

McCandless Family Counseling, Inc.

733 E Chapman Ave

Fullerton, CA 92832

**Agreement for Psychotherapy Services
and Office Policies**

This document is intended to provide you with important information regarding your treatment. Please read this carefully. Please feel free to ask your therapist any questions you may have regarding it's contents.

Information About Your Therapist:

Sandy McCandless, MFT is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Ms. McCandless has been licensed by the California State Board of Behavioral Sciences continually since January, 2005. Ms. McCandless opened her practice in Orange, CA in 2004. Ms. McCandless has practiced in Fullerton full time since June, 2010. Ms. McCandless was approved as a Certified Grief ♥ Recovery® Specialist by the Grief ♥ Recovery® Institute in June, 2007 . At an appropriate time, Ms. McCandless will be happy to discuss her treatment philosophy with you.

Information About This Practice:

Ms. McCandless' practice does business under the name:

McCandless Family Counseling, Inc.

The individual Therapists who operate this practice are:

Paul McCandless Licensed Marriage Family Therapist Lic #: MFC39160
Sandy McCandless Licensed Marriage Family Therapist Lic #: MFC41508

Fees:

The fee for service is \$120.00 per individual therapy session. Sessions are 50 minutes in length but will, occasionally, last up to one hour.

The fee for your initial conjoint (marital/family) session is \$150.00. Thereafter each subsequent session is billed at the rate stated above (\$120.00 per hour). Allow up to 70 minutes for your initial conjoint session.

Fees are payable at the time that services are rendered and are due at the BEGINNING of each session hour. At this time, only cash or checks are accepted for payment.

**Payments made by check for services which are not honored by the bank
are subject to a returned check charge of \$20.00 per occurrence.**

Insurance:

You may wish to utilize your health insurance coverage to pay for services. If so, you must inform Ms. McCandless of your desire to utilize insurance coverage PRIOR to your first session. Whether Ms. McCandless is a contracted provider for your insurance company or not, Ms. McCandless will discuss the procedures for billing your insurance. The amount of reimbursement and the amount of any co-payments or deductible depends on the requirements of your specific insurance plan.

What you need to know about using insurance:

- ❖ You are solely responsible for understanding the eligibility, benefits and coverage limits of your health insurance policy.
- ❖ You will be responsible for any and all charges which your insurance coverage either denies or fails to cover.
- ❖ Although Ms. McCandless is happy to assist in your utilization of your insurance coverage, he is unable to guarantee your insurance will provide payment for the services provided to you.

- ❖ Insurance plans generally limit coverage to certain diagnosable mental conditions.

Please discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about this with Ms. McCandless.

If for some reason you find that you are unable to continue paying for your therapy, please inform your Ms. McCandless immediately. Ms. McCandless will help you to consider any options that may be available to you at that time.

Confidentiality:

All communications between you Ms. McCandless will be held in strict confidence unless you provide written permission to release information about your treatment. Fullerton is a small community and many clients know each other and Ms. McCandless from the community. Consequently you may bump into someone you know in the waiting room or into Ms. McCandless out in the community. Ms. McCandless will never acknowledge working therapeutically with you without your (client's) prior written authorization.

If you participate in marital or family therapy, Ms. McCandless will not disclose confidential information about your treatment unless all person(s) who participated in the treatment with you provide their written authorization to release such information. However, it is important that you know that Ms. McCandless utilizes a "no-secrets" policy when conducting family or marital/ couples therapy. This means that if you participate in family, and/or marital/ couples therapy, Ms. McCandless is permitted to use information obtained in an individual session that you may have had with her, when working with other members of your family. Please feel free to ask Ms. McCandless about her "no secrets" policy and how it may apply to you.

There are exceptions to confidentiality. For example, therapists are required by law to report instances of suspected child or elder abuse. Therapists may be required or permitted to break confidentiality when they have determined that a patient presents a serious danger of physical violence to another person or when a patient is dangerous to him or herself. In addition, a federal law known as **The Patriot Act of 2001** requires therapists (and others) in certain circumstances, to provide FBI agents with books, records, papers and documents and other items and **prohibits the therapist from disclosing to the patient that the FBI sought or obtained the items under the Act.**

Minors and Confidentiality:

Communications between therapists and patients who are minors (under the age of 18) are confidential. However, parents and other guardians who provide authorization for their child's treatment are routinely and regularly involved in the minor's treatment. Consequently, Ms. McCandless, in the exercise of her professional judgment, may discuss the treatment progress of a minor patient with the parent or caregiver. Patients who are minors and their parents are urged to discuss any questions or concerns that they have on this topic with Ms. McCandless.

