

*Helen Rudinsky, MS*

**Consent form 3—Code of Conduct**

The following **Code of Conduct** has been established to ensure that all clients have a positive therapy experience. It is recommended that clients become very familiar with the conduct expected of them.

**Failure to abide by this Code of Conduct may result in termination and denial of services.**

**Payment**

To keep fees as low as possible, a “Pay As You Go” system has been established. Clients are asked to pay at the beginning of the session. Clients may also pay for a few sessions in advance.

**Session Duration**

The length of the session is decided ahead of time. If the client needs to go over the session time, and another client is not scheduled, the client may extend the session by paying an additional session fee.

**Arriving Late**

The time schedule needs to be strictly maintained and clients are asked to be prompt to their sessions. If a client arrives late, only the remaining time of the session will be used, no extension will be made. The client is required to pay the full fee. If the therapist is late, the client will still receive the full session or the time will be made up at a later date. If a client is running late, he or she can call in by cell phone and start the session in route to therapy.

**No Food and Drinks**

Clients are asked not to bring food and drinks ((even water and coffee) into the office or waiting room.

**Cell Phone Off**

To receive maximum benefit from the session, clients are asked to turn off cell phones. If the client is expecting an emergency call, he or she needs to arrange this with the therapist ahead of the session.

**Childcare**

It is the responsibility of clients to find childcare for their children. Children are not allowed in the therapy session as it is disruptive. If a client's child gets sick at the last minute, clients have the option of a phone or Skype session from home during the regular scheduled time, or have only one partner come to therapy.

**48 Hour Cancellation Notice**

Clients are asked to give a 48 hour notice to change or cancel an appointment otherwise they will be charged the full fee. If one partner can not attend the session, the other partner can attend alone or by phone.

**Homework Assignments**

Clients will have homework assignments and are asked to bring to session a folder for handouts and notebook for notes.

**Consistent Weekly Attendance**

Clients are encouraged to come to sessions consistently, usually once a week. Sporadic attendance will keep clients from improving and moving forward.

**Expression of Emotion**

Clients are encouraged to get in touch with their emotions and express themselves freely without gender stereotyping.

**Ground Rules for Couples Sessions-Do's and Don'ts**

The goal for each partner in Couples Therapy is to identify the negative patterns he or she is bringing to the relationship, take responsibility for those patterns, and work to change them. Each partner is ask to do the following: Speak only for yourself, your partner can speak for herself/himself. Focus on yourself, take ownership for your contribution to the relationship problems. Take responsibility for the state of your relationship today, do your part to create the type of relationship you want going forward. Take responsibility for your past mistakes, bad decisions and negative behavior. Express your own feelings, opinions and ideas freely, you have a right to do so without apologizing and defending yourself.

Partners are asked to **not do** the following: Don't use the session to recount the latest conflict, blow by blow, it is not an effective use of our time. Don't try to get the therapist to take your side of a problem, both sides are usually valid. Don't blame your partner for choices you have made in the past or the state of your relationship today.

Your relationship is your responsibility. Do what you can to make it better. You can't change your partner—but you can change yourself and your own destructive, harmful patterns.

### No Arguing Rule

Couples are asked to treat each other respectfully. Arguing is not allowed during sessions. Arguing rarely resolves a problem anyway. Instead, we ask why are you arguing in the first place and work to address those needs. Session time will be used to learn new ways to clearly communicate your concerns in a way that empowers you to get your needs met. Each partner is helped to learn healthy ways of speaking to the other partner using “I statements”.

### Couples Therapy conducted Separately and Individually

If a couple argues constantly and continually creates conflict with each other, therapy will be conducted individually with each partner separated from the other during two different sessions. If one or both partners have not yet developed the adequate level of self awareness, maturity and relationship skills, therapy is conducted individually until they are able to be together in the same room and same session without arguing.

### Interaction during Couples Sessions

Often discussions regarding relationship problems can become intense and heated. Being angry and expressing negative emotions is acceptable. Reacting in anger in ways that are harmful, cruel, threatening or abusive to the other is not.

Clients are asked to take responsibility for their behavior. During intense sessions a client may need to exercise self control and restraint. If need be, a client should excuse him or herself from the room until he or she regains control.

In order to provide a safe, nurturing and supportive environment during the session, aggressive and hostile physical behavior will not be tolerated. Aggressive behavior includes any hitting, pushing or other acts of aggression.

Any client conducting him or herself in this manner will be asked to leave the session immediately and will be denied future services.

Also, cruel or hostile comments directed to one's partner, the therapist or another client will not be tolerated. Hostile comments include: yelling, name calling, bullying, insulting, ridiculing, belittling, shaming, invalidating, or threatening.

Any client conducting him or herself in this manner will be asked to leave the session immediately and will be denied future services.

I \_\_\_\_\_ and I \_\_\_\_\_ (name) have read the **Code of Conduct** and agree to abide by it.

I pledge to exercise self control and refrain from any behavior that is hurtful, cruel and destructive.

I understand that if I fail to abide by this **Code of Conduct** or if I behave in manner that is rude or disruptive to my partner, the therapist or another client, my treatment will be terminated immediately and I will be denied future services.

Client's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Client's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_