**Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist**

20 S. Santa Cruz Avenue #309, Los Gatos, CA 95030

(650) 641-0040

**INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS**

*Welcome to my practice*. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies, and what you can expect in our work together. Please read it carefully and make note of any questions that you might have so we can discuss them at our next meeting.

**ABOUT ME**

 I am a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (MFT #77747) in the State of California. I earned my Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, CA. As an intern, I trained at the Community Health Awareness Council in Mountain View, CA and at the Intensive Day Treatment program at Chamberlain’s Mental Health Services in Gilroy, CA working with adults, families, couples and children experiencing trauma and stress.

I provide psychotherapy to individuals, couples, families and groups, addressing a wide range of personal issues, such as depression, anxiety, life transitions, relationships, family dynamics, parenting, self-esteem, spirituality, trauma and grief. I welcome your questions at any time about my background, experience and professional orientation**.**

**MY APPROACH TO THERAPY**

My approach can be considered Holistic because it includes work on many levels: emotional, mental, physical and spiritual.  I believe that all of these aspects of life contribute to our happiness and wellbeing.

I also draw from a number of time-tested psychotherapeutic modalities.  My personal growth and professional studies are centerpieces of my life and practice, and I am continually updating my knowledge and experience in the field.

The success of psychotherapy depends upon a strong and trusting relationship between therapist and client. This relationship, and the moment-to-moment experience of each other, is a major focus of my work with each individual. To this important base, I bring a wide variety of therapeutic interventions and approaches. Currently, my work with clients is informed by the following theories and therapies, any number of which may come into play during a session:

* **Attachment Theory**  ::  exploring the nature of one’s relationship with early caregivers and how it shows up in our current ways of relating to others.
* **Psychodynamic Therapy** ::  providing insight into inner emotional conflicts that unconsciously power our self-defeating thoughts and behaviors.
* **Mindfulness**  ::  Mindfulness has been defined as “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”  The practice of mindfulness offers us a powerful antidote to the “trance” of habitual thoughts and feelings.
* **Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) Skills Training**  ::  DBT skills are an effective set of tools designed to help us develop mindfulness, emotional wisdom and improved interpersonal skills.  I teach these in group settings as well as to individual clients.
* **Emotion-Focused and Somatic Therapies**  ::  our body and mind are profoundly intertwined.  It makes sense, therefore, to access and interpret the messages our body has to share through its gestures, emotions and symptoms.
* **Journal-Writing and Creative Expressive Arts**  ::  Writing and art provide rich avenues into the deeper aspects of our psyche, and help us to contact thoughts and feelings we otherwise would not be aware of.

**BENEFITS AND RISKS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY**

 As with any powerful treatment, there are some risks as well as many benefits with therapy.

Participating in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including a better understanding of yourself, alleviation of painful feelings, improved interpersonal relationships, and, hopefully, the resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy. However, sometimes therapy can be uncomfortable, especially when painful feelings arise or when unpleasant aspects of your history or your present situation come up. There is a risk that clients will, for a time, have uncomfortable levels of sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, helplessness or other negative feelings. Clients may recall unpleasant memories. These feelings and memories may disrupt relationships and bother clients while at work or school.

For therapy to “work,” you must be an active participant, both in and outside of the therapy sessions. Between sessions, it is often helpful to think about what we discussed and what it means to you. I often recommend journaling as a way to reflect upon and integrate our work together.

There are no guarantees about what therapy will do for you. Sometimes participating in psychotherapy results in changes that you may not expect or that you did not originally intend. The counseling process can be difficult at times as we grapple with certain issues and feelings, but it can also be very rewarding. The process of making change can involve risks such as dealing with traumatic events, painful emotions, and the unpredictable impacts change can have on our lives.

Counseling is a process that takes time, self-assessment, commitment, and openness to change. I look forward to collaborating on this journey with you. You may ask questions about the process or end counseling at any time. We will regularly assess your goals and the effectiveness of our sessions. During our work together, you may be assessed for a diagnosis, which becomes a permanent part of your client record. Please review your rights under HIPAA regulations. You may ask questions at any time.

