

GENERAL INFORMATION & OFFICE POLICIES AGREEMENT FOR SERVICES PROVIDED BY ELINOR BAWNIK, LICENSED MFT

Elinor Bawnik is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She earned a master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Alliant International University in 2018 and a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel in 2014. She has been working in the field since 2015 and received her license in August 2021.

What is Marriage and Family Therapy?

Therapy provided by psychotherapists and healing arts practitioners trained to assess, diagnose and treat individuals, couples, families and groups to help those who are struggling achieve more satisfying and productive lives. LMFTs work in many different settings including private practice, treatment clinics, probation centers and schools, and they can specialize in working with depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, child and adolescent issues, marital and relationship issues, existential issues, eating disorders, severe mental illness and more. Requirements for licensure include a related doctoral or master's degree, and at least 3,000 hours of supervised experience. – California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists

I. Individual and Family Psychotherapy

The majority of those seeking therapy are at a low point in their life – or some part of their life, face distress and emotional pain. They range from seriously impaired to highly functional in some life areas. They seek therapy for the part of their life that is dysfunctional, wounded, hurting or debilitated. Issues that people bring to therapists are often enmeshed and complex. Therapy follows a medical model wherein the therapist makes a diagnosis and treats the client. Hopefully, the outcome is improvement in symptoms or further steps towards a life best lived.

Elinor uses a variety of theoretical approaches when providing psychotherapy & its related services. She will consult with you, the client, to develop a treatment plan that reflects your needs. Psychotherapeutic approaches to your problem are likely to vary over the course of treatment. They may include modalities that are behavioral (CBT, DBT, ACT), psychodynamic, family systems-oriented, and psycho-educational. The approach to treatment will be modified as your goals and needs change. Treatment planning will reflect Elinor's assessment of what will most benefit you and will be developed as part of a mutually agreed upon process with you at the onset of treatment, and as needed. Participation in counseling and therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improved interpersonal relationships and resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek consultation. Working towards these benefits requires effort on your part. Psychotherapy requires your very active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings and/or behavior. Elinor 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 in order to properly evaluate the efficacy of the approach(es) being utilized.

Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful in dealing with a certain situation. Talking about unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts, during evaluation or therapy, can result in considerable distress, discomfort or strong feelings of anger, sadness, worry, fear, anxiety, depression, insomnia, and other emotional responses. Elinor may challenge some of your

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assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations. This may also cause you to feel increased tension, anxiety, very upset, angry, depressed, disappointed, or challenged. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to therapy in the first place, such as personal relationships, may result in changes that were not originally intended and may result in a decision about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing or relationships. Sometimes a decision or change that is positive for one person is viewed quite negatively by others that are significant in the person's life. Change will sometimes be easy and rapid. More often, change will come slowly and even be frustrating, at times. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results.

Psychotherapy usually occurs in a face-to-face setting, although sessions can be scheduled via telephonic and/or video conferencing if mutually agreed upon by Elinor and her client. In these instances, a separate consent to participate in "telemedicine" must be completed. Email contact may occasionally occur, but not in lieu of direct contact with Elinor. Face to face appointments take place in Elinor's office.

II. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is maintained unless 1) you (client) authorize, with your signature, a release of information, and/or, 2) you (client) present a physical danger to self, and/or, 3) treatment is being acknowledged to a referring professional person or agency, and/or, 4) you (client) default on your account, and/or 5) your (client) health plan or organization (e.g. employer), requires information to authorize or pay for services rendered, and/or 6) you present a danger to others, and/or, 7) child, dependent, or elder abuse or neglect is suspected.

Some of the instances where disclosure is required by law are: when 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. Disclosure may be required pursuant to a legal proceeding. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy or coaching records and or testimony by Elinor. In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. Elinor will use her professional judgment when revealing such information. Elinor will not release records to any outside party unless she is authorized to do so by all adult family members who were part of the treatment. For psychotherapy for minors, parents/guardians must understand and agree that the details of what is discussed in sessions, necessarily, must remain confidential. However, parents/guardians can expect to be kept up to date on their child's progress in treatment and will be immediately notified if any serious safety concerns about their child arise, including suicidality. Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO, PPO, MCO, EAP in order to process your claims. Elinor has no control or knowledge over what insurance companies do with the information she submits or who has access to that information. You must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk to confidentiality, privacy or to future capacity to obtain health or life insurance. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is entered into insurance companies' computers and may also be reported to, congress approved, National Medical Data Bank. Accessibility to companies' computers or the Data Bank database is always in question as computers are inherently vulnerable to break-ins and unauthorized access. Medical data has been reported to be sold, stolen and accessed by enforcement agencies, placing you in a vulnerable position.

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Due to the nature of therapy, and the fact that litigation often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters which may be of a confidential nature, it is agreed that should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you (the client) nor your attorney, nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on Elinor to testify in court or any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the records be requested.

Elinor consults regularly with other professionals regarding her clients. Your name or other identifying information is never mentioned. Your identity remains completely anonymous, and confidentiality is fully maintained. Both the law and professional standards require that Elinor keep appropriate records of your work together. As the 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 Elinor assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. In such a case, Elinor will provide the records to an appropriate and legitimate professional of your choice. Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, upon your request, Elinor will release information to any agency or person you specify unless she assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way.

III. Telephone and Emergency Procedures

If you need to contact Elinor between appointments, please leave a message on the voicemail (424-431-1122). Your call will be returned during usual business hours. Elinor will check her voicemail daily, unless it is a holiday, or she is out of town. If you have an emergency or need to talk to someone right away, you can call the Police (911), the crisis line (310-391-1253 or 1-877-727-4747) or the Stewart and Lynda Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital UCLA (310-825-9111).

IV: Payments

Clients are expected to pay for therapy at the end of each session or meeting unless some other arrangement was made with Elinor. Please notify Elinor if any problem arises during the course of your work with her regarding your ability to make timely payments.

V: Professional Fees

Fees vary according to the type and length of service provided. Some examples of the fees are below:

- Initial meeting – initial sessions are \$200 for individual and \$250 for couple and family sessions (session is generally 50-75 minutes and includes initial paperwork review, treatment plans, assessments, and any additional paperwork)
- Individual Counseling and Therapy - sessions are \$200 (session is generally 50 minutes)
- Couple/Family Therapy - appointment fee for a 50-minute meeting is \$250-300 (sessions are generally 50-75 min and prorated accordingly)

*Note: Fee increases are scheduled on an annual basis. A fee increase may be up to a maximum of 10% of the total fee paid. If you are meeting with Elinor on an ongoing basis, you will be given a 30-day notice prior to such an increase. If you are a returning client, you will be charged the current fee unless other arrangements have been made with Elinor.

VI: Treatment Plans

Within a reasonable period of time after the initial session or meeting, Elinor will discuss with you (client) her working understanding of the problem or situation, treatment or actions

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plans, objectives, and her view of possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your work with Elinor, their possible risks or benefits, Elinor's expertise in employing them, please ask and you will be answered fully. If you could benefit from any treatment Elinor does not provide, she has an ethical obligation to assist you in obtaining those treatments.

VII: Termination

As set forth above, Elinor will assess if she can be of benefit to you. Elinor will, if she doesn't think she can assist you, give you a number of referrals that you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy, coaching or any service provided by Elinor assesses that she is not effective in helping you resolve your concerns or reach the goals set, she is obligated to discuss it with you and, if appropriate, to terminate treatment. In such a case, she would give you a number of referrals that may be of help to you. If you request or authorize it in writing, Elinor will talk to the professional 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 professional, Elinor will assist you in finding someone qualified, and if she has your written consent, she will provide that professional with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate services at any time. If you choose to terminate your relationship with Elinor prior to accomplishing your goals, Elinor will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

VIII: Cancellations

Since scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24-hour notice is required for rescheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless we reach a different agreement, the full fee will be charged to you for time missed without such notification. If I am able to reschedule you for another time within that week, then I will not be charged for the cancelled session. If you cancel the day of the appointment, there will be a charge for the session even if you reschedule for another time that week. You are responsible for coming to your session on time. If you are late, your appointment will still need to end on time. Regularly kept appointments are essential to establishing and maintaining rapport and to helping you achieve the best treatment outcomes. With couples, both partners must be present for the session to occur; a no-show or late cancellation by one member will be billed in full, but the single member will not be seen alone as this can be counterproductive to trust and continuity.

It is my practice to charge my hourly fee on a prorated basis for other professional services - e.g., report writing, telephone conversations that are longer than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings or consultation which you have requested or authorized, preparation of records, treatment summaries, and any time required to prepare and perform other services that you may request.

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE GENERAL INFORMATION & POLICIES CAREFULLY. I UNDERSTAND THEM AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THEM. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC AND NON-PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC SERVICES. I AM ENGAGING ELINOR BAWNIK, LICENSED MFT, FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES:

Client Name (Print and Sign) and Date _____

Client initials: _____

Client #2 Name (Print and Sign) and Date _____

Client initials: _____