MANHAS COUNSELING COLLECTIVE, LLC

Simran K. Manhas, MS, LMHC
Licensed Mental Health Counselor: #LH61334678
www.manhascounselingcollective.com
contact@manhascounselingcollective.com
(425) 224- 3907

OFFICE POLICIES, DISCLOSURE, & INFORMED CONSENT FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY TREATMENT

Welcome to Manhas Counseling Collective, LLC! This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. The purpose of this treatment policy and disclosure statement is to ensure that we have a clear understanding of our work together and of our professional relationship. Washington State law requires all licensed counselors/therapists to provide a disclosure statement to their clients. Feel free to discuss any of this with us.

When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us. Please read and indicate you have reviewed this information and agree to it by filling out the signature and checkbox at the end of this document. You are welcome to ask any questions or express concerns about this document, about our work together, or about our professional relationship, at any time. As an individual, you have the right to refuse any treatment you do not want, and the right to choose a practitioner and treatment modality which best suits your needs.

QUALIFICATIONS

I am licensed in the state of Washington as a Mental Health Counselor (#: LH 61334678). I obtained my degree in 2018 in Master of Science in Marriage and Family Counseling from Walden University. During my studies and internship, I received training in psychotherapy and counseling with children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families. My approaches are evidence-based and include but is not limited to: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Attachment Based Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD, various couple & family systems approaches, Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT), Inner Family Systems (IFS), Narrative Therapy, and Relational psychotherapy. Other than private practice, I have had experience working in both inpatient and outpatient settings, community mental health agencies, schools, and hospitals as a clinical provider and in

outpatient clinic management. I prefer to work from an integrative perspective, as no one single theory can account for the infinite variety of human presentations. I strongly believe in the importance of humanity, compassion, and am against racism or oppression in my work. This may mean that in our work we discuss liberation, power, privilege and the history of the United States and the community at large and how it relates to you as well as to the present. I will also regularly acknowledge and am aware of the privilege and power I hold as a therapist, and regularly engage in power-sharing in our sessions to ensure a more egalitarian environment and better outcomes.

THE PROFESSIONAL CLIENT-THERAPIST RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between a licensed therapist and a client is a professional one, in which the therapist assists the client in exploring and resolving difficult life issues. Some clients may need only a few counseling sessions to achieve their personal goals; others may require months or even years of counseling. While the therapist and client have distinct roles, I view the professional counseling relationship as collaborative, not hierarchical. As the client, you have control over how long therapy will continue. You may end our counseling relationship at any time and for any reason, without giving notice. You may seek a second opinion from another mental health practitioner. However, if you decide to end counseling, I recommend scheduling one final meeting to discuss termination, as well as your progress toward your counseling goals.

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF THERAPY

Therapy has the potential to help people grow, understand themselves better, and live more satisfying lives. However, these results are not guaranteed. I ask that you be willing to participate fully in the process of your treatment. In my experience, progress and growth increase with the client's willingness to be open, curious, and honest with their dedication to achieving their treatment goals. It is important to note that therapy has potential risks. Powerful emotions, aspects of your personality, your past, your goals, and your relationships, may come up during sessions; this can sometimes lead to confusion, pain, fear, or emotional turmoil. However, this is generally a normal part of the path toward self-understanding and eventually leads to greater clarity and acceptance of who you are. As you explore old patterns of thinking and behaving, you may find that some of your relationships change. Some of this may be welcomed by others and some not. An important part of the therapist's role is to

provide a safe space for this process to unfold. Throughout treatment, we will discuss your treatment plan on an ongoing basis, and I encourage you to communicate thoughts, desires, and concerns about our work together at any time.

BOUNDARIES OF THE COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP

Our work together is limited to the scheduled sessions we have together. This usually occurs within our telehealth session, over the phone or via messaging feature on the EHR portal. Sessions usually are limited to 53 minutes in length. It is important to note that although very personal and intimate issues can come up in our sessions, we continue to have a professional relationship, not a personal one. Our contact will be limited to only the paid sessions we have together. I am not able to attend social engagements, accept gifts, or relate to clients in any way outside our therapy sessions. My goal is for our therapy to be helpful to you, and this can best be done when our relationship stays strictly professional and focuses on your concerns and experiences. If we see each other accidentally outside of the therapy session, I will not acknowledge you first. Your privacy and confidentiality are of utmost importance to me, and I do not wish to jeopardize your privacy. However, if you acknowledge me first, I will be more than happy to speak briefly with you but feel it appropriate not to engage in any lengthy discussions in public or outside of our therapy session.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your participation in therapy, the content of our sessions, and any information you provide to me is protected by legal confidentiality. Some exceptions to confidentiality are the following situations in which I may choose to, or be required to, disclose this information:

• If you give me written consent (Release of Information form) to have the information released to another party.