**WORKING TOGETHER**

Achieving a good fit between therapist and client is very important. If I conclude that we do not have a good fit, I will provide you with a referral to another therapist who may better serve your specific needs. Any of a number of reasons could lead me to this conclusion. These include, but are not limited to, my decision that your issues fall outside my scope of practice, that a private practice setting is not suitable for your issues, or that I am not prepared to make the kind of commitment I believe would be necessary to fully serve your needs. In most cases, I will make this decision within the first three sessions of our work and discuss it with you. I will also provide appropriate referrals.

**Client Expectations:** There are several things that you can do to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of your therapy process. By attending every session, arriving on time, and turning off all electronic equipment, you can remove delays and distractions that get in the way of in-session progress. You may make the most of your time between sessions by keeping a record of thoughts, dreams, and feelings pertaining to your therapy goals; clearing time in your schedule to process what you are learning; and enlisting the help of other people in your life who can support you in your growth efforts. You may ask me to recommend books, movies, articles, workshops, or other resources that will help your progress in therapy. While my short-term goal is to help you gain the self-awareness and to attain your goals in the context of a supportive, trustworthy relationship, my long-term goal is to work myself out of a job by helping you develop the relational, emotional, physical, spiritual, and vocational resources you need to pursue long-term health and growth without my assistance. The more actively you pursue your own growth goals in and between sessions, the better your progress will be.

**MEETINGS**

Sessions are typically scheduled to occur once a week, at the same time and day if possible. Some people who are in crisis or extreme distress may need more than one session per week, at least until the crisis passes. A session lasts 50 minutes, but some people prefer longer sessions, lasting 75 or 80 minutes. I will work with you to establish the frequency and length of sessions that meets your needs. The first several sessions are devoted to evaluation. During this time, we can both decide if I am the best person to help you achieve your goals.

**CONTACTING ME**

To contact me, please leave a message on my confidential voice mail at 650-641-0040. I make every effort to return your calls the same business day. If I am going to be unavailable for an extended period of time (such as vacations or professional conferences), I will provide advance notice and will leave the name and number of a trusted colleague that you can contact if necessary in my absence. If at any time you are experiencing an emergency and cannot contact me within a reasonable time, please go to the nearest hospital emergency room for assistance or call 911. Alternately, you can contact the community health center for your county: Santa Clara County: 855-278-4204, Santa Cruz County: 831-458-5300.

Public Encounters: To protect your confidentiality if we happen to see each other in public, I will follow your lead. If the situation would affect your confidentiality and you choose not to greet me, I will likewise conceal the fact that I know you and will certainly not be offended. If you choose to greet me, I will respond. If others ask how you know me, I will let you answer.

**FEES**

The customary fee for service is $125 per individual 50-minute therapy session, $190 for an 80-minute family/couples session, and $50 per group session.

Payment in full is due at the beginning of the session, and can be made by cash, credit card or check (*made payable to* *Ann Hawkins, MFT*).

Phone calls involving therapeutic material and that last for more than 10 minutes *may* incur extra charges. While I welcome emails alerting me to special issues you want to discuss in therapy, emails that require me to respond and take more than 10 minutes for me to respond to, may also incur extra charges.

If you should become involved in litigation that requires my participation, please expect to pay for services that may be required of me, even if I am compelled to testify by another party. In such cases, I charge $125 per hour for preparation, travel, and attendance at any such legal proceedings.

**CANCELLATION POLICY**

Your appointment time has been reserved for you. You are requested to provide as much advance notice as possible to cancel or reschedule an appointment. However, to avoid being charged for a missed appointment, simply call my voice mail at (650) 641-0040 before midnight the day before the appointment and leave a message to cancel or reschedule. If you forget your appointment or if your call to cancel or reschedule is after midnight the day before your appointment, you will be charged the entire fee for a missed session. Therefore, if you think you are getting sick the night before your appointment, be sure to call my voice mail and cancel. Do not use email or text message to cancel an appointment; call and leave a voicemail message.

**INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

 At this time, I am not on any insurance panels. You may still be able to obtain some reimbursement for my services, depending on your insurance coverage. Please plan to pay me at the time services are rendered and seek reimbursement for these services from your insurance company. Upon your request, I will be happy to provide an itemized receipt showing dates of service and charges to submit to your insurance provider.

**CONCLUSION OF THERAPY**

 It is often difficult to predict how long therapy will take. Usually therapy ends when you and I agree that you have made satisfactory progress in achieving your goals. Either you or I may bring up the subject of bringing our work to a close. Of course, you have the right to terminate therapy at any time, without explanation, and without further financial, legal, or moral obligations, other than those already incurred. However, it is a good idea for us to discuss plans for concluding your therapy well in advance so that you and I can plan to have a reasonable number of sessions to discuss your progress and wrap up any lose ends. The longer we have worked together, the more sessions we should plan to have to bring our work to a close. Ending our relationship well and on good terms will be beneficial for both of us.

**Premature End to Therapy** – If for any reason you decide to terminate therapy before you feel you have made satisfactory progress on your goals for therapy, please to talk with me about why you wish to end prematurely. If there is a problem, perhaps we can resolve it. If not, I will provide you with referrals to other therapists. Or, if financial or other difficulties have arisen, you and I may be able to find a solution that will allow you to continue therapy.

**MINORS**

 Minors are people under 18 years of age. Parents are often understandably interested in the content and progress of therapy for their minor child. Except in special circumstances, parents of a non-emancipated minor in treatment "hold the privilege." This means that in a legal proceeding, and regardless of the child's wishes, parents could permit the release of information about the child's treatment. Parents also decide whether to permit a therapist to communicate with a child's teacher, probation officer, physician, etc., should this become an issue. Both parents, including a non-custodial parent, have a legal right to information about their child's treatment in most circumstances. At the same time, a confidential relationship is an important element of effective treatment for a child, as well as for an adult. Legally and ethically, minors are entitled to a confidential relationship with their therapists.

**Confidentiality and Treating a Minor Client** – In order to balance the child's right to a confidential relationship with parents' need for information about the therapy, I, with your child's input and agreement, will periodically provide you with a verbal progress report and respond to general questions about treatment. In return, I ask that as a parent you give up your right to examine the treatment records of your minor child, I also ask you to refrain from questioning your child about the specifics of his or her therapy sessions. Please be assured that if issues arise in treatment that indicates your child's health or safety are seriously in question, I will contact you regarding such circumstances. In order for me to provide treatment to your minor child, you need to sign a form entitled Parental Consent for Treatment of a Minor, which restates the above-mentioned conditions.

**PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. These records include at the minimum identifying data, dates of services, types of services, fees, release of information forms, any written assessment or plan for intervention, summary reports, and/or testing reports and supporting data as may be appropriate. You are entitled to inspect your records with certain limitations. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or be upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to inspect your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. Alternatively, I will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice who can help you understand the content. You will be charged an appropriate fee for any materials and time spent in preparing information requests.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

 All information disclosed within sessions is held in strict confidence and I do not release any information to anyone without your written permission except in the following circumstances:

1. In the State of California, the law requires disclosure if I have reasonable suspicion or knowledge that a child (a person under the age of 18) or an elder (someone 65 years or older) or a dependent adult (someone with a physical or mental limitation that restricts his or her ability to carry out normal activities of daily living) is being abused or neglected. Abuse can be sexual, physical or emotional.
2. Disclosure may be required if I have reasonable cause to believe that you may be dangerous to yourself (actively suicidal) or that you are seriously threatening bodily harm to another. In either case, I will take steps to protect you or the other person. This may involve seeking hospitalization for you or contacting family members or others who can help provide protection for you. In the case of potential harm to others, this may involve notifying the potential victim, notifying the police, or seeking appropriate hospitalization for you.
3. Occasionally I seek consultation on a case from another professional. Although case details are discussed at such times, potentially identifying information is *not* shared. Furthermore, the consultant is also legally bound to keep all information confidential. Unless you object, I will not tell you about these case consultations unless I feel it is important to our work together.

**HAVING ANOTHER PERSON ATTEND A THERAPY SESSION**

Sometimes when working with an individual client, it seems appropriate to invite a spouse, parent, or significant other to attend one or more sessions to provide collateral information. Should this happen, the original person continues to be my client and not the person who is the guest. If you want another person to attend one of your therapy sessions, please discuss this with me first so that we can decide the purpose and goal of doing this.

**If you have any questions about any of the above provided information or any questions pertaining to issues not addressed here, please discuss these with me.**