

## **INFORMED CONSENT—GROUP COUNSELING**

Welcome to your group experience!

Group counseling can be a powerful and valuable venue for healing and growth. It is my desire that you reap all the benefits group has to offer. To help this occur, groups are structured to include the following elements:

- 1 A safe environment in which you are able to feel respected and valued as you work
- 2 An understanding of group goals and group norms
- 3 Investment by both myself and members to produce a consistent group experience

### **A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

A safe environment is created and maintained by both myself and its members. Primary ingredients are mutual respect and a chance to create trust. Another primary ingredient for a safe environment has to do with confidentiality. I am bound by law to maintain confidentiality, as group members are bound by honor to keep what is said in the group in the group. I realize that you may want to share what you are learning about yourself in group with a significant other. This is fine as long as you remember not to talk about how events unfold in group or in any other way compromise the confidentiality of other group members.

I will ask you to sign a release form so that they can talk with your individual therapist. This is a safeguard for you which allows consultation between group leaders and your individual therapist should the need arise. This also provides you with extra support should a difficult issue come up in group that may need more individual attention.

### **LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY:**

If you are a threat to yourself or others (showing suicidal or homicidal intent), I may need to report your statements and/or behaviors to family, your therapist, or other appropriate mental health or law enforcement professionals in order to keep you and others safe.

There are a broad range of events that are reportable under child protection statutes. Physical or sexual abuse of a child will be reported to Child Protective Services. When

the victim of child abuse is over age 18, reporting is not mandatory unless there are minors still living with the abuser, who may be in danger. Elder abuse is also required to be reported to the appropriate authorities.

If a court of law orders a subpoena of case records or testimony, I will first assert “privilege” (which is your right to deny the release of your records although this is not available in all states for group discussions). I will release records if a court denies the assertion of privilege and orders the release of records.

Records may also be released with your written permission. Records will include only your personal progress in group—not information about other group members.

I may consult with other professionals regarding group interactions. This allows a freedom to gain other perspectives and ideas concerning how best to help you reach your goals in group. No identifying information is shared in such consultations unless a release has been obtained from you as a group member.

#### **OTHER SAFETY FACTORS:**

- Members of a group may not use drugs or alcohol before or during group
- Members of a group should not engage in discussion of group issues outside of group
- Members of group should remember that keeping confidentiality allows for an environment where trust can be built and all members may benefit from the group experience.
- I will monitor discussions and maintain a respectful environment to keep safety and trust a priority

#### **Education, training, and experience:**

I hold an M.A. in Clinical Counselling from City University of Seattle. I am a registered clinical counselor (RCC). I hold a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from Simon Fraser University in Education and a M.A. in Educational Administration, Policy and Community from Ben-Gurion University in Israel. I am a member of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (student membership). Over the years, I have

been a counsellor/trainer for disadvantaged soldiers in the Israeli Army and troubled youth. I have also been a choreographer, philosophy teacher, a yoga teacher and a meditation instructor. I bring my knowledge in all of these fields to our sessions, which will hopefully support a holistic approach to healing and change.

### **Therapeutic orientation:**

I believe that therapy should simplify our lives and that the success of therapy has much more to do with how you see the world and less with my theoretical orientation. Counselling should provide a healing space for you to explore the feelings, thoughts, behaviors and relationships that cause difficulties in your life. I engage therapy from a solution-focused orientation and values based therapy to enhance change processes. This means we will be focusing on your **strengths** and **values** and on enhancing your capacities to make desirable changes in your life. I will do my best to ensure that my counselling is based on your inner resources and strength; that you will develop explicit, measurable, and obtainable goals; and that our sessions will foster a sense of hope for change. I try to bring a holistic approach that engages the emotional, mental, relational, spiritual and physical aspects of your being, with respect to your belief systems and culture.

Some areas that I can support you include life changes, grief and loss, pain management, personal development and life planning, spiritual and/or emotional crises, spiritual meaning, substance abuse, family and couples therapy and youth counselling. Although I cannot guarantee change, your ability to be open and honest with me and in the group will greatly enhance the effectiveness of therapy.

