

Scott J. Romeika, Psy.D.

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Informed Consent for Treatment: Policies, Services, and Practice Information

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission except where disclosure is required by law.

WHEN DISCLOSURE IS REQUIRED OR MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW: Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required or may be required by law are:

- where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent, or elder abuse or neglect;
- where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled;
- when a client's family members communicate that the client presents a danger to others.

Disclosure may also be required pursuant to a legal proceeding by or against you. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by Dr. Romeika. In couples and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, even over a period of time, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members, unless otherwise agreed upon. Dr. Romeika will use his clinical judgment when revealing such information. Dr. Romeika will not release records to any outside party unless he is authorized to do so by all adult parties who were part of the family therapy, couples therapy, or other treatment that involved more than one adult client.

EMERGENCY: If there is an emergency during therapy, or in the future after termination, where Dr. Romeika becomes concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper care, he will do whatever he can within the limits of the law to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive the proper medical care. For this purpose, he may also contact the person whose name you have provided as emergency contacts.

HEALTH INSURANCE AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS: The practice accepts payments directly from clients only. We do not bill to or accept payment from third-party payors (health insurance carriers, HMOs, PPO, MCOs, or EAP). You may elect to seek reimbursement from third-party payors if you so choose. Please be aware that disclosure of confidential information may be required by your third-party payor in order to process claims. If you so instruct, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. The practice has no control over, or knowledge of, what insurance companies do with the information submitted or

who they permit access to it. Submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk to confidentiality, privacy, or the future capacity to obtain health or life insurance or certain kinds of employment.

LITIGATION LIMITATION: Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters which may be of a confidential nature, should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to, divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you nor your attorney(s), nor anyone else acting on your behalf will ask Dr. Romeika to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested unless otherwise agreed upon.

CONSULTATION: Dr. Romeika consults regularly with other professionals regarding his clients; however, each client's identifying information remains protected and anonymous, ensuring that your confidentiality is fully maintained. Consultation is a standard practice in healthcare and contributes to a high quality of care to which you are entitled.

EMAILS, CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS, AND FAXES: Electronic technology runs the inherent risk of being accessed by unauthorized people, thus compromising the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. Faxes can be sent erroneously to the wrong address. Emails, in particular, are vulnerable to unauthorized access since internet servers have access to all emails that go through them. It is important that you be aware that emails, faxes, and important texts are part of client records. Additionally, Dr. Romeika's email is not encrypted. Dr. Romeika takes all recommended precautions to minimize that risk; computers are equipped with a firewall, virus protection, and a password, and confidential information is backed up on a regular basis. Please notify Dr. Romeika if you decide to avoid or limit in any way the use of any or all communication devices, such as email, cell phone, or faxes. If you communicate confidential or private information via email, Dr. Romeika will assume that you have made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and will honor your desire to communicate on such matters via email.

RECORDS AND YOUR RIGHT TO REVIEW THEM: Both the law and the standards of the profession of clinical psychology require that Dr. Romeika keeps treatment records for at least seven (7) years. Unless otherwise agreed to be necessary, Dr. Romeika retains clinical records only as long as is mandated by law. If you have concerns regarding the treatment records, please discuss them with Dr. Romeika. As a client, you have the right to review or receive a summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when Dr. Romeika assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. In such a case, Dr. Romeika will provide the records to an appropriate and legitimate mental health professional of your choice. Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, and upon your request, Dr. Romeika will release information to any agency/person you specify unless Dr. Romeika assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. When more than one client is involved in treatment, such as in cases of couple and family therapy, Dr. Romeika will release records only with signed authorizations from all the adults (or all those who legally can authorize such a release) involved in the treatment.

TELEPHONE AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: If you need to contact Dr. Romeika between sessions, please leave a message at (267) 428-6988 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Dr. Romeika checks his messages intermittently during standard business hours only. If an emergency situation arises, indicate it clearly in your message and if you need to talk to someone right away call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. Please do not use email or faxes for emergencies, as these media are not checked on a regular basis.

PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT: Clients are expected to pay the standard fee of \$200.00 per hour (60 minutes) at the end of each session, by credit card or check, unless other arrangements have been agreed upon. Telephone conversations, site visits, writing and reading of reports, consultation with other professionals, release of information, reading records, longer sessions, travel time, etc. will be charged at the same rate, unless indicated and agreed upon otherwise. Please notify Dr. Romeika if any problems arise during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely, full payments. Clients who carry insurance should remember that professional services are rendered and charged to the clients and not to the insurance companies. Unless agreed upon differently, Dr. Romeika will provide you with a copy of your receipt on a monthly basis, which you can then submit to your insurance company for reimbursement if you so choose. As was indicated in the above section "Health Insurance and Confidentiality of Records," you must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk. Not all issues/conditions/problems which are dealt with in psychotherapy are reimbursed by insurance companies. It is your responsibility to verify the specifics of your coverage. If your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no written agreement on a payment plan, Dr. Romeika is authorized to use legal or other means (courts, collection agencies, etc.) to obtain payment.

MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION: All disputes arising out of, or in relation to, this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediation, before, and as a pre-condition of, the initiation of arbitration. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Dr. Romeika and the client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed upon. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association which are in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, Dr. Romeika is authorized to use legal means (court, collection agency, etc.) to obtain payment. The prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceedings shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum as and for attorney's fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum.

THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE: Participation in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improving interpersonal relationships and resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy. Working toward these benefits, however, requires deliberative effort on your part. Psychotherapy requires your very active

involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Dr. Romeika will ask for your feedback and views on your therapy, its progress, and other aspects of the therapy and will expect you to respond openly and honestly. Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful in dealing with a certain situation. During evaluation or therapy, remembering or talking about unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts can result in you experiencing considerable discomfort or strong feelings. Dr. Romeika may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations, which can cause you to feel upset, angry, sad, challenged, or disappointed. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to therapy in the first place, such as personal or interpersonal relationships, may result in changes that were not originally intended. Psychotherapy may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing, or relationships. Sometimes a decision that is positive for one family member is viewed quite negatively by another family member. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and potentially frustrating at times. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results. During the course of therapy, Dr. Romeika is likely to draw on various psychological approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and his assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include, but are not limited to, cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, existential, system/family, developmental, humanistic, or psychoeducational. Dr. Romeika provides neither custody evaluation recommendation nor medication or prescription recommendation nor legal advice, as these activities do not fall within his scope of practice.

TREATMENT PLANS: Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, Dr. Romeika will discuss with you his working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and his view of the possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your therapy, their possible risks, Dr. Romeika's expertise in employing them, or about the treatment plan, please ask. You also have the right to ask about other treatments for your condition and their risks and benefits.

TERMINATION: As set forth above, after the first several meetings, Dr. Romeika will assess if he can be of benefit to you. Dr. Romeika does not accept clients who, in his professional opinion, he cannot help. In such cases, he will provide referrals whom you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy Dr. Romeika assesses that he is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals or that you are non-compliant with treatment recommendations, he is obligated to discuss it with you and, if appropriate, to terminate treatment. In such a case, he would provide referrals for other practitioners that may be of help to you. If requested and authorized in writing, Dr. Romeika will talk to the healthcare practitioner of your choice in order to help with the transition. If, at any time, you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another therapist, Dr. Romeika will assist you with referrals, and, if he has your written consent, he will provide them with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate therapy at any time. If you choose to do so, and if appropriate, Dr. Romeika will offer to provide you with contact information of other qualified professionals.

DUAL RELATIONSHIPS: Not all dual or multiple relationships are unethical or avoidable. However, therapy never involves sexual or any other dual relationship that impairs objectivity, clinical judgment or can be exploitative in nature. Dr. Romeika will assess carefully before entering into non-exploitative dual relationships with clients. It is important to realize that in some communities (particularly small towns, military bases, university campus, etc.), multiple relationships are either unavoidable or expected. Dr. Romeika will never acknowledge working with anyone without written permission from the client. Some clients have chosen Dr. Romeika as their therapist because they knew him before they entered therapy with him, and/or are personally aware of his professional work and achievements. Nevertheless, Dr. Romeika will discuss with you the often-existing complexities, potential benefits, and difficulties that may be involved in dual or multiple relationships. Dual or multiple relationships can enhance trust and therapeutic effectiveness but can also detract from it, and often it is impossible to predict this ahead of time. It is your responsibility to advise Dr. Romeika if the dual or multiple relationship becomes uncomfortable for you in any way. Dr. Romeika will always listen carefully and respond to your feedback and will discontinue the dual relationship if he finds it interfering with the effectiveness of the therapy or your welfare and, of course, you can do the same at any time.

SOCIAL NETWORKING AND INTERNET SEARCHES: Dr. Romeika generally does not accept friend requests from current or former clients on social networking sites, such as Facebook, as it can potentially compromise privacy and confidentiality. For this same reason, clients should not communicate via chat or messaging on any interactive or social networking websites.

CANCELLATION: Since the scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of two (2) business days' notice is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless we reach a different agreement, the full fee will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions.

I have read the above **Informed Consent for Treatment: Policies, Services, and Practice Information** carefully. I understand them and agree to comply with them. If I have any questions or concerns about these policies or my ability to comply with them, I will address them with my therapist as soon as they arise.

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Therapist Signature: _____ Date: _____