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SPECIAL INFORMED CONSENT REGARDING COVID-19 AND OFFICE VISITS

In March 2020, Flagstaff, Arizona, in addition to the rest of the world, went into a state of high alert regarding transmission of COVID-19, a newly identified respiratory virus in the coronavirus family. Most communities recommended very little to no contact with others outside of one's immediate household due to the number of individuals affected and the high contagion rate in the United States. At that time, communities across the nation and world requested their community members isolate and/or self-quarantine, and the City of Flagstaff and the State of Arizona instituted a stay-at-home order that required postponing nonessential travel until the outbreak was properly contained.

At the end of May 2020, the governor of Arizona ended the stay-at-home order. The public was no longer restricted to their homes or only essential travel. With guidance from the gating criteria issued by the White House and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), businesses and other services received guidance to re-open with enhanced physical distancing and safety measures in place. Since that time, there have been a variety of orders by the governor of Arizona and/or the mayor of Flagstaff in attempts to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such orders continue to be issued and rescinded at various times, including shelter-in-place order, requirement to wear facial masks, etc.

According to the National Institutes of Health, COVID-19 can affect your lungs and airways, and symptoms can include a cough, a fever, and shortness of breath. COVID-19 appears to spread from person to person like similar viruses via respiratory droplets. It is recommended not to expose yourself to someone's else's droplets (e.g., through sneezes, coughs, or being in an enclosed space for more than 15 minutes without a mask). Simple measures like washing your hands often with soap and water also can help stop viruses like COVID-19 from spreading. As of December 2020, there are several vaccines for COVID-19, though not all individuals can yet access them and some do not wish to receive them. I was fully vaccinated in February 2021. Treatment is available, and aims to relieve the symptoms until you recover.

I have offered psychotherapy services throughout the stay-at-home order through an online platform. After the stay-at-home order, I offered walk and talk sessions which I continue to offer. In late February 2021, I began offering limited in person psychotherapy appointments. If you are scheduling for the first time or returning to in-person appointments at my office, this document informs you of the risks that could be involved as related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In coming to my office, you should be aware that you could be putting yourself at risk for contracting COVID-19. The front door, entryway, waiting area, and restrooms are shared with other mental health, massage therapy and Chinese medicine practices. If

you choose to come to the building for in-person therapy services, you could possibly be exposed to the virus via contact with any of the surfaces and areas described as well as from the people in the building and on the premises, including me, staff from other offices, and/or other patrons. Accessing my office requires walking through parts of the building operated by other businesses, and I do not have control over their operating procedures.

I also want to inform you of the cleaning procedures currently in effect in the common areas of the office building in which my office is housed. Building management has informed all tenants that they sanitize the front door knobs, bathroom door knobs, bathroom light switch, and bathroom counter and sink handles. There is hand sanitizer available in the waiting room. As of May 2020, all building tenants are required to wear face masks in the common areas, but may remove them in their individual offices.

To create the safest office setting possible, I am encouraging clients to inform me when they have arrived outside the building so that I can escort them directly into my office for their appointments. In other words, please do not come early to your appointment with the intention of sitting in the waiting areas. Our waiting area is closed and the doors to access the building are locked. In addition, to lessen your exposure to other areas of the building, please consider using restroom facilities at home prior to your appointment. If you are early for our meeting, please sit outside the building in your car or take a stroll around the neighborhood. When entering the building, I will ask you to go into the bathroom and wash your hands. As for cleaning within my office and the area immediately outside of it (e.g., door, table, chair in the alcove), I clean any surfaces touched by a previous client with sanitizing solution between each appointment and utilize a disinfectant spray. I also keep my window open during my work day to refresh the air in my office. In addition, I have a medical grade air filtration unit in my office.

To reduce your risk, I request you wear a mask when entering and traveling through the building to my office as well as while you are in my office. If you do not have one, I can provide one. I will wear a mask at all times. For your information, I do not have COVID-19 at this time and am not aware that I have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19. I have also been vaccinated. If either of these situations arose, I would immediately cease providing in-person services.

I offer the above to be sure you are fully informed of the risks that you may be taking in coming to the office for services at this time. Again, I remind you that such services are available via an online platform. Your signature below indicates you have been informed of the risks of coming to my office for your services and are doing so willingly. If you have any questions about this document, please bring them to my attention immediately.

Client Name

Signature of Client

Date

Parent/Guardian Name (for minors)

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date