and agreed to accept couples psychotherapy services from Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC.

Client Signature/Date: _____

Partner's Signature/Date: _____

Couples Counseling Psychotherapist Signature/Date: _____