



## THERAPY AGREEMENT AND INFORMED CONSENT

Amanda Burns BSN, MA, RN, RPN, RCC

This document contains important information about the counselling services I provide and my business policies. Please read it carefully before signing. Building a trusting therapeutic relationship is essential, so questions or comments are welcome at any time.

### **Benefits of Therapy:**

Therapy can help a person gain a new understanding of his or her problems and to learn new ways of coping with and solving those problems, such as anxiety, depression, anger, or relationship concerns. Therapy can help a person develop new skills, gain new insights, and change thought and behaviour patterns. Therapy can contribute to improved ability to cope with stress and challenging situations and increase understanding of self and others. The benefits of counselling are maximized when clients attend sessions and make a sincere effort to work on issues in and out of session.

### **Risks of Therapy:**

While there are potential therapeutic benefits, there is no guarantee of success, and there are potential risks. During therapy, difficult emotions or memories may be stimulated, evoking strong feelings such as sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. Changes in awareness may alter self-perception and ways of relating to others. The therapeutic change process can be quite varied and unique to individuals. It is important that you mention any concerns to me as soon as possible and at any point in the process.

### **Confidentiality:**

All communications with me and all records relating to the services I provide are confidential and may not be disclosed without your informed, voluntary, and written consent. Please note, I can also offer walk-and-talk sessions. Still, because the sessions take place outside of the therapist's private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions or encounters with others may occur. Strategies and concerns will be discussed in advance.

#### *Exceptions to confidentiality are:*

- When a suspicion or disclosure of abuse of vulnerable persons, such as a child or the elderly.
- Threat or danger to self (such as suicidal ideation or plans)
- Threat to others (such as homicidal risk and duty to warn)
- When records are subpoenaed by court order

When a third party is paying for counselling such as EAP or ICBC, a summary report may be required but this will be discussed with you with full disclosure.

### **Virtual Counselling**

Self-Matters offers the option of virtual counselling. Because virtual counselling sessions take place outside of the therapist's private office, there is potential for other people to overhear sessions if you are not in a private place during the session. All efforts should be made to ensure you are in a room or area where other people are not present and cannot overhear the conversation. There may also be issues related to technology that may impact the counselling process. Please ensure all efforts are made

to ensure your equipment is working correctly, and I will do the same. Virtual sessions may be restricted to those clients who are currently in a crisis requiring high levels of support and intervention.

**Appointments and Fees:**

Therapy sessions are 50 minutes long, with the remainder of the hour set for scheduling and payment. The cost of sessions is identified on the selfmatters.ca website. Session fees may change based on the BCACCs fee recommendations but will be discussed with you before changes are made. Fees are to be paid in full at the end of each session. A receipt will be issued for each session. Extended therapy sessions can be requested as per the availability.

**Cancellation Policy:**

We request 24 hours' notice for cancellations. Cancellations made before this window are rescheduled with no penalty. Cancellations made without 24 hours' notice but before the start of the session incur a \$50 late cancellation fee. No-shows or cancellations made after the beginning of the session incur the full fee.

**Correspondence between Sessions:**

If you need to contact me in between sessions, a phone message, email, or text is acceptable. The content is to be free from any personal information to protect your privacy and confidentiality. Please note that I cannot provide emergency services and may take 48-72 hours to respond to your message. In case of an emergency, please call 911, the Fraser Health Crisis Line at 1-877-820-7444 or Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Centre of BC Helpline (604) 872-3311.

Your Rights: Include

- May withdraw your consent at any time.
- Request information about your progress or planning around your therapy.
- Provide the counsellor with feedback about your session.
- Ask the counsellor questions and request clarification at any time.
- Provide the counsellor with feedback about your session.
- Decide when therapy will end.

**Consent:**

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood this two-page document, and agreed to the terms and conditions of Self Matters Counselling.

Client Name (Please Print):

Signature:

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Date:

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