- ❖ It is the policy of McCandless Family Counseling, Inc. to obtain consent from both parents, whether married, separated or divorced, when treating minor children.

- ❖ Neither Paul McCandless, MFT nor Sandy McCandless, MFT are qualified, nor do they conduct, either formal or informal child custody evaluations.

Appointments:

Sessions are generally scheduled once a week at the same time and on the same day. Occasionally, Ms. McCandless may suggest a different amount of therapy depending on the nature and severity of your concerns. At all times, your consistent attendance is instrumental in achieving your goal(s).

Canceling Appointments:

If you wish to cancel or reschedule an appointment, you are expected to notify Ms. McCandless at least 24 hrs. in advance of your appointment. If you fail provide notice within at least 24 hours of your appointment or, if you fail to attend a session without advance notice, you will be responsible to pay a **\$50.00 charge for the missed late cancelled session**. Please understand that your insurance company will not pay for missed or cancelled sessions.

Therapist Availability/Emergencies:

If you have an urgent need to speak with Ms. McCandless, please indicate that fact in your message. In the event of a medical emergency or an emergency involving a threat to your safety or the safety of others, please call 911 to request emergency assistance.

Telephone consultations between office visits are welcome. However, Ms. McCandless will attempt to keep those contacts brief due to her belief that important issues are better addressed within regularly scheduled sessions. You may leave a message for Mr. McCandless at any time on her confidential voicemail. The number is: 714-321-4619. Ms. McCandless' voicemail is available 24 hours per day. If you wish Ms. McCandless to return your call, please be sure to leave your name and phone number(s), along with a brief message concerning the nature of your call.

Routine phone calls, will be returned within 24 hours, between the hours of 9:00 am and 9:00 pm Monday through Friday. As a general rule, Ms. McCandless does not return routine calls on Saturdays, Sundays or on holidays.

Communication via Email and Text Messaging: Be aware that email and text messaging, though convenient, can be accessed by unauthorized people. Hence, the privacy and confidentiality of such communication can be compromised. Therefore, Ms. McCandless asks that you utilize email and text messages for informational purposes (e.g., scheduling, appointment confirmation, etc.) **only**. Ms. McCandless may not be able to respond immediately to texts and emails. So, if you need a more immediate response, it is best to place a phone call and leave a confidential voicemail message.

About the Therapy Process:

It is Ms. McCandless' intention to provide services that will assist you in reaching your goals. Based upon the information that you provide and the specifics of your situation, Ms. McCandless will provide recommendations to you regarding your treatment. Ms. McCandless believes that therapists and patients are collaborators in the therapeutic process. You have the right to agree or disagree with Ms. McCandless' recommendations. Ms. McCandless will also periodically provide feedback to you regarding your progress and will invite your participation in the discussion.

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. Therapy requires commitment and your active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings and/or behavior. Sometimes change may be easy and swift and at other times, it may be slow or even frustrating. Additionally, changes which might be positive for one person, may sometimes be viewed negatively by a partner or other family members. Therefore, there is no guarantee that therapy will always yield positive or even intended results.

Termination of Therapy:

The length of your treatment and the timing of the eventual termination of your treatment depend on the specifics of your treatment plan and the progress you achieve. It is a good idea to plan for your termination, in collaboration with your therapist. Ms. McCandless will discuss a plan for termination with you as you approach the completion of your treatment goals.

You may discontinue therapy at any time. If you or Ms. McCandless determines that you are not benefiting from treatment, either of you may elect to initiate a discussion of your treatment alternatives. Treatment alternatives may include, referral, changing your treatment plan, or terminating your therapy.

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 Ms. McCandless 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 Orange County, California in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association which are in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed.

Signature Page

Please retain the above document for your records and bring this page with you to your first session

I have read the Agreement for Psychotherapy Services and Office Policies carefully. My/our signature(s) below indicate that I/we have read and understand this Agreement's contents. I will retain a copy for my records and future reference.

Client Name: _____

Client Signature

Date

Client Name: _____

Client Signature

Date

Sandy McCandless, MFT _____
Signature

Date