

Group Therapy Participation Agreement

People who participate in group therapy have the opportunity to benefit from sharing personal experiences, giving and receiving support/constructive feedback, and experimenting with new interpersonal behaviors. For group therapy to work effectively, a safe and trusting environment must be created and expectations for members and group facilitator must be understood and agreed upon. These group norms include the following:

Confidentiality: Sharing within group can be anxiety provoking. Therefore, your responsibility is to protect the privacy of other group members. This means not talking with anyone outside of group about the content of the group or in any way identifying group members or what they discuss in session. You may talk about your participation and experiences within group (and are encouraged to do so) with others outside of group but not about members' information, responses, or reactions.

Attendance: Members are expected to make a commitment to attend group consistently and agree to arrive on time every week. If you are running late or have an emergency or illness that keeps you from group, please contact Lee before group. If you know ahead of time that you will miss a session, please share the date of your absence with the group beforehand. Group will always end on time, no matter what is being discussed. Coming back the next week will allow you to continue the discussion. You are expected to make an initial commitment to attend and pay for group sessions consistently for a minimum of 6 weeks.

***When you decide to end group, please explore and discuss your concerns and reasons within the group. You are expected to attend at least 2 sessions after announcing to members your intention to leave. Members will begin to care about one another and will feel unresolved if unable to say goodbye or if you leave without any explanation.

Fee: You are expected to pay at the beginning of each session or in advance for several sessions. The established fee per session constitutes membership in the group & you will be charged for each session that is conducted whether you are present or not, with the exception that you are allowed to miss with no charge two sessions after the first 6-week commitment and during subsequent 6-month periods, from Jan-June and July-Dec. Absences will be listed as "missed appointments" on your billing receipt, as most insurance companies do not pay for these sessions.

Group Safety: Any topic is open for discussion in group. All participants agree to strive to be nonjudgmental in their response to other members, including a commitment not to engage in behaviors that are sexist, racist, homophobic, or disrespectful of personal diversities. Touching in a supportive way (e.g., hugs or sitting closer to someone) is encouraged but only with permission from the member(s) involved. You always have the right to say no to any requests that are made during sessions. You always have the right to question or challenge each other and Lee.

Individual Therapy: You may be requested to participate in individual therapy as a requirement for continued participation in this group. If you are already meeting with a therapist, or if you begin sessions with another therapist, Lee may periodically consult with this therapist for coordination of services. Please sign & return the Release of Information Form to authorize such communication. You will be informed when such consultation has occurred.

Alcohol/Drugs: You are expected to refrain from using alcohol for a minimum of 24 hours prior to sessions & drugs for a minimum of 72 hours prior to sessions. You will be requested to leave a session if you are determined to be intoxicated. You are encouraged not to engage in an excessive use of medications to regulate your emotional anxieties related to attending group.

Relationships with Other Members: Group is not a place to make social friends or find romantic partners, and if you use it in this way, you may not have the desired benefits you want out of your experience. Group is a chance to have unique relationships in which you learn more about yourself and the ways in which you relate to others so that you can develop more effective ways of making social friends or finding romance. You may have strong feelings toward some members of the group, as you do with people in your life. However, group can be a safe environment to talk about and understand those feelings and how you act on them. If you have contact with someone outside of group, it is expected that you share that contact with the group at the next meeting and process any leftover feelings or situations. If any group members have sexual contact with each other during their membership in the group, they will be asked to end their participation in the group.

Active Participation: Members are not required to talk within group; however, the more you put in, the more you will receive and the connections with others will be deeper and more meaningful. The only time you will be asked to speak is when a new member is added to the group and introductions and goals for group are shared. You will also be encouraged to talk about your feelings, as opposed only to sharing details of stories, because not everyone can relate to a life experience but everyone can understand feelings (i.e., fear, happiness, anger, hope, etc.).

Signature of Participant

Date