• Families, Couples, and Group work: when more than one person is the client, we will seek agreement among parties regarding each individual's right to confidentiality within and outside of sessions.

• In the case of your death or disability I may disclose information to your personal representative.

• If you waive confidentiality by bringing legal action against me.

• In response to a valid subpoena from a court or from the secretary of the Washington State Department of Health for records related to a complaint, report, or investigation.

• If I reasonably believe that disclosure of confidential information will avoid or minimize an imminent danger to your health or safety or the health or safety of any other person.

• If, without prior written agreement, no payment for services has been received after 90 days, the account name and amount may be submitted to a collection agency.

As a mandated reporter, I am required by law to disclose certain confidential information including suspected abuse or neglect of children under RCW 26.44, suspected abuse, or neglect of vulnerable adults under RCW 74.34, or as otherwise required in proceedings under RCW 71.05. If you have any questions or concerns related to this, please speak with me.

CONSULTATIONS

I regularly consult with other professionals regarding clients with whom I am working. This allows me to serve you better, gaining other perspectives and ideas that may help you reach your goals. I may disclose information about you in consultation with colleagues, in which case I will limit the information I disclose to the minimum amount necessary. I have an agreement with a colleague to access my client files to make appropriate notification and referrals in case I am temporarily or permanently incapacitated. If you do not consent to my colleague accessing your file in case of my incapacity, please let me know so that I may make alternative arrangements.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

I am a member of the Washington Mental Health Counselors Association. I adhere to all applicable legal and ethical standards. If you have a concern or complaint about your treatment, please talk to me about it, preferably in session. I want to encourage you to advocate for yourself at all times, even if this means you disagree with me. I take your opinion very seriously, and I will address your complaint with respect. You also have the right to register a complaint with:

Health Systems Quality Assurance Complaint Intake

Post Office Box 47857

Olympia, WA 98504-7857

Phone: 360-236-4700 E-mail: HSQAComplaintIntake@doh.wa.gov

A copy of the acts of unprofessional conduct can be found in RCW 18.130.180.

EVALUATION AND THE PROCESS OF THERAPY

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and what your treatment plan might look like. Session cadence and pacing will be set at the initial intake and at that pacing and can be reassessed by the client-therapist relationship. Appointments are arranged per month given provider availability. Throughout the course of treatment, we will both collaborate on your treatment plan. My evaluations may include an assessment that results in a diagnosis. This diagnosis is used for treatment planning only/3rd party billing your insurance plan, if applicable. I may also use tests and evaluations screeners as seen on your intake forms facilitated also by the electronic health record (EHR) platform used to assess and monitor your symptoms and needs, if necessary, and will discuss with you prior to the assessment as we develop your treatment plan and during our time together. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so it is important to be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions or concerns about my procedures, I encourage you to discuss them with me whenever they arise. You can, at any time, refuse services or modality changes, and I will advise you of pros and cons of your therapeutic options. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

MEETINGS, CANCELLATIONS, AND NO-SHOWS

Manhas Counseling Collective, LLC normally schedules one 53-minute session per week at a mutually agreeable time, although the frequency may vary depending on need and current circumstances. (Note: we strongly recommend weekly sessions during the initial phase of work on your presenting concerns; bi-weekly or monthly sessions may be more appropriate during

maintenance and termination phases of therapy).

We use Therapy Notes that (with your consent) will send you a confirmation of your appointment date and time, as well as a reminder 48 hours before your appointment. We ask that you please read these emails and ensure that we have the correct time booked, and that you will be able to attend this appointment.

When you make an appointment with a therapist, you reserve that time for yourself. Please know that if you are late for your session, the session will end on time. A commitment to our time together is essential for meeting your counseling goals. To ensure a beneficial experience, we kindly ask that you familiarize yourself with our cancellation policy below.

