

# *O'SULLIVAN PSYCHOTHERAPY*

~ Sheilagh O'Sullivan MACP, RP ~

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## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND INFORMED CONSENT**

### ***SERVICES***

Sheilagh offers psychotherapy and clinical hypnotherapy / hypnosis to individuals. Please note that Sheilagh requires her therapy clients to be aged 14 or older. Session length is dependent on service provided. All sessions are by appointment only.

Typically individual therapy is delivered via private sessions between the psychotherapist and the client; on rare occasions these individual sessions may benefit from the client joining group therapy and / or having family members, or significant others present in some individual sessions.

Therapy is most frequently provided through face to face sessions. Sheilagh is also available to provide therapy at your location (home or office) or through live online meetings through the encrypted system called Zoom. This delivery format is commonly referred to as e-counselling / e-psychotherapy.

### ***MORE ABOUT E-COUNSELLING / E-PSYCHOTHERAPY***

E-counselling / e-psychotherapy services are intended for clients who have limited access, and availability to receive direct, face-to-face professional psychotherapy services.

E-counselling / e-psychotherapy services are most suitable for clients who have either previously engaged in formal psychotherapy services and are seeking support for issues that are unrelated to major crisis, severe mental health issues, suicidal, homicidal or violent behavior (past and present). Clients suffering from major crisis, severe mental health issues, suicidal, homicidal or violent behavior (past and present) are ineligible for e-counselling / e-psychotherapy services. Knowingly misleading or withholding this information excludes Sheilagh O'Sullivan MACP, RP from any legal obligation or liability related to said client's diagnosis, prognosis, outcome, and actions.

Limitations to the effectiveness of e-counselling / e-psychotherapy include the lack of "personal" face to face interactions, the lack of visual and audio cues in the therapy process, and the lack of non-verbal body language. E-counselling / e-psychotherapy can be negatively impacted by differing time zones, language barriers, cultural differences, and technology breakdown.

E-counselling / e-psychotherapy are not a substitute for medication under the care of a psychiatrist or doctor. E-counselling / e-psychotherapy may not appropriate if a clients is experiencing a crisis or is having suicidal or homicidal thoughts. If a life-threatening crisis should occur, the client agrees to contact a crisis hotline, call 911 or go to their nearest hospital emergency room.

Sheilagh O'Sullivan MACP, RP is permitted to provide psychotherapy services in Ontario, Canada. Sheilagh O'Sullivan MACP, RP follows all regulations and codes of ethics applicable to Ontario, Canada. If the client lives outside of Ontario, Canada and still seeks to receive e-counselling / e-psychotherapy services from Sheilagh O'Sullivan MACP, RP the client acknowledges and understands that they will not be receiving services licensed in their area.

### ***PAYMENT POLICIES AND FEES***

- The fee for individual one hour therapy sessions at my office or online is \$135.
- The fee for individual therapy sessions at your location varies as it depends on travel distance and travel time.
- Payment is due at the time service is provided.

- Payment may be made by cash, credit card, e-transfer or cheque.
- For e-Transfer payments, please send payment to [osullivanpsychotherapy@gmail.com](mailto:osullivanpsychotherapy@gmail.com).
- NSF cheques are subject to \$25 service fee plus any applicable bank charges.
- Receipts are only provided after payment in full has been received.
- Payment for “no show” sessions or NSF cheques must be made prior to booking further sessions.

Therapy fees are not covered by OHIP, but may be completely or partially covered by extended medical plans or possibly deductible as a medical expense on income taxes. Psychotherapy services may be covered under a client’s company or workplace’s extended health benefits. If the client will be using insurance or third party coverage, the client will be required to cover the full fee at the time service is rendered, regardless of the amount reimbursed to the client. The client will also be responsible for payment of services should the client’s insurance coverage or third party provider stop funding. The client is responsible for checking that psychotherapy provided by a Registered Psychotherapist is covered by their third party insurer or plan prior to booking if they plan to use extended health care benefits. Sheilagh does not bill insurance plans, however Sheilagh always provides receipts for the client to submit for reimbursement, if covered.

Between sessions Sheilagh is available to take one brief 10 minute phone call or answer one short 1 paragraph email regarding the client’s therapy appointment times or therapy homework without the client incurring a fee. Sheilagh and the client will not process therapy issues via telephone or email unless Sheilagh has specifically asked the client to check in as part of the client’s treatment. If the client feels that more contact is needed between sessions due to crisis, increasing the frequency of the therapy sessions may be appropriate.

Fees are reviewed yearly, and may increase. Sheilagh will provide 30 days’ notice prior to the increase of any fees.

#### ***CANCELLED AND/OR MISSED APPOINTMENT POLICY***

Continuity of care is an important aspect of providing therapy. Frequent cancellations and/or failing to notify Sheilagh prior to your scheduled appointment time that you are unable to attend may cause long periods between therapy sessions, and will impact the effectiveness of your treatment.

If you are unable to keep your appointment and wish to cancel, PLEASE contact Sheilagh’s office. 24 hour notice must be given for the cancellation of appointments otherwise, the full session fee will be charged. As there is a high demand for services, your time is reserved exclusively for you, and therefore is not available to others. Please call even if it is a few hours before your scheduled session as this allows for people on the waitlist to be contacted.

- Appointments cancelled less than 24 hours prior to your scheduled appointment time will be billed at the full agreed-upon rate.
- Cancellation fees will only be waived in the event of a medical emergency requiring urgent professional treatment, death in the family, or in the event of a natural disaster.
- Clients who do not contact Sheilagh’s office, and do not show up for a scheduled appointment (“no show” / “missed appointment”) are billed at the full cost of their scheduled session. If you miss a scheduled appointment for any reason including, but not limited to: bad traffic, simply forgetting, not receiving a reminder call, car trouble, minor illnesses (i.e. common cold), or personal schedule change the missed appointment policy applies.
- Out of fairness to you, if Sheilagh cancels your appointment with less than 24 hour notice, your next appointment is 50% off. In the unlikely event that Sheilagh does not show up for your scheduled appointment, your next appointment is free.
- If you miss your appointment, Sheilagh will not be contacting you to reschedule. Sheilagh’s assumption is that if you would like to pursue further support through O’Sullivan Psychotherapy and Sheilagh O’Sullivan, you will connect with her, and she will do her best to accommodate you at that time.

### ***LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY***

Understand that all records and communications relating to the provision of psychotherapy services offered to the client are confidential, and may not be disclosed without the client's written consent. Understand that the law places certain limits on the confidential nature of these services, and that these limits to confidentiality typically arise, but are not limited to, situations such as the following:

- If the client presents an imminent danger to self or others
- If there is suspicion of child abuse or a child in need of protection
- If a vulnerable adult is abused or neglected
- If the client intends to drive a motor vehicle while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs
- If the client intends to have sexual contact or share IV drug needles that could spread HIV and/or AIDS
- If a judge sends a signed, valid court order requesting information regarding the client's treatment.

Every reasonable effort will be made by Sheilagh to discuss these circumstances with the client prior to the involvement of other professionals.

An additional exception may be made if the psychotherapy is being paid for by a third party (such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)). Sheilagh will discuss this with the client at the onset of psychotherapy.

Understand that no online, cell phone, or chat / text exchanges can be considered 100% secure. Due to the limits of security when using technology to communicate Sheilagh is unable to guarantee the confidentiality of our electronic communications. If the client chooses to communicate with Sheilagh through technology for any reason the client acknowledges and accepts the risk that confidentiality may be violated by external entities.

### ***COLLECTION AND STORAGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION***

Storage and collection of client information is in accordance with the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), and is in accordance with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario guidelines. If you have any questions regarding this, please speak with Sheilagh.

### ***CLIENT RIGHTS***

- Clients have the right to withdraw this consent at any time. Please provide this in writing whenever possible.
- Clients have the right to refuse particular psychotherapy interventions.
- Clients have a right to receive a referral to another psychotherapist or mental health professional.
- Clients have the right to have access to their clinical records or request to obtain copies of their file, subject to legal requirements. Please note that if a request is made, the file is first scanned for information pertaining to legal requirements, therefore records may not be released immediately upon request, but usually within two weeks of the request. The client's right to access their information continues after the end of the psychotherapy relationship.
- It is the client's right to terminate psychotherapy at any time by so advising their psychotherapist.

### ***COMPLAINTS OR QUESTIONS***

If you have a complaint or question, please feel free to speak with Sheilagh O'Sullivan directly. If you would like to talk to someone else, you may contact the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario.

### ***CLIENTS WITH ADDICTIONS CONCERNS***

Clients must not be affected by substances at the time of the therapy appointment. This typically requires that a client is sober for the 24 hours before the time of the appointment.

### ***THERAPIST TIME OFF POLICY***

Sheilagh regularly takes time off to recharge just like you. Sheilagh will give you at least one week's notice before her time away. During Sheilagh's time away, she will be completely unavailable. If you are a threat to yourself or another when Sheilagh is away please call a crisis hotline, 911 or go to your nearest hospital emergency room immediately. Sheilagh asks that clients respect her time away, and that they wait until the next session to discuss any issues that arise while she is away. Sheilagh will respond to any messages left while she is away the first business day upon returning to her office.

### ***EVENING, WEEKEND, AND HOLIDAY CONTACT POLICY***

Sheilagh will make every effort to return the call, email or text message of a non-emergency client message within 24 hours during her work week. If this call, email, or text arrives during an evening, weekend, or holiday, Sheilagh will return the non-emergency client contact during the first working day following the evening, weekend, or holiday. For emergency only clients (emergency constitutes imminent danger to self or others) Sheilagh asks that the client call a crisis hotline, call 911, or go to your nearest hospital emergency room immediately. Sheilagh is unable to offer after hour's emergency / crisis support.

### ***CONTACTING OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS***

It may be helpful or necessary for Sheilagh to speak to other professionals who may be involved in aspects of the client's physical and psychological health. This will only be done with the client's prior written permission, and with the client understanding the intent of such contact. The client has the right to know what transpired in any conversations between their psychotherapist and other professionals.

