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Informed Consent for Court Ordered Co-Parenting Counseling

The following information is provided with the intent of offering you the best possible co-parenting counseling experience.

When a couple who is actively raising children goes through a separation and/or a divorce, their relationship continues but transforms into that of co-parents. Co-parent counseling is meant to help you with this transition and define what this new relationship will look like while keeping the focus on the business of raising children in the new family system. Co-parenting counseling is different from couple's therapy in that the focus is on relationship transition rather than reparation. We will attempt to identify relationship dynamics between the parents that could both hinder and/or help your working relationship on behalf of the children going forward.

Confidentiality

The Court has ordered the co-parent counseling and may ask the co-parent counselor for feedback, recommendations or a report about the counseling process. We understand that this co-parenting counseling is a non-confidential process and agree to the release of information about the counseling to the mediators or attorneys involved in this case as well as the Court and any of it's representatives.

Confidentiality does apply to the inappropriate disclosure of information to parties not involved in this matter.

The co-parent counselor is **legally required to report all incidents of suspected child, elder or dependent adult abuse to the appropriate authorities. I am also legally mandated to take preventative action should a client present a danger to him/herself or others.** In addition, information and records may be provided in the event of a court order. Finally, for the purposes of providing quality care, I sometimes utilize other professionals in the field for consultation. In doing so I seek to maintain clinical integrity while protecting client identity as much as possible. If you elect to communicate with me by email at some point in our work together, please be aware that I do not have encrypting software on my computer so while my computer is password protected, email confidentially is not totally under my control.

Scheduling and Cancellations

Counseling sessions are 50-90 minutes in length, unless otherwise arranged. Appointments represent time reserved exclusively for you. **If you must cancel an appointment, you must give at least 48 hours notice, or you will be charged your usual fee for the missed appointment.** Cancellations may be left on my voice mail or email at any hour of the day or night.

Fees

The fee is \$200 per hour and is also applicable for time spent in co-parenting at the time the meeting is scheduled and for time outside of the meetings required to study documents, draft and distribute summary notes of sessions and/or agreements made to both of you, communicate with the parties or to communicate with collateral contacts - this time is billed at a tenth of an hour. An advance fee deposit or retainer of a total of 12 hours or \$2,400 (\$1200 for each party) and fee for service will be deducted from the retainer until it reaches \$500 at which time you agree to pay your respective shares in order to replenish the retainer to return it to the \$2400 level. Alternatively, you may put a credit card on file which will be charged at the time of service rather than utilizing a retainer fee system.

Identical monthly statements detailing all activity in the preceding month will be sent to each party. The statement will include any remaining retainer balance or balance due. To the extent there is a balance due, payment is expected within 15 days of receipt of the invoice.

Availability and Emergencies

My office is equipped with a confidential voice mail that will receive messages any time. I will make every effort to return calls within 24 hours or by the next business day, but cannot guarantee that calls will be returned immediately. In emergency situations, if you are feeling unsafe or require immediate medical or psychiatric assistance when I am not available, you may get immediate assistance by calling San Mateo County's 24-hour crisis line at (650) 579-0350 or 911, or by going to the nearest emergency room.

A colleague will be on-call and available by phone or for sessions whenever I am out of town; I will notify you of the name and number of this person, as it will be indicated on my voice mail during my absence.

If you have further questions about my training, experience or approach, or need clarification regarding any of the above information, please do not hesitate to ask me.

I have read, understand and agree to the above policies and the fee for services.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____