

**Amanda Buswell LMFT**  
**Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist**

**Outpatient Services Contract and Informed Consent**

Welcome to my practice! This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and be sure and ask any questions you might have. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

**Coaching Services**

I am a licensed marriage and family therapist and have maintained a private practice for over 15 years. I primarily practice what is called brief narrative therapy. This is a systemic approach to problems where the focus of coaching and intervention is in patterns of behavior and pathology is found in interactions in relationships rather than focusing on pathology in an individual. I work to identify patterns and reframe life stories, utilizing their power to discover the potential of the individual. I am focused on having high quality, high stakes conversations and in being solution focused in our approach to meeting the goals of the therapy/coaching experience. As a brief therapist, I prefer to work with clients once a week for no more than 12-16 weeks at a time, although individual circumstances vary.

Coaching is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the professional and client and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Therapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the coaching to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home. Life coaching can have benefits and risks. Since it often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. I will do my best to comfort and praise when appropriate, but there will be times when I will not interfere with the emotional hurt so growth and progress can occur. On the other hand, coaching has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. It often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience. Although I will do my very best to help you achieve those things you want to have within your personal life and relationships, much of the result is dependent on you, the client(s) as well as unforeseeable elements. This is a growing process and all growth requires work!

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 a treatment plan to follow. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Coaching involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the professional you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. I normally

conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 3 sessions. During this time, we can both decide whether I am the best person to provide the services you need. If coaching is begun, I will usually schedule one 50 or 80 minute session weekly or every other week at a time we agree on.

### **Billing and Payments**

Professional Fees: The intake session is \$140 for 80 minutes and regular day or evening appointments are \$95 for a 50 minute session. Please make every effort to cancel appointments at least 24 hours in advance. If you cancel with less than 24 hours notice, a cancellation fee of \$25 will be billed. You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise. I am happy to provide an invoice so you can seek reimbursement for services from your insurance provider. What they will cover will depend on the plan you have and their out of network reimbursement policy for your plan. You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries. This information will become part of the insurance company files and will be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have 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. I will provide you with a copy of any report I submit should you request it. Insurance companies may have high deductibles for out of network service and may limit their coverage of how many sessions they will pay for. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above.

### **Contacting Me**

The best way to contact me for scheduling requests or changes is through text. When I am not available by telephone, your call will go to a confidential voice mail that I monitor frequently. I will make every effort to return your call or respond by text within 24 hours, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the clinician or psychologist on call. PLEASE NOTE: I cannot respond to emails or texts expressing observations and questions about our counseling sessions. While these thoughts/observations are important, personal email is both an ineffective therapeutic form and can work against a balanced alliance when working as a couple. Please be aware that when working with a couple, I will not hold confidences between the two people. Please bring your questions and thoughts into the next meeting. Thank you for respecting this request.

### **Minors**

If you are under 18 years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is my policy to request an agreement from parents that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless I feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case I will notify them of my concern. I will also provide them with a summary of your treatment when it is complete. Before giving them any

information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections you may have about what I am prepared to discuss.

### **Confidentiality**

In general, everything shared in sessions will be considered to be confidential and privileged and is protected by law. Information about our work to others can only be released with your written permission. There are a few legal exceptions to this. In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he or she determines that the issues demand it. As a mandated reporter, there are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. For example, if I believe that a child, elder, or disabled person is being abused, I must file a report with the appropriate state agency. If I believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I am required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm himself or herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him or her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. These situations have rarely occurred in my professional experience. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action. I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together. While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at our next meeting. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

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Name

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Date

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Name

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Date

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