### ***DUAL RELATIONSHIPS***

Although sessions between Sheilagh and her clients may be very intimate psychologically, this is a professional relationship rather than a social one. Not all dual relationships are unethical or avoidable. However, any actions, or dual relationship situations that might impair Sheilagh's objectivity, clinical judgment, or therapeutic effectiveness, or that could be exploitative in nature are never part of the therapy process. In addition, Sheilagh will never acknowledge working therapeutically with anyone without his / her written permission. In some instances, even with permission, Sheilagh will preserve the integrity of the working relationship. For this reason Sheilagh will not accept any invitations via social networking sites, nor will Sheilagh respond to blogs written by clients, or accept comments on her blog from clients in which their identity is identified. On the rare occasion that Sheilagh sees a client outside of the office (when Sheilagh and the client may accidentally run into each other in public), Sheilagh is highly discreet, and will maintain your confidentiality. Sheilagh will do her best to follow your lead, as such it is your choice to acknowledge the encounter, and Sheilagh as your psychotherapist or not. If you do not choose to acknowledge the encounter, Sheilagh will respect this, and will follow your lead.

### ***PHYSICAL CONTACT POLICY***

Sexual contact is never acceptable in the therapeutic relationship. Romantic or sexual talk, or sexual innuendos, and sexual jokes are also unacceptable in the therapeutic relationship. If you should express a sexual comment or joke while in session directed to Sheilagh, Sheilagh will explore this comment professionally, and in a non-shaming way within a therapeutic non-sexual relationship. Hugging is an expression of affection, a greeting, or a good bye within many cultures. However, in some cases hugging can be misconstrued as sexual, and can be triggering for some clients, or may interfere with the therapy relationship. Occasionally a client may spontaneously hug Sheilagh while they exit her office, or may ask for a hug after a particularly difficult or emotional session, or may feel quite comfortable with a hug at the end of sessions or when ending therapy. Some clients are huggers, some are not, and so it is important for Sheilagh to understand your stance, and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. If Sheilagh believes that a requested non-sexual brief hug is appropriate, and supports your therapy, she will allow for this on occasion. Please understand, if Sheilagh chooses not to hug you, it is not an expression of judgment, dislike or dismissal, rather it would be denied in the best interest of your clinical care based on a therapeutic decision.

### ***FRIENDS, FAMILY, CO-WORKERS REFERRALS POLICY***

The greatest compliments a therapist can receive are referrals from current or former clients. There are times when clients wish to introduce Sheilagh as their therapist so they can recommend her as a referral, which is ethical and acceptable. Please understand that your confidentiality is extremely important to Sheilagh. If another client that Sheilagh sees referred you to her, or if you refer a friend, co-worker, or family member to Sheilagh, legally and ethically Sheilagh is not able to acknowledge that other person's attendance to you if they should begin seeing Sheilagh in therapy, or if they are currently in therapy with Sheilagh. If you choose to share that Sheilagh is your therapist with the person who referred you, or with someone you refer, that is a decision that you must make. Please be assured that Sheilagh will not acknowledge you as her client to anyone outside of O'Sullivan Psychotherapy without your written consent. Occasionally Sheilagh may discover through something you share in a session that she has seen / is seeing someone that you know in therapy, if this is the case, Sheilagh must maintain that person's confidentiality, and will hold this information just as she would uphold your confidentiality. On occasion a client may say, "My friend Jane / John Doe mentioned that she / he started seeing you, and is enjoying the work you are doing with him / her." This is an example of Sheilagh's standard response which is stated in a kind tone: "I appreciate any referrals that clients make, however, I cannot reveal whom I see in therapy, and thus I cannot remark on whom I am seeing clinically at this time." Because this may sound rather official to clients, and because Sheilagh will not acknowledge whom she sees in therapy, including you, Sheilagh thanks her clients here on this page one time in advance for any referrals they may make:

*Thank you for the referral; I am privileged, and honoured to be able to walk with you on your journey.*

\*Please understand that Organizational/Leadership Development referrals are different dynamics than a therapeutic relationship.

### ***NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY***

Sheilagh respects each person's right to choose his or her own belief system. Sheilagh works well with clients from many religions, and beliefs. If a client would like to work from a faith-based approach, Sheilagh is happy to discuss this with you, and support your process. Additionally, Sheilagh respects each person's right to their choices in terms of sexual orientation, and provide a safe place for both straight and gay clients. Sheilagh believes in supporting people of all ethnicities, cultures, and physical challenges. While our gender, ethnicity, orientation, or spirituality may be different, Sheilagh is open to discussing any concerns or questions you may have in working with a therapist who is either a different race, religion, orientation, or gender than you. Having an open discussion on any of these topics can lead to a greater level of trust, and rapport. If you have any questions regarding Sheilagh's therapeutic approach and style, or her non-discrimination policies, please feel free to discuss this with Sheilagh now and / or in the future.