

Child Therapy Agreement

Patient(s): _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

Therapist: _____

Prior to beginning treatment, it is important for you to understand Wake Kendall's approach to child therapy and agree to some guidelines about your child's confidentiality during the course of his/her treatment with me. This agreement emphasizes some key points contained in the Psychotherapist-Patient Services Agreement as well as including additional information.

Therapy is most effective when a trusting relationship exists between the therapist and the patient. Privacy is especially important in securing and maintaining that trust. Children often find it necessary to develop a "zone of privacy" so that they feel free to discuss personal matters with greater freedom. By signing this agreement, you are agreeing to respect your child's confidentiality with me.

If it is necessary to refer your child to another mental health professional with more specialized skills, I will share that information with you. I am also available to consult with your child's school regarding academic, social-emotional or behavioral issues on an as needed basis. I am unlikely, however, to share with you what your child has disclosed to me without your child's consent.

Over the course of therapy, parents often want to share with me information concerning their child. It is important for you to be aware that these communications, whether in person, via email, text or voicemail, may be shared with your child. Particularly with adolescents, transparency between the therapist and child is a critical element in maintaining a trusting relationship, and you should keep in mind that your conversations with me would likely be shared with your child.

If your child is an adolescent, it is possible that he/she will reveal sensitive information regarding sexual contact, alcohol and drug use, or other potentially problematic behaviors. Sometimes these behaviors are within the range of normal adolescent experimentation, but at other times they may require parental intervention. If I believe that your child is at clear risk of seriously harming him/herself or another, I will inform you.

One risk of child therapy involves disagreement among parents and/or disagreement between parents and therapist regarding the best interests of the child. If such disagreements occur, I will strive to listen carefully so that I can understand your perspectives and explain my perspective. We can resolve such disagreements or we can agree to disagree, so long as this enables your child's treatment to progress. Ultimately, you will decide whether therapy will continue. If either parent decides that therapy should end, I ask that you allow me the option of having three closing sessions with your child to appropriately end the treatment relationship.

Although my responsibility to your child may require my involvement in conflicts between the two of you, I need your agreement that my involvement will be strictly limited. This means, among other things, that you will treat anything that is said in session with me as confidential. Moreover, in the case that you are engaged in custody, visitation, or other legal proceedings, you agree that neither parent will involve me, or anything that we have discussed in sessions, in any legal proceeding between the two of you. When the parental relationship is precarious, it is even more important that therapy occurs in a safe, protected environment. That safety is particularly endangered when a child has to worry that what he/she says in therapy will be revealed in court and used against one of his/her parents. Therapy will only be effective if I can remain neutral in any parental/legal discord and maintain your child's confidentiality. When parents involve a therapist in any legal proceedings, it will likely cause irreparable damage to the therapeutic relationship and may cause the treatment to be terminated prematurely. Thus, this means that neither of you will ask me to testify in court, whether in person, or by affidavit.

Please note that the agreement we make will not prevent a judge from requiring my testimony. I will do my best to uphold our agreement, but if I am ordered by a judge to testify, then I will have to do so. If the court appoints a custody evaluator, guardian ad litem, or parenting coordinator, I will provide information as needed (if appropriate releases are signed or a court order is provided), but I will not make any recommendation about the final decision. Furthermore, if I am required to appear as a witness, the party responsible for my participation agrees to reimburse me at the rate of \$500 per hour for time spent traveling, preparing reports, testifying, being in attendance, and any other case-related costs. For more information about what types of information I am obligated to share, such as in cases of abuse or neglect, please refer to the Psychotherapist-Patient Agreement.

Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian