

# INFORMED CONSENT– TERMS & AGREEMENT

**Dr. Alim Awadia, DClInPsy**

**Registered Psychologist (#R0800)**

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## **Informed Consent for Psychotherapy**

The following information is to clearly define rights and responsibilities in the therapeutic relationship. Knowing your rights and responsibilities creates a safe framework to take risks and open yourself to new experiences.

## **Professional Qualifications**

I have been a qualified and practicing psychologist since 2011. I have worked in community and hospital settings with children, adolescents and adults. I initially qualified and practiced in the United Kingdom, however I moved to Canada in 2015. I subsequently registered with the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology as well as the Canadian Association of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies. My areas of specialty are in the treatment of anxiety disorders, mood disorders and psychosis. My main treatment approach is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, but I also offer psychodynamic psychotherapy if this is more appropriate. The approach I take will be explicitly discussed and agreed with you.

As above, I am accountable to the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology. This organization is responsible for the licensing and regulation of Psychologists in this province. Their contact information is:

Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology  
The Halifax Professional Centre, (Corner of Spring Garden Road & Robie Street).  
455 – 5991 Spring Garden Road  
Halifax, NS B3H 1Y6  
Phone No. 902-423-2238  
Fax No. 902-423-0058

## **Benefits & Potential Risks**

Most people who take risks in therapy find it helpful. Potential benefits of treatment include:

- A reduction of symptoms
- Changes in problematic behaviours
- Improvements in self-esteem and overall mood
- Problem-resolution
- Positive changes in personal relationships
- Return to productive activity
- A better understanding of yourself and your personal goals and values



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Methods used in therapy include (but are not limited to) psycho-education, cognitive reframing, behavior experiments, exposure work, awareness exercises, self-monitoring experiments, imagery work, journal writing/drawing and biblio-therapy. Some people find that participating in psychotherapy results in positive changes that were not expected or intended at the outset. Despite its many benefits, therapy has potential emotional risks. Therapy should be a transformative process over time, but it requires that you discuss experiences and events in your life that may be unpleasant. This may increase feelings of sadness, anger, fear, shame or other unpleasant feelings. Making changes in your life can be difficult and may be disruptive to the relationships you have. You may even find that your relationship with me raises strong feelings, some of them painful at times. For some, you may feel worse before you begin feeling better. It is important that you consider carefully whether these potential risks are worth the benefits.

### **Confidentiality**

With a few exceptions, you have the absolute right to confidentiality in your therapy. This means that I cannot share what you have told me to anybody without your consent to do so. You may direct me in writing to share information with whomever you deem necessary and you may revoke that permission at any time. I may legally speak to another regulated health care provider without your consent, but I would only do so when necessary for the delivery and management of your health care or in the case of an emergency. There are times when confidentiality must be broken without your consent. These circumstances include:

- If there is reason to believe that you are at serious and imminent risk of physically harming yourself or another person.
- If there is reason to believe that a child is suffering from abuse and/or neglect.
- If you have been sexually abused by another regulated health professional.
- A court has subpoenaed your records.

### **Record Keeping**

You have the right to access your health information and copies of my notes from our sessions can be provided. You always have a right to ask questions about the way the privacy of your personal health information is being handled.

Any written records I make will be stored in a locked room, and will remain in this building.



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## **Fees**

The services provided by a psychologist in private practice are not always covered by private insurance providers. If you plan to claim the cost of these sessions back from your insurance provider, please check your coverage in advance. You will be billed directly, and (if you are eligible) you may then try to recoup the cost from your insurance provider using the receipt provided. My fees are consistent with the guidelines suggested by the Association of Psychologists in Nova Scotia and may be revised each year effective January 1st. Currently, my fees are \$190 CAD per 50 minute session (or part thereof). Payment must be collected at the beginning of each session. All overdue bills are expected to be paid within 30 days and will be charged 1.5% per month interest. If you refuse to pay your debt, I reserve the right to pursue payment via a debt collection agency or small claims court.

## **Length of sessions**

Although a full hour is scheduled for you, the actual session lasts 50 minutes. This allows me to use the remaining 10 minutes to complete session notes and prepare for the next session.

## **How often are therapy sessions?**

The frequency of sessions depends on the individual and typically ranges from once a week to once a month. I will work with you to establish the frequency of sessions that will be best for you and your financial situation.

## **Missed appointments**

Your appointment is a block of time that is reserved for you. Missed appointments and short notice cancellations prevent me from scheduling other people. If you believe you will not be able to make a scheduled appointment, I ask that you notify me as soon as possible. If you give me 24 hours' notice, no fee will be charged to you. However, the regular fee for one session will be charged for any missed appointments where no notice is provided, or when you give me less than 24 hours' notice. For Monday appointments, notice to cancel must be made by 4:00 pm on the Friday before.

## **How long does therapy last?**

Generally, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy takes a shorter period of time than longer-term psychodynamic psychotherapy. In most cases, I will agree a timeframe with you within the first session or two. You have the right to stop therapy at any time without further financial obligations, other than those already incurred. Some people do decide to stop therapy suddenly when difficult issues come up. Rather than just quitting, it is best to discuss your feelings with me. Talking about your wish to quit therapy, including negative feelings you have towards me, will very often lead to progress, new insights and a stronger therapeutic alliance. On occasion, I may decide to terminate therapy if I think that continuing therapy with me is not likely to lead to further improvements for you. If I feel that I cannot help you due to limitations in my training, I will inform you of this and help direct you other therapists who may be better suited to meet your needs. If you threaten me verbally or physically, or harass office staff, my family, or myself, I will terminate you immediately from treatment.



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## Complaints

You have the right to refuse anything I might suggest throughout the therapy process and to seek a second opinion. I do not carry on friendships or relationships with patients or former patients because that would be unethical and/or illegal. Misunderstandings and other difficult or uncomfortable issues may arise in our relationship and are not uncommon in the process of therapy. If you are unhappy with me or what is happening in therapy, I hope that you'll talk about it so that I can respond to your concerns. I will take such concerns seriously, and with care and respect. If you believe that I've been unwilling to listen and respond, or that I have behaved unethically, you can complain about my behaviour to the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology (see contact info above). You have a right to discuss your therapy with anyone you choose. If you would like someone to accompany you to our sessions, I ask that you let me know ahead of time so that we can discuss your concerns and how best to protect your privacy.

## Emergency Procedures

If you are experiencing an emergency and believe that you cannot keep yourself safe, please call 911, the mobile crisis unit (1-888-429-8167) or go to the nearest hospital emergency room for assistance.

## Confirmation of understanding and agreement

In order to take part in an initial assessment, and/or begin psychological therapy with me, I require you to review the following statements and tick all that apply:

- I understand the points made in this document, and I accept the conditions described
- I agree to work in accordance with the parameters stated within this document
- I have been offered a copy of this document for my own records
- I understand my rights as stated within this document (including the right to end treatment at any time)

Printed Name:

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Date:

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Witness:

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Dr. Alim Awadia:

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Signature

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Date:

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Date:

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