

Christiane Elsbree, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W., A.C.S.W., B.C.D.

ABECSW Board Certified Diplomate in Clinical Social Work #4770
Washington State Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker #LW6096

6300 - 9th Avenue N.E., Suite 340, Seattle, WA 98115
(206) 522-0269
(206) 522-5595 Fax celsbree@earthlink.net

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT AND CLIENT AGREEMENT

August 15, 2006

Washington State Law requires that I provide new clients with the following information and that I keep a written record acknowledging your receipt of it. Also, since the psychotherapy process may be new to you, and since certainly I'm new to you, I would like to answer some questions that many clients have raised over the course of their treatment. Please keep this statement for future reference.

*"Counselors practicing counseling for a fee must be registered or certified with the department of health for the protection of the public health and safety. Registration of an individual with the department does not include a recognition of any practice standards, nor necessarily implies the effectiveness of any treatment."
18.19RCW Wash. St. Dept. of Health*

*"The purpose of the Counselor Credentialing Act is:(A) To provide protection for public health and safety; and (B) to empower the citizens of the state of Washington by providing a complaint process against those counselors who would commit acts of unprofessional conduct."
18.19RCW Wash. St. Dept. of Health*

My Training:

I grew up in a rural, resort and farming area in Upstate New York. There I began my education in a one-room schoolhouse. I did my undergraduate work in New Hampshire and Delaware. I received my Master of Social Work degree from the University of Southern California in 1975. I was licensed as a clinical social worker in the State of California in 1977. Between 1978 and 1984, I studied intensively with the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Los Angeles. In 1988 I was accepted by the American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work as a Board Certified Diplomate in Clinical Social Work. I am a member of the National Association of Social Workers and of the Academy of Certified Social Workers. I am licensed by the State of Washington as an independent clinical social worker. I adhere to the Codes of Ethics of these organizations and governing bodies.

Between 1975 and 1980 I worked in mental health clinics in South Central Los Angeles (three years at a community mental health children's outpatient department and two years at an outpatient county mental health unit). I went into private practice full-time in 1980. Then, along with Dr. Violet Oaklander, author of the book *Windows to Our Children: a Gestalt Therapy Approach to Children and Adolescents*, and two other therapists, I founded the Center for Child and Adolescent Therapy in Hermosa Beach, California. The Center was founded on the premise that the child enters the world with full capacity for emotional health and that it is the therapist's task to support the child's innate thrust for life and growth and to help the child get back on his or her rightful path.

In my practice I have had extensive experience working with children, adolescents, couples and families, and training and supervising professionals and students. I have given workshops for professionals and I have been a field instructor for graduate and undergraduate students. I have been a consultant to schools, day cares and residential treatment facilities. My areas of expertise include work with children and adults, couples issues, stepfamily issues, spirituality and depression. I have had much experience working cross-culturally.

I have also authored three audio tapes for parents and professionals. Their titles are: *Healing the Sexually Abused Child*, *Narcissistic Disturbances in Children and Adolescents*, *When Do Children and Adolescents Need Therapy?*. Available through Maxsound, Educational Tape Division, P.O. Box 41183, Long Beach, CA 90853 (562) 856-4832.

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My Approach to Psychotherapy:

I work from a Gestalt perspective. Gestalt therapy is based on humanistic, existential, phenomenological theory. It is a therapy which asks "What...?" and "How...?" more than "Why?" Central to this approach is the concept of "organismic self-regulation": each organism or entity, be it a cell, a person, group, culture, etc., has an inherent thrust for life, health and growth, and regulates and directs its own growth within its environment. That thrust for life is expressed in varying ways ranging from "creative response-ability" to a fixed characterological pattern.

"What is Therapy?"

Psychotherapy, as I see it, is a process of growth and change. This growth or change occurs through awareness of one's self within the context of the therapist-client relationship. The therapist's role is one of observer/facilitator/consultant. Through heightening awareness of self, needs, choices and opportunities, therapy creates the possibility for each person to be fully who they are, to fully support their organismic self-regulation, to be able to live at their full potential and to bring into the world and into their relationships all of their unique gifts.

In Gestalt work the therapist pays particular attention to the client's awareness of self and others and the quality of support that is available for contact and growth. We will be aware of boundaries, contact functions, self-support, gestalt formation and destruction process, and dialogic process/I-Thou relation.

Boundaries: How do you define who you are and who you are not? How do you set boundaries between yourself and others? What are the qualities of your personal boundary? Is your boundary rigid, flexible, permeable or impenetrable, vague and undefined? How do you protect yourself? Do your relationships allow for intimacy? Do they allow for both approach and withdrawal?

Contact Functions/Awareness: Are you fully using all of your senses: hearing, seeing, smelling, thinking, tactile senses, kinesthetic senses, and intuition? Do you rely on one sense more than others? What remains beyond your awareness? What is the ratio in your behavior of awareness: action? Do you allow spontaneity? What part does humor play in your life? Are there things you would rather not be aware of?

Support: What is the quality of support you have available for contact and growth including internal and external sources of support? How do you support your physical structure: breathing, posture, diet, sleep, exercise? What permission do you give to yourself to take in available external support? What is the nature of your grounding foundation? (Anxiety is often unsupported excitement.)

Gestalt Formation and Destruction Cycle: When needs are met the organism is at rest: as needs begin to emerge into the foreground the organism begins to scan internally and externally for a remedy to those needs; as needs heighten and become more defined a gestalt with form, grace and clarity emerges which unites needs, organism and environment; the selection is made and taken in; there is assimilation; then the discarding of what is not fitting; the organism returns to rest. That need recedes to the background, another will come to the foreground. This is a continual moment-to moment process in all of us. When stress occurs along the way during this cycle the organism loses effectiveness, and becomes increasingly limited. Some people cannot recognize or define their needs, others search only internally or only externally for resolution, others prolong the searching process looking for the "perfect" remedy, others avoid or prematurely curtail the search settling for no remedy or an unsatisfying one, others don't assimilate what they take in, but "swallow whole" unable to

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separate what fits for them and what doesn't fit. When we recognize what needs we are responding to; when we can articulate those needs; and effectively meet them; we have a greater sense of satisfaction in our lives. An additional important aspect of organismic self-regulation is the recognition that there are consequences which we suffer, needs of our own which will not be met, when we are not respectful of others development and growth.

Dialogic Process/I-Thou: Full awareness makes possible dialogue which has integrity and is inclusive, not pre-prepared. Here Gestalt therapy theory draws on Martin Buber's philosophy. In an I-Thou relationship each party is held in respect. As a therapist I bring an expertise in my field based on training and experience, you bring an expertise about you and your experience. If I offer an observation regarding you, it is only valid if you confirm it. Dialogue can be a free dance which allows for responsiveness and creative resolution of differences. Without the full support of contact skills, dialogue can be characterized by hidden agendas, speaking without listening, wanting to be seen, but not see-ing the other, etc.

My goal is to bring a sensibility to my work which holds you and your unique presence in honor as I look at all of the above as we work together on what is important to you. We will talk with each other, I may also ask you to draw, or create a scene with figures in a tray of sand, or to work with clay, or to keep a journal of your feelings, thoughts, or dreams.

"How Often? For How Long? Who?"

The frequency of visits, which members of the family will be seen and how long the treatment will continue are all based on your particular needs and on my schedule. What follows are some general guidelines and rules of thumb.

First of all, for us to develop a working relationship it's essential that our work together be consistent and regular. I usually see clients once weekly. Sometimes I may recommend that clients see me more than once a week either because of the symptoms they are experiencing or because of the work they are doing during the therapy hour. Sometimes I see clients less frequently than once a week, this especially may happen during the termination phase of our work.

The length of treatment needed varies from a few weeks to a few years. I really can't tell you at the beginning how long the treatment should continue because the length of treatment needed depends so much on you, your participation, and your style of growth. I can give you a very general idea based on my past experience with similar problems, but you are a unique individual and I can't know when the work will feel finished to you. The time to stop will come when you believe that you have accomplished what you set out to do and that you don't want to continue any longer. I will also be watching for signs that the work is completed by looking at how you are doing at home, at work, and in your personal relationships and by looking at the intensity of the work during the therapy session.

"What Do I Look For During The Initial Evaluation?"

We'll talk about your reasons for concern. I'll ask for some information about your family and work history, your past relationships. During this evaluative period I will be looking at the following areas (and asking you to also): perceptive and contacting skills, spontaneity, body image and use of the physical self, humor, defenses, expression of emotions, mood, cognitive abilities, creativity, sense of self-esteem, manner of interacting with me and the environment, and response to treatment. I'll share my observations and recommendations, as well as hear your feedback about this therapy experience. Then we'll decide together how to proceed.

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"What Goes On During the Course of Treatment?"

Psychotherapy is a process. You will be becoming more aware of yourself. Some of the things that you become aware of may cause you to feel more distressed, you might become distressed when you discover parts of yourself that you don't like or that don't work the way you want them to. Your relationships may become more strained at times during the therapy. Remember that all of this is part of the process of self-discovery and reintegration, not necessarily the end result. Please keep me informed about these changes. I use several media to facilitate self-expression. I might ask you to draw, or work with clay or arrange a scene in the sand tray using various figures I have available. I might suggest keeping a journal of your feelings, behaviors or dreams.

Your Rights as a Psychotherapy Client:

You have the right and the responsibility for choosing the provider and treatment modality which best meets your unique needs and purposes, and you have the right to refuse treatment. If you believe that your work with me is not helping you, please tell me so that we can work through the difficulty together. If we can't, then, if you would like, I will assist you in finding another therapist. I would encourage you to see me for a termination session to allow us to review our work together.

You have the right to assurance of professional conduct on my part. Please see the attached brochure from the Washington State Dept. of Health which describes behaviors which are considered unprofessional.

Confidentiality:

All information which you tell me will remain confidential, unless you give written authorization for release of information, with the following exceptions:

1. If I believe that you are likely to do harm to yourself or to another person, I must take steps to protect you and/or the other person.
2. If I believe that you may be physically or sexually abusing or neglecting a minor child or a vulnerable adult or if you report information to me about the possible abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, I am required by law to report this to the appropriate state agency.
3. If you are currently in litigation or filing a complaint against someone, including me, for malpractice, you and I may be asked to disclose information regarding your therapy as a part of that process.
4. If the information or records are subpoenaed by an attorney in the State of Washington, and you do not choose to file a protection order of those records, they will be released. I will notify you if I receive such a subpoena.
5. If you are submitting claims to your health insurance company or health care plan for my services they will likely require you to sign a consent for me to release information to them regarding your treatment. You have a right to request copies of any information I send to your insurance company. I will use one of your sessions to review with you in detail any reports I send to managed care plans.

Please see the attached brochure from the Washington State Dept. of Health for further elaboration regarding confidentiality.

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Additional Matters of Confidentiality:

In some cases it will be useful to the therapy to discuss your situation with others such as a physician, a former therapist, a teacher, etc. In those instances I will ask you to sign the appropriate authorizations to release information.

If you have been directly referred to me by someone else, I may, as a good business practice, acknowledge to them that you have contacted me and thank them for the referral. I will not discuss your situation with them unless I have your written permission.

On occasion, I consult with colleagues about my work with a particular client to gain further feedback and suggestions about treatment or resources. I do not reveal full names or any unique identifying information in these consultations.

How to Best Reach Me:

To reach me call (206) 522-0269. This number rings in my office only. If you leave a message on my voice mail I will try to reach you within a reasonable amount of time. ***IF YOU DON'T HEAR FROM ME WITHIN 24 HOURS PLEASE CALL AND LEAVE ANOTHER MESSAGE,*** just in case the first one got lost.

IF YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY:

If you would like to reach me as soon as possible in case of an emergency or to schedule an appointment: leave a message as usual, press "1" after your message and follow instructions for an "urgent" message. The voice mail system will then attempt to reach me immediately, and will continue its attempts until it is successful. If you are unable to reach me and need to speak with someone immediately call the **24-hour CRISIS LINE at 461-3222.**

Hours:

My regular office hours are Tuesdays from 9 AM to 6 PM, Wednesdays from 10 AM to 6 PM and Saturdays from 9 AM to 4 PM

Fees:

1. My regular fee for individual or conjoint (couple or family) psychotherapy appointments is \$100. Appointments for children and adolescents are 45 minutes in length. Adults' sessions are 50 minutes. Sometimes double sessions (90-100 minutes) are advisable, particularly for conjoint work. These can be arranged and will be billed at twice the regular rate.
2. Fees/insurance co-pays are due and payable at each session unless other arrangements have been made in advance. I do not routinely send out bills.

Health Care and 401K Flex Plan Claims:

1. You are responsible for payment of all fees. Each fee is set individually with you and is not contingent upon whether or not an insurance company accepts your claim.
2. If you want me to complete health care claims or provide a billing statement for you to submit to your insurance company please let me know. I prefer that we handle claim forms and statements on a monthly basis.

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4. Health care plans differ as to coverage. If you wish to use health insurance benefits please ask your carrier these questions:

- Is "outpatient mental health treatment" covered by your specific plan?
- Does your plan accept me as the provider of services?
- Am I an in-network or out-of network provider for your plan?
- Does your plan cover family or couples sessions or only individual visits?
- How many sessions are allowed per calendar year?
- What will your co-payment be?
- What is the effective date of your coverage?
- Is there a waiting period for preexisting conditions?

Missed or Canceled Appointments:

1. I would like to know **as soon as you do** if you will not be able to keep an appointment.
2. Because the time I have for seeing clients is limited and valuable, **I will charge you for all appointments you miss or cancel less than 24 hours in advance. I also will charge you for appointments canceled and rescheduled when this is done less than 24 hours ahead of the original scheduled appointment.** Of course I will not charge you in the event that I am able to fill your canceled time.
3. I will notify you as soon as I know when I will be out of the office.

Charges for Phone Calls and Report Writing:

1. You will be charged for any phone consultation beyond 10 minutes. The charge will be prorated according to the time spent and is based on your regular fee.
2. Sometimes I am asked to write extensive reports to send to schools, out-of-state parents, physicians, attorneys, and so forth. You will be charged at your usual hourly rate for the time it takes me to write these reports. The average preparation time is four hours.
3. You will not be charged for brief summaries for insurance companies and others.

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I don't expect these comments to be all inclusive nor to answer all of your questions. I just hope that they make it easier for you to become acquainted with the therapeutic process. I hope that our work together will provide a healing experience for you.

Client Consent to Treatment:

I have received Ms. Elsbree's **Disclosure Statement and Client Agreement**. I agree to read it and to ask her to clarify any parts that I have questions about or which I do not clearly understand. I consent to therapy with Christiane Elsbree, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W. under the terms described above and understand that I have the right to terminate therapy at