Please note: this cancellation policy applies to all clients. Those who are private pay or with commercial insurance will need to adhere to all guidelines below. The fee to the 3-week window to reschedule for missed appointments, cancelled appointments, no shows, and/or late cancellations which is only waived for those clients carrying state health insurance due to state mandate for in network providers under Manhas Counseling Collective, LLC. Due to these considerations, clients with state insurance who miss appointments (1 or more consecutive appointments) with your therapist will be redirected to another cadence of pacing for sessions per therapist's discretion. The therapist will discuss this redirection with the client and reason behind the clinical significance for this change per client's reengagement into therapy and/or at the next attended session.

Missed Appointments: Missed appointments should be rescheduled within the week before, during, or after your absence, giving you a generous three-week window to make arrangements.

Waived Session Fees: We appreciate that life can be unpredictable. That's why we offer the flexibility of waiving session fees for up to two missed appointments per year. The count begins with your very first session. If you want to utilize a waived fee, email or message in the EHR to the billing department at MCC and we will review and confirm or deny based on past missed appointments that may have already occurred.

Cancellation Fees/Late Cancellation Fees: After you have utilized your two waived session fees, any subsequent missed appointments not rescheduled within the three-week window will result in a cancellation fee equal to your session rate.

Staying Connected: If you cannot attend a scheduled session, we encourage you to stay in touch. You have a couple of options: 1) Contact your therapist before the next scheduled appointment to let us know you intend to maintain your current schedule, or 2) Utilize the online scheduler to reschedule the missed appointment.

Our Commitment to You: We value your ongoing commitment to therapy. If your therapist hasn't heard from you or seen a rescheduled appointment by the time of your next session, we will check in on your well-being. Rest assured; your appointment time will never be forfeited due to absences unless we have not heard from you. We will assume you are not interested in pursuing additional treatment with us after one to two no-shows and/or no communication between said missed sessions.

Travel time: Please notify your therapist as soon as possible of any travel time that will prevent you from attending sessions so that the therapist may accommodate others on their schedule. If you will be away for 4 or more weeks, we will not be able to hold your regular time but will work to find a spot for you in the provider's schedule when you return.

No-shows: If you do not show or call to your session, your therapist will reach out to you via your preferred contact method to check on your general well-being (and may follow up with any safety procedures as is appropriate). In non-crisis situations, we will assume you are not interested in pursuing additional treatment with us after one to two no-shows and/or no communication between said missed sessions.

You will not be charged for any sessions we cancel. Your therapist will do my best to notify you well in advance about upcoming vacation weeks, or any need to change or cancel an appointment.

PROFESSIONAL FEES, BILLING, AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

Unless applying insurance coverage, Simran's fee is $180 per 53-minute session for individuals and $220 per 53-minute session for couples unless otherwise discussed. Sessions exceeding 15 minutes past the end of the session will be charged $80 per 30 minutes. We rarely meet with clients via phone yet if requested, phone calls or administrative tasks that go over 15 minutes will be billed prorated at 15-minute increments of the rate of $40. These invoices will be labeled as "Case Management" due to the task requested and clinical consideration it requires.

Some insurance plans support these needs as a case management claim - it is the client's responsibility to check in with their insurance on this possibility and if not, are still responsible for the services rendered. Manhas Counseling Collective accepts credit cards, debit cards, Health Savings Account cards, or check [contact us for more information on this payment method]. Any returned checks will be charged a $25 fee. If you are using a credit card, our preferred method of accepting payments is via Therapy Notes database as it is a more secure and confidential platform designed for therapists. **We are unable to let clients carry a balance of more than two sessions. If your card on file is not updated by the next appointment, your future sessions will be cancelled until this is completed at your earliest convenience**. Please note: if the billing department makes two engagements related to your expired/declined card and it is not completed by the second engagement to you, a monthly fee will be accrued at the rate of $25 and appointments cannot be scheduled until the balance is paid. This service may send receipts or records on bank or credit card statements which include our business name. If any of these receipts are viewed by an unauthorized party, your privacy may be at risk. Please consider who has access to these records.

Manhas Counseling Collective revisits our fee structure annually, and fees may increase periodically and are subject to change with two-month prior notification. We are happy to provide monthly superbills to be submitted to insurance companies for reimbursement.