Depending on your needs, I will draw on a variety of therapeutic orientations. My therapeutic orientations include, but are not limited to: solution-focused therapy; Core energetics, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT); existential therapy; narrative therapy; Somatic therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy and transpersonal therapy. My therapeutic orientation is also grounded in embodiment work, which means that we might use the breath to ground ourselves in the body.

**Collection of personal information (including audio recordings and notes):**

All the information shared during our sessions will be kept confidential, with accordance to the British Columbia Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and B.C.A.C.C. Code of Ethical Conduct. PIPA require that I obtain your consent when I collect information. You have the right to have your confidentiality maintained at all times, unless in specific cases (See section on “limitations to confidentiality” below for more information). Recordings include identifying information, dates of sessions, the initial assessment, treatment plan, and any consultations made. With your permission, I may also audio record some other parts of our sessions. I will notify you before audio-recording and will ask for permission every time. The recording is done so I can review the session between our meetings, so I can be as prepared and present for you. All recordings will be erased at the time of termination of treatment.

Please remember that you have the right to decline the collection of your personal information. You also own the clinical content and have the right to access the information of your clinical records and/or obtain a copy of those records.

**Risks in therapy:**

It is not always easy to ask for help or to receive it and any kind of intervention has its risks. We change and with that change come new challenges. Sometimes when we change, we affect the people we love and sometimes we are not sure how the change will affect our life. Every time we let go of a familiar habit, there is a sense of loss and we need to become aware of this. Opening up and healing can be a frightening thing and we must do it with self-care and patience. It is important to remember that counselling may evoke extreme emotional and/or physical reactions. Therefore, it is understood and agreed that you are responsible for any actions you take and any reactions that may occur related to the counselling process. Remember that you can talk to me about your difficulties and we can use challenging moments to continue to meet ourselves where we are and to heal. In case of emergency, you can reach me at 604.354.1204 or call a crisis line at 1-800-784-2433 or 1-888-494-3888.

**Know your rights:**

You have the right to refuse treatment, to question any type of intervention, techniques or particular therapeutic modalities at any time during the counselling process. You have the right of giving, refusing or revoking consent to the counselling services at any time. By withdrawing or refusing consent, you will end the counselling relationship. You have the right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to have a safe and humane treatment environment that protects you from harm or abuse. If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of our professional relationship or what occurs during our therapy, and we have not resolved them together to your satisfaction, you can contact the BCACC at 1.800.909.6303

**ATTENDANCE**

Your presence in group is highly important. A group dynamic is formed that helps create an environment for growth and change. If you are absent from the group this dynamic suffers and affects the experience of you and other members of the group. Therefore, I would ask that you make this commitment a top priority for the duration of the group.

It is understood that occasionally an emergency may occur that will prevent you from attending group. If you are faced with an emergency or sudden illness, please contact myself before group begins let them know you will not be present.

Because it usually takes several group sessions for clients to "settle in" and receive the full benefits a therapy group provides, I ask incoming members to make a 7-week commitment when they join a group. I also ask members to give a 3 week notice when they decide to leave a group. I ask this because each member of a group is important-- your presence and your absence impacts members--and I want to allow time for members to process when members choose to leave.

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

Group time consists of both teaching and processing time. Processing may revolve around an issue one member of the group is working on with time for structured feedback and reactions by other members of the group. At times the group may focus on a topic

with all members verbally participating. In either case, the group dynamic offers a place where you can experience support, give support, understand more clearly how you relate to others, and examine your own beliefs about yourself, God, and the world around you. These dynamics provide a very powerful environment for change.

Remember, the more you give of yourself during the sessions, the more you will receive. The more honest and open you are, the more you allow for insight and growth.

### **FEES**

The fee for this group is \$290-350 for 7 2 hour, Bi-weekly sessions... The full payment will be done in the first meeting. You can cancel your participation after the first meeting. After that, you will not be able to ask for your money back.

### **CONSENT**

Please fill out the top and bottom of this form. The bottom portion of the form is for your records and the top portion of the form will be kept in your file. Thank you!

Group Consent Form—Name of Group:

I have read the above information, understand the information, and agree to the terms of group participation.

Signature of Group Member:

Printed Name of Group Member:

Date:

Signature of Facilitator:

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I have read the above information, understand the information, and agree to the terms of group participation.

Signature of Group Member: Printed Name of Group Member:

Date:

Signature of Facilitator: