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## Informed Consent for Online Therapy

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### **Ethical Practice Standards**

I am a Registered Counsellor and Counselling Supervisor (#1019) with the Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists of Canada and a Registered Educator (#32) with the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association. In the interest of maintaining ethical and compassionate practice standards for your session time, I invite you to agree to the terms of my services before you begin your online sessions by signing this form.

The purpose of submitting this form is to confirm that you understand your rights and responsibilities as my client, as well as to inform you of your legal rights and limits of confidentiality. Your signature on this consent form also confirms that you are fully aware of the advantages and disadvantages of online therapy.

### **Scope of Services - Depth-Oriented Therapy**

Unlike cognitive-behavioural therapy, which provides effective short-term coping skills, depth-oriented, emotion-focused therapy supports you to accept, express, regulate, make sense of, and transform your emotions. Depth therapy offers the practices of mindful somatic attention, self-loving ways to process emotional pain, inspired goal setting, innovative wellness practices, and powerful tools for cognitive and emotional re-patterning.

My therapeutic framework gently explores six principles of emotional processing: (1) awareness of emotion, (2) emotional expression and release, (3) regulation of emotion, (4) reflection on past experience, (5) transformation of emotion, (6) corrective experiences of positive emotions through new lived experiences in therapy, and out in the world.

**Risks and Benefits:** Therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings such as sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness. Therapy can also lead to better relationships, new ways to solve problems, the

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development of new skills, a significant reduction in feelings of distress, changing unwanted behaviours, and improved self-esteem.

There are no guarantees of what you will experience, as each person is unique. Counselling is a process of personal exploration that may lead to major changes in your life, perspectives, and decisions. Together we will work to achieve the best possible results for you. It is important to note that I will not diagnose your condition or prescribe medication.

**Confidentiality:** All information disclosed within sessions is confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without written permission, except where disclosure is permitted or required by law. Those situations include but are not limited to: (a) when there is reasonable suspicion of abuse to a child, to a dependent or elder adult; (b) when the client communicates a threat of bodily injury to self or others; (c) when the client is suicidal; (d) when the client has been physically injured due to violence; (e) when disclosure is required pursuant to a legal proceeding.

As a registered therapist, it is my duty to protect the confidentiality of all communications with my clients, but there are limits to confidentiality if sessions are conducted online. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if sessions are conducted via phone or video. You should use your own discretion when utilizing these options.

**Note:** *I receive monthly professional counselling supervision where I regularly stay updated on current therapy standards and ethics of care. Should I need to discuss your case, neither your name or any identifying information will be shared.*

**You are the Decision Maker:** It is important for you to understand that you are the primary decision-maker in the direction that your sessions take, and therefore you have the right to full and active participation and collaboration in the decisions that affect you. If you would like to try different approaches to your session time that vary from what I have detailed above, please ask, and I will let you know if I can skillfully accommodate your needs.

**Your Client Rights:** In addition, you have certain rights, which include the right to:

- Receive an appropriate referral to other resources as needed.
- Accept or reject any task, exercise or procedure suggested by me.
- Be made aware of the rationale, risks, and benefits of any and all suggestions.

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### **A Focus on Self-Regulation**

The depth therapy that I offer online is an oscillating process of briefly accessing the painful emotions emerging for healing and then coming back to present-time to build upon your strengths. Expressing and releasing pain is necessary for the emotional healing process, however in online therapy, it is necessary to take a lighter approach than in-person therapy. In online therapy, you can expect to focus on self-regulation, pain management and release, as well as innovative and effective growth practices.

As long as you can maintain self-safety and self-caring at home, online therapy could be a good fit for you. My intention is that you will finish every online session feeling better than when you started. My aim is that you will feel regularly encouraged to expand your strengths as you learn how to navigate the hard places. If, however, you are feeling severely dysregulated during or after an online therapy session we will begin the necessary transition to in-person therapy in your home area.

### **Advantages of Online Therapy:**

#### **A Good Option for Remote Areas**

You might not have access to any other form of mental health treatment because there are limited in your geographic area. Online therapy also gives you access to more modalities of treatment than you might have otherwise.

#### **Accessibility for People With Physical Limitations**

Online therapy provides accessibility if you are disabled or housebound. If you are unable to leave your home for various reasons, such as physical or mental illness, online therapy can be a useful alternative to traditional psychotherapy settings.

#### **Convenience and Comfort**

Online therapy is convenient. Since you will be attending therapy sessions online in the comfort of your own home. If you are a busy person, you can schedule your therapy sessions for times that are most convenient for you.

#### **Accessible Information, Education and Support**

You might not feel comfortable talking to friends and family about your emotional struggles and so online therapy might feel necessary at certain times in your life. If you are seeking to become psychologically and emotionally stronger in any area of your life, online therapy can provide support.

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## **Disadvantages of Online Therapy:**

### **Crisis Management is Difficult**

Since online therapy is distance therapy, it is difficult to respond quickly and effectively when a crisis happens. If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, are having difficulty managing dysregulation from post-traumatic stress, are actively self-harming, or have suffered a recent personal tragedy, it can be difficult or even impossible for me to provide direct assistance.

### **Online Therapy Is Not Appropriate for People With Serious Psychiatric Illnesses**

Online therapy can be useful for a variety of situations, but is often challenging when comes to more serious psychiatric illnesses that require close and direct treatment.

### **Concerns About Confidentiality, Privacy, and Unreliable Technology**

Confidentiality is just as important in online therapy as it is in more traditional forms of therapy delivery. Since information is being transmitted online, privacy can be more of a concern.

Technology glitches can occasionally can make it difficult to access therapy sometimes.

### **Online Therapy Sometimes Lacks Intimacy and Information**

In some cases, such as in phone therapy, I cannot see your facial expressions or body language. These visual signals can give me a clearer picture of your feelings, thoughts, moods, and behaviours. Some people prefer the level of intimacy that online therapy offers, and some people find that online therapy does not offer the intimacy that real-world interactions possess.

### **Case-by-Case Assessments**

In some cases, if you have a psychiatric diagnosis, I will see you on a session-by-session basis as an adjunct therapist provided that you are seeking regular in-person care with a local licensed therapist. However, since online therapy is unsuitable for crisis management, if I assess the online therapeutic process is unsuitable for you to partake in at home, I will communicate exactly why we cannot continue, set a termination date, and support you to transition to local therapeutic care immediately.

**Fees:** My fees are \$125 Canadian dollars including tax per one-hour session, payable prior to each session through Paypal or credit card via my website at [www.shelleyklammer.com](http://www.shelleyklammer.com). You may also choose to access reduced fees via the prepaid therapy packages that I offer at <https://www.shelleyklammer.com/counselling>. Please note, I cannot offer insurance receipts to you if you live outside of Canada.

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**Cancellation Policy:** You will be charged the full session fee for missed or cancelled appointments unless you have given at least 24 hours notice via email at [shelleyklammer@hotmail.com](mailto:shelleyklammer@hotmail.com) or 403-929-4480. If you do not fully understand any portion of this statement, or have questions about it, please do not submit the form below. I will go over this disclosure and clarify any questions you may have.

**Adult Client Consent (please print your name)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Name and Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, I indicate that I have fully read, understand, and agree with the above.

**Client signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Counsellor signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*I look forward to connecting with you and assisting you in your life's journey.*

***Sincerely,  
Shelley Klammer***