

The following **Code of Conduct** has been established to ensure that all clients have a positive therapy experience. It is recommended that all clients become very familiar with the conduct expected of them. Failure to abide by this **Code of Conduct** could 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 waiting, the client may extend the session by paying an additional prorated session fee.

Arriving Late

The time schedule is strictly maintained and clients are asked to be prompt to their appointments. If a client arrives late to a session, only the remaining time of the hour 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 child care for their children during the session. Clients are not allowed to bring children to their therapy sessions as it is disruptive. If a client's child gets sick at the last minute, clients have the option of a phone session during the regular scheduled time, or have only one partner come to therapy.

24 Hour Notice for Cancellation

Clients are asked to give a 24 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 are asked to schedule enough time every week to complete all homework assignments. Clients are asked to bring a folder to organize handouts, quizzes and paperwork and a notebook to record homework assignments and take notes during the session.

Consistent Weekly Attendance

Clients are encouraged to come to sessions consistently, usually once a week. Sporadic attendance or missing several appointments in a row 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 during the session. Gender stereotyping is not allowed. Men should feel free to cry and express sadness and grief without apologizing or being judged “unmanly”. Women should feel free to express their anger without fear of being judged “unfeminine”.

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

The goal for each partner in Couples Therapy is to identify the negative patterns she or he is bringing to the relationship, to admit those patterns and to work to change them. Each partner is asked to do the following: Speak only for yourself, your partner can speak for herself or himself. Focus on yourself, take responsibility 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 in the relationship. Express your own feelings, opinions and ideas freely, you have a right to do so without apology and explanation.

Helen A. Rudinsky, MS

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 the 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 destructive patterns.

No Arguing Rule

Couples are asked to treat each other respectfully. Arguing is not allowed during couples sessions. Arguing rarely resolves a problem anyway. Instead we ask why is there 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 using "I" statements.

Couples Therapy conducted Separately and Individually

If a couple argues constantly and continually creates conflict with each other, therapy is 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.

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 another is not acceptable.

Clients are asked to take responsibility for their physical 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 any other acts of aggression.

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

I, _____ and _____ (client's 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 discourteous 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 _____

Consent Form 3-Code of Conduct