

**Welcome to our office. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions so you can discuss concerns with your psychologist.**

## **Psychotherapy**

**Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the particular problems you are experiencing. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.**

**Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have many benefits. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience.**

**Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.**

## **Psychological Evaluations**

**Unlike psychotherapy, where the psychologist attempts to be as empathic and accepting as possible, psychological assessment requires a more objective, neutral stance. In an evaluation, the goal is to understand the patient, and answer the referral question in as thorough and objective a manner as possible. There are times when a patient may not like the findings of a psychological evaluation. Your psychologist will make every effort to present the results in a caring, understandable, and non-hurtful manner. Results will be released only after obtaining written authorization, unless there is a court order of release of the results required by law. In doing an evaluation, every effort will be made to keep your health care costs down while also answering the referral question and providing reasonable and helpful recommendations.**

## HOW TO CONTACT YOUR PSYCHOLOGIST

Office hours are from 8:00am to 5:00pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 8:00am to 8:00pm on Wednesdays. Typically your psychologist is with patients during these hours and may not be immediately available to take your phone call. Our office staff will be happy to assist you or you may leave a confidential voicemail message for your psychologist. We make every attempt to return calls as soon as possible.

At this time, communicating with your psychologist through e-mail is inadvisable. We cannot guarantee the confidentiality of e-mail communications.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In the case of an emergency situation after office hours, please consider the following resources:

**Gersh, Hartson, Payne & Associates**                      338-9960  
An after-hours message will direct you on how to contact your psychologist.

**University of Iowa- Emergency Room Treatment Center**  
**St. Luke's Hospital- Emergency Room**

If you or the patient is in danger of hurting themselves or another person, going to the emergency room is a good option. The person will be assessed for inpatient admission by psychiatry staff. If you live outside the Iowa City or Cedar Rapids area, go to your local emergency room for assistance.

### **Family Doctor or Pediatrician**

Calling to consult with your primary care physician is a good option when there is a question about the seriousness of the situation and your psychologist is unavailable.

### **Other Community Resources for Urgent or Emergency Situations:**

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Crisis Center                               | 351-0140       |
| Rape Victim Advocacy Program                | 335-6000       |
| Johnson County Department of Human Services | 356-6050       |
| Abuse Hotline                               | 1-800-362-2178 |
| Domestic Violence Intervention Project      | 1-800-373-1043 |

**IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER,  
PLEASE CALL 911 FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES**