



**B.Y.R.C.S**

4250 Cessna St  
Bldg 270  
Boise, ID 83705

Office: (208) 272-8393  
(208) 272-8392

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Counseling Services

## **Informed Consent and Services Contract**

Welcome to Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Counseling Services (BYRCS). This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at your next session. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and your counselor.

### **COUNSELING SERVICES**

Counseling is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the clinician and client, and the particular problems you hope to address. There are many different methods your counselor may use to help with those problems. Counseling is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Counseling can have benefits and risks. Because therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, counseling has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. However, there are no guarantees as to what you will experience.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, your counselor will be able to offer you some first impressions of what your work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions about whether you feel comfortable working with the assigned clinician. At the end of the evaluation, the clinician will notify you if they believe that they are not the right therapist for you and, if so, they will give you referrals to other practitioners whom they believe are better suited to help you.

Therapy involves a large commitment of time and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about their procedures, you should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, the counselor will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

### **THERAPY SESSIONS**

Your counselor will conduct an evaluation that will last from 1 to 2 sessions. During this time, you and the clinician can both decide if they are the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If you agree to begin counseling, your counselor will usually schedule one 45-minute session

per week, at a time you agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. If you need to cancel counseling appointments, please contact your counselor to make arrangements as soon as possible.

## **CONTACTING YOUR COUNSELOR**

To best serve our clients and to be a resource if clinical emergencies come up, our clinicians carry phones 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. You may call your clinician when you need to schedule or reschedule your appointment, or if you are having an emergency. However, your clinician may not immediately be available by telephone. Though our clinicians are usually in the office between 8 AM and 4 PM, they may not answer the phone when with another client. Your clinician will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of non-emergent calls on weekends and holidays. To aid in a timely response, please inform your clinician of some times when you will be available. In emergencies, if you are unable to reach your counselor and feel that you cannot wait for a return call, contact your family physician, go to the nearest emergency room, or call 911. If your counselor will be unavailable for an extended time, they will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY**

In order to maintain clarity regarding our use of electronic modes of communication during your treatment, BYRCS has prepared the following policy. This is because the use of various types of electronic communications is common in our society, and many individuals believe this is the preferred method of communication with others, whether their relationships are social or professional. Many of these common modes of communication, however, put your privacy at risk and can be inconsistent with the law and with the standards of the counseling profession. Consequently, this policy has been prepared to assure the security and confidentiality of your treatment and to assure that it is consistent with ethics and the law.

If you have any questions about this policy, please feel free to discuss this with your counselor.

### **Email/Text Message Communications**

We use email communication and text messaging only with your permission and only for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. That means that email exchanges and text messages with our office should be limited to things like setting and changing appointments. Please do not email or text message your counselor about clinical matters because email is not a secure way to contact them. If you need to discuss a clinical matter with your counselor, please feel free to call them so they can discuss it on the phone or wait so you can discuss it during your therapy session. The telephone or face-to-face context simply is much more secure as a mode of communication.

### **Social Media**

We do not communicate with, or contact, any of our clients through social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. In addition, if we discover that we have accidentally established an online relationship with you, we will cancel that relationship. This is because these types of casual social contacts can create significant security risks for you.

Your counselor may participate on various social networks, but not in a professional capacity. If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter your counselor by accident. If that occurs, please discuss it with them during your time together. We believe that any communications with clients online has a

high potential to compromise the professional relationship. In addition, please do not try to contact your counselor in this way. They will not respond and will terminate any online contact no matter how accidental.

### **Websites**

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Counseling Services has a website that you are able to access. If you have questions about it, you should discuss this during your therapy sessions.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and a counselor is protected by law, and we can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent your counselor from providing any information about your treatment. In some legal proceedings, a judge may order your counselor's testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it, and your counselor must comply with that court order.

There are some situations in which your counselor is legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if they have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. For example, if your counselor believes that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is being abused or has been abused, your counselor must make a report to the appropriate state agency.

If your counselor believes that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, they are 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/herself, your counselor may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. If a similar situation occurs in the course of your work together, your counselor will attempt to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

Your counselor may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, your counselor makes every effort to avoid revealing the identity of the client. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

Although this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality is intended to inform you about potential issues that could arise, it is important that you discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at your next session. Your counselor will be happy to discuss these issues with you and provide clarification when possible.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Both law and the ethical standards of the counseling profession require that your counselor keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of these records. If you wish to see them, your counselor may prefer to prepare an appropriate summary instead. Client records are professional documents; they can be misinterpreted and can be upsetting. If you insist on seeing your records, it is best to review them with your counselor so that they can discuss their content.

If you are under 18 years of age, the law provides your parents/Guardians the right to examine your treatment records. If you are over the age of 14, you must give written approval for these records to be released.

Your records will be kept for 7 (seven) years after termination of counseling services. For minors, 7 (seven) years after the minor turns 18 (eighteen).

In the event of incapacitation or death of a client, the treating clinician will maintain the confidentiality of all records, except as outlined in limits of confidentiality.

In the event of incapacitation, death or termination of treating clinician, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Counseling Services becomes the designee of all records. Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Counseling Services will notify you and work with you to facilitate your ongoing care. This may include but not limited to placing you with another clinician within our program, facilitating your transfer to an outside clinician, or completing appropriate termination of services.

## COMPLAINT PROCESS

Should you have a complaint regarding your treatment, please bring it to your counselor's attention so that they may attempt to rectify the issue first. If they are unable to rectify the situation, they will work with you to find an appropriate clinician to meet your counseling needs.

If you feel that you wish to file a complaint regarding your counselor's professional services, you may download a Complaint Form from the state licensing board at [www.ibol.idaho.gov](http://www.ibol.idaho.gov) or you may also request a Complaint Form by contacting the Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses or by e-mailing the Investigative Unit ([inv@ibol.idaho.gov](mailto:inv@ibol.idaho.gov)).

A written and signed statement of your complaint is required before an investigation can begin. You may fill out an IBOL Complaint Form online, print & sign the form, attach copies of any documents which relate to the problem, and mail it to the IBOL office.

Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses  
1109 Main Street, Suite 220  
Boise, Idaho 83702-5642

IBOL relies a great deal on individuals, like you, who are willing to provide them with information concerning possible violations of Idaho regulatory laws. They cannot, however, act as a private attorney for those bringing complaints to their attention. Their role in any action arising out of a complaint is to act on behalf of all the people of Idaho.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

**Client Name (Printed)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Client Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Counselor Name (Printed)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Client Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_