



# INFORMED CONSENT

## **LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Contents of all therapy sessions are considered to be confidential. Both verbal information and written records about a client cannot be shared with another party without the written consent of the client or the client's legal guardian. Noted exceptions are as follows:

### **Duty to Warn and Protect**

When a client discloses intentions or a plan to harm another person, the mental health professional is required to warn the intended victim and report this information to legal authorities. In cases in which the client discloses or implies a plan for suicide, the health-care professional must make reasonable attempts to protect the client and may or may not notify legal authorities and/or the family of the client.

### **Abuse of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Dependent Adults and Elderly)**

If a client states or suggests that he or she is abusing a child (or vulnerable adult) or has recently abused a child (or vulnerable adult), or a child (or vulnerable adult) is in danger of abuse, the mental health professional is required to report this information to the appropriate social service and/or legal authorities.

**CONTACT & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** If you need to contact Cerina Griffin between sessions, please leave a message on her confidential voice mailbox (949) 870-8098 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Cerina checks her messages a few times a day Monday through Friday, unless she is out of town. If an emergency situation arises, please indicate it clearly in your message. If you need to talk to someone right away in case of emergency, please dial 911.

Please do not e-mail Cerina content related to your therapy sessions, as e-mail is not completely secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate by e-mail, be aware that all e-mails are retained in the logs of both (client and therapist) Internet service providers. You should also know any e-mails with therapeutic content received from you will become part of your legal record. If you are comfortable, text or e-mail may be used to arrange or modify appointments. Please no texting outside of appointment modification.

**PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT:** Clients are expected to pay the fee of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per 50-minute therapy session. Please notify Cerina if any problem arises during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. Clients who carry insurance should remember that professional services are rendered and charged to the clients and not to the insurance company. Upon specific request, Cerina 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. Please be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk. Not all issues/conditions/problems, which are the focus of psychotherapy, are reimbursed by insurance companies. It is your responsibility to verify the specifics of your coverage.

**MEDIATION & 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 Cerina Griffin and client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in Irvine, CA 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, Cerina Griffin can use legal means (court, collection agency, etc.) to obtain payment. The prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceeding shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum as and for attorneys' fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum.

**THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION:** 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 effort on your part. Psychotherapy requires your very active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings and/or behavior. 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 of anger, sadness, worry, fear, etc., or experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. Cerina may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations in which can cause you to feel very upset, angry, depressed, 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 can be viewed quite negatively by another family member. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and even frustrating. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results. During the course of therapy, Cerina Griffin is likely to draw on various psychological approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and her assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, existential, system/family, developmental (adult, child, family), or psycho-educational.

**RECORD KEEPING:** Your records are maintained in a web-based system. What this means is your records are stored online in a secure, encrypted, HIPAA compliant system that is backed up to ensure records are not lost due to technical problems. This system provides certain benefits to client including credit card payment, online scheduling, and automated text and/or e-mail reminders. Please ask any questions or report any concerns you have regarding online record keeping. As with any record keeping method, every foreseeable precaution has been taken to protect privacy, but there are no guarantees.

**TERMINATION:** Cerina Griffin does not accept clients who, in her opinion, she cannot help. In such a case, she will give you a number of referrals that you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy Cerina assesses that she is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals 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. You have the right to terminate therapy at any time. If you choose to do so, Cerina may offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer at your request.

**DUAL RELATIONSHIPS:** Therapy never involves sexual or business relationships or any other dual relationship that impairs Cerina's objectivity, clinical judgment, and therapeutic effectiveness or can be exploitative in nature.

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY:** Cerina does not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). Adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet for us to talk about.

**Fanning/Following**

You may “like” Cerina’s Facebook business page. However, the information on her facebook page is often on her website as well. If you “like” Cerina’s page, you are choosing to reveal that you are connected to her in some way. Cerina’s business page exists to be a forum of information and inspiration. Cerina will not engage in conversations with you on that page. However, if you find it helpful then that is great! You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow Cerina’s business pages involving business blogs or her newsletter. Note that she will not follow you back. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with her, please bring them into your sessions where you can view and explore them together, during the therapy hour.

**CANCELLATION OF APPOINTMENTS:**

The scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for us. To avoid being charged for a missed session, please inform me of your cancellation at least 48 hours in advance or you will be financially responsible to pay your full fee for that session. However, you will not be financially responsible for that session if we are able to reschedule in the same week for a mutually agreed upon time. No-shows will always incur a charge regardless of re-scheduling.

I acknowledge receipt of this notice.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Guardian or Parent Signature (if client is under 18)

\*\*Client is eligible to sign for own consent if over age 12 and wishes to do so

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today’s Date

Mailing Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

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Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth