

Jim Matto-Shepard, Ph.D.

Licensed Psychologist (PSY15031)

1 Bodega Ave. #4, Petaluma CA 94952

(707) 762-1670

OFFICE POLICIES

Welcome. Please read the following policies. Your signature below signifies that you understand and agree with these policies, and freely consent to treatment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Legal and ethical codes require that information provided during psychotherapy be kept confidential except under the following circumstances:

- Release of Information: There may be circumstances in which it will be necessary or beneficial to release or exchange information about your treatment with other professionals such as your primary care physician, psychiatrist or another therapist. In these situations, I will ask that you sign a Release of Information form.

Legal Limitations to Confidentiality — I may disclose limited information to necessary people without your permission if:

- I have clear evidence that you are a serious danger to yourself or others.
- I learn of an incident of child or elder abuse by you or anyone else.
- There are some situations where the court can mandate that I release your records.
- Insurance Information: At your request I will give specific information to your insurance company or another third party payer so that you may receive reimbursement. This information may include dates of appointments, diagnosis, and a treatment summary. If your insurance company makes a request for more detailed information, I will consult with you before communicating with them.

FEES

My fee is \$200 per hour for each contracted hour. (\$300 for each ninety minute session.) Hours are 60 minutes.

Group therapy fees are \$40 for the mixed men and women's group, \$45 for the men's group and \$90 per couple for couples group. Please note that

you pay for your place in group and will be charged whether you are in attendance or not.

Your therapy session includes the business of therapy such as scheduling and payment. To maximize your time in therapy please write your check in advance.

Insurance Reimbursement: Payment for therapy is made at the time of your visit. If you would like to seek reimbursement from your insurance company I will give you a statement that will list your dates of service, the CPT codes and a required diagnosis every six weeks to two months. You will receive any reimbursement directly from your insurance company. Please note that I do not guarantee reimbursement and that your insurance company may not reimburse for sessions longer than 60 minutes.

SCHEDULING AND CANCELLATION POLICY

I require one week's notice to cancel a session without charge. However, if you cannot make your scheduled appointment, and we are able to reschedule your appointment during the same week, you will be charged only for the session that you attend. Please note that, while I make every effort to reschedule in emergency situations, it is often the case that there are no available times for rescheduling.

Late Cancellation or Missed Appointment Fee: If an emergency causes you to cancel a session with less than 24 hours notice you will be charged the full fee for the session. If you cancel with less than a week's notice but more than 24 hours before your scheduled appointment, (and we do not reschedule for the same week), you will be charged a cancellation fee of one half of my normal fee for your scheduled time (\$100 for sixty minutes, \$150 for ninety minutes, etc.). Please note that insurance companies do not pay for missed appointments.

PHONE CALLS

If you need to talk with me between scheduled sessions, you may leave me a message at any time at (707) 762-1670. If you need emergency assistance and cannot reach me call psych emergency services at 576-8181 or 911. I check for messages several times a day Monday through Thursday, and will usually call you back within a few hours. Friday, Saturday, Sunday and holidays I check my messages less frequently — at

least once a day. In emergencies I will get back to you as soon as possible. There is no charge for calls of less than 10 minutes. The charge for calls of 10 minutes or more is prorated based on my fee for a 60 minute session.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

I recommend no drug or alcohol use 24 hours prior to and after a session.

CONSENT TO TREATMENT

Initial Assessment: I believe that it is important to assess the fit between the client(s) and therapist. For this reason, I always view the first session or two as a period for initial assessment. Within our first two sessions I will discuss with you the approach that I believe will be effective in treating your issue and will give you an opportunity to choose your course of action.

Depending on your situation, I may suggest some combination of individual, couples and group therapy as each approach offers something different and they are complimentary. I may also refer you for mindfulness training, self-compassion training, psychiatric assessment or other adjunctive training.

Approach To Therapy: I have advanced training in and offer therapy for individuals, couples and groups. My style is interactive and relational. I actively work with clients to shift relationship patterns, recover emotions, de-armor the body, and form a more flexible identity. I believe that effective change involves the body, mind and emotions. To facilitate this, therapy often involves awareness practice (e.g., mindfulness) and other ongoing mind/body practices. In addition, I am trained in “Integrative Somatic Psychotherapy” and use body-oriented approaches as appropriate.

Treatment Planning: In the beginning and throughout our work together, I will collaborate with you to establish clear goals for the outcome of your therapy. We will develop a plan for reaching these goals. Over time, we will define specific areas of focus, identify particular skills and capacities which need to be developed and implement procedures that can help you develop them. As part of this, keep me informed about your experience in therapy. Please ask questions, express concerns and give me feedback on a regular basis.

Touch In Psychotherapy: My approach to therapy actively integrates the body with the mind and emotions. For some people, depending upon a variety of factors, I suggest body work or other practices that involve physical touch. When a psychotherapeutic process involves physical touch, I take special care to talk about it. Touch in psychotherapy is never sexual or about sex.

Effectiveness of Psychotherapy: The process of psychotherapy requires intention, effort and courage. Most people who participate in regular therapy benefit. But learning to relax reactive defenses and experience aspects of yourself that have atrophied is difficult work. Psychotherapy can involve experiencing uncomfortable feelings, engaging in difficult interactions, or being challenged to see the world in new and different ways. It is not uncommon for people to experience painful memories or be confronted with new images of self. Occasionally, in the process of working through, depression or anxiety will temporarily increase.

Sometimes it is useful to consider additional options for change such as psychotropic medication, spiritual endeavor or self-help groups (AA, etc.). I may suggest these or other procedures.

Termination of Therapy: You have the right to terminate treatment any time you wish. However, in some circumstances people feel that they want to stop coming to therapy when they are about to face something that is uncomfortable, yet potentially very fruitful. For this reason, I request at least one session to discuss termination under all circumstances.

THANK YOU, for trusting me to assist you in the resolution of your psychological issues.

I have read and understand the above policies and information, and freely give consent to treatment.

Signature_____ Date _____

Signature_____ Date_____