In addition to sessions, we charge our fee for other professional services you may need on a prorated basis. **Phone calls and/or other related administrative needs as described here) that go over 15 minutes will be billed prorated at 30-minute increments of the rate of $40. Those with state health insurance, please check in for this level of support with us prior to intake.** These may include case management (consulting with other community providers, providing resources to clients and follow-up, clinical content presented to provider between sessions for provider to review, etc), report or letter writing, attendance at meetings you have authorized with other professionals, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of us. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require your therapist's participation, you will be expected to pay for their professional time, even if the therapist is called to testify by another party. These invoices will be labeled as "Case Management" due to the task requested and clinical consideration it requires. *Some insurance plans support these needs as a case management claim - it is the client's responsibility to check in with their insurance on this possibility and if not, are still responsible for the services rendered*.

We are unable to let clients carry a balance of more than two sessions and/or if your card on file is not updated by next seen appointment; **there will be an accrual rate of $25 per month if your card is not updated.** If you are unable to pay this balance, we will discuss strategies to avoid building up more debt, and whether it makes sense to pause your treatment. Please inform us if problems arise during our treatment that might impact your ability to make timely payments as we may negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan. Please note: if the billing department makes two engagements related to your expired/declined card and it is not completed by the second engagement to you, a monthly fee will be accrued at the rate of $25 and appointments cannot be scheduled until the balance is paid. *Billing questions, concerns, or requests for payment options can be directed to* via the platform messaging portal or calling Kari at (253) 753-7314. Any assistance requested related to insurance or billing that is sent to a provider will be charged as "case management" and be billed prorated at 15-minute increments of the rate of $40.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, we reserve the right to obtain legal means to secure payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through the small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information we release regarding a client's treatment is the client's name, the nature of services provided, last known address, and the amount due. If the cost of therapy becomes prohibitive to receiving services, please let us know and we will provide you with reasonable alternatives.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health benefits policy or insurance plan, it will normally provide some coverage for mental health treatment.

Manhas Counseling Collective currently participates in the following insurance networks: *Aetna, Anthem, Blue Cross, Blue Shield, BlueCross and BlueShield, Cigna and Evernorth, First Choice Health (FCH), Kaiser PPO, Kaiser (Out-of-Network), Lifewise, Medicaid, Meritain Health, Molina Healthcare, Optum, Premera Blue Cross, Regence, United Medical Resources, UnitedHealthcare UHC/UBH*. **We do not accept EAP plans [or "authorization codes"] through insurance companies and/or employers**. If your plan covers out-of-network mental health services, we can provide you with a monthly billing statement (often known as a

"superbill") to submit for reimbursement to your insurance company. Please note that your insurance may decline reimbursing you for services. Payment must be provided to us directly at the time of service.

We will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, it is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. Carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. You may also see the "***Out of Network Benefits Information***" document on our website for more guidance.

Please also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize us to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes we have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, Manhas Counseling Collective has no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. We will provide you with a copy of any report we submit if you request it. We also will discuss the diagnosis with you before we create your first invoice to submit to your insurance plan, so that you may have informed consent about what will be on your health record.

Once we have all the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available, and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end our sessions. You always have the right to pay for our services yourself to avoid the problems described above.

If you choose to use a health savings account or flexible savings account, your payment may be approved initially but could later be denied. Please know that you are responsible for full payment in this situation.

RESPONSE TIME

For small administrative matters, such as confirming or changing appointment times, you can contact us via confidential phone number at (425) 224 – 3907, email, or via messaging system

on Therapy Notes, our electronic health record (EHR) portal. Messages received on off days, or received on business days after 6 pm, will generally be returned within two business days, **with the exception of weekends and holidays**. Your therapist will generally return your call/message within 24 hours, but at times there may be a longer delay. If your therapist is planning on being out of the office, we will inform you in advance. Phone calls that go over 15 minutes will be billed prorated at 30-minute increments of the rate of $40.

EMERGENCIES

If an emergency involves imminent risk to yourself or to someone else, call 9-1-1 immediately. In such situations, you may also go to the nearest hospital Emergency Room or call the Crisis Connections crisis line at (866) 427-4747.

TECHNOLOGY & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

To ensure privacy and security, Manhas Counseling Collective will utilize encryption, firewalls and secure passwords in all forms of communication and record storage. We will only meet via telehealth with your permission (verbally, in our initial consultation, and written, as signed below). When meeting via video, I will confirm your location and identity with each session. Please note that technology failures may occur, including lapse in sound or poor video quality. We will address these as they arise.

As mentioned, your records will be stored via electronic health record system (EHR) called Therapy Notes. There are some inherent limitations to confidentiality when using electronic records and transmissions. In the off chance that there is unauthorized access or a security breach of your confidential information, we will immediately perform a risk analysis, inform you if it is likely your information was disclosed, inform you as to the nature of the disclosure, and make an appropriate report to authorities. We will perform a risk analysis and risk management assessment and follow up with you as needed regarding results and any remediations that will be made.

Although email and text messaging are immediate and convenient communication methods, they are unfortunately not completely secure or confidential. Unencrypted emails and texts are vulnerable due to servers or communication companies may have unlimited and direct access to the messages travelling through them. Additionally, people with access to your computer, phone, and/or other devices may also have access to your email and/or text messages. *Please*

take a moment to contemplate the risks involved if any of these people were to read the messages we exchange with each other.

Therapy Notes platform is the most private and secure way for us to communicate, which may be especially important if we are discussing issues related to your treatment that go beyond scheduling and logistics. If you choose to communicate with your therapist by email or messaging system, be aware that any emails we receive from you and any responses that we send to you become a part of your health record.

We take privacy and confidentiality very seriously and am ethically bound to protect your medical information. However, we also recognize that clients do have the right to request unencrypted emails and texts. Please let us know if you would like to request this.

Our sessions will be held via Therapy Notes secure online video platform. You can send digital documents via Therapy Notes secure software.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Professional ethics standards do not permit our therapists to communicate with clients via personal social media. Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, we do not accept friend requests or direct messages from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc). We believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when you meet with your therapist so it can be discussed further. You may benefit from following Manhas Counseling Collective on our professional social media accounts as we aim to share information helpful to all our clients. Please feel free to follow my professional accounts.

Search Engines: Manhas Counseling Collective will not look up your information on any search engines.

Any technology we use has third-party members who are supporting the software needed to run various programs (engineers, technicians, administrators and more who maintain the software). This means there is always a risk of a third-party person accessing our information. If you use your work phone or computer, or any sort of shared phone or computer, for

communication with us, your work can then access that information.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of our profession require that we keep treatment records. Your records will be stored in a “cloud” through Therapy Notes platform. We have signed a HIPAA Business Associate Agreement with this company, and they are obligated by federal law to protect these records from unauthorized use or disclosure. We also follow strict security procedures in maintaining your security and privacy, including utilizing firewalls, malware software, complex passwords and disk encryption on any devices upon which your information is stored. Even with all this in place, security cannot be guaranteed.

You are entitled to receive a copy of these records at any time. If we believe that seeing your records would be harmful to you in some way, your therapist will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice should you need us to coordinate your care, or if you begin services with a different therapist. With any disclosure, we aim to disclose the lease amount of information possible to achieve the desired purpose.

You must make the request in writing; Manhas Counseling Collective will respond to you within 5 working days and we will provide copies of your records within 15 days. You will be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent preparing information requests, and if you request copies of your file, we will charge you not more than $.25 for each page.

Typically, a copy of your records will be provided, or, if it is deemed more appropriate, a summary of your records can be prepared for you. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents.

By law, your records will be kept for 7 years following termination of therapy. After 7 years, they will be destroyed in a manner that preserves your confidentiality.

TERMINATION

Therapy may be terminated by you at any time. It is generally more constructive and useful

when at least one week's notice (or more) is given, so that a final session can be scheduled to explore the reasons for ending and to summarize our treatment together, as well as to provide referrals to any other appropriate services. If, without having made prior arrangements, your therapist or the billing office has not heard from you in 30 days, we will assume that you would like us to terminate our current episode of care and close your active clinical file. In such cases, we may re-open the file and initiate a new episode of care once we meet in session again.

MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS

Your rights include freedom from discrimination, safety, a collaborative relationship, the right to discontinue work at any time, confidentiality, the right to submit complaints to the governing board. Per your request, we can gladly provide you with relevant portions or summaries of the state laws regarding these issues. Expectations of you include: fully participating in treatment, discussing discontinuation prior to it happening, keeping appointments and inform your therapist or the office of any changes in contact information or finances that affect therapy, inform me if seeing another therapist, and inform your therapist of any medication change, substance abuse, high risk behaviors or suicidality.

Manhas Counseling Collective's rights and responsibilities are to uphold all policies and disclosures as outlined in this letter. We will also adhere to the ACA ethical code of conduct and provide you with the highest quality of therapy services possible.

CONSENT FOR TREATMENT

By signing below, you are attesting that you have received, read, fully understand, and consent to the disclosures, terms, and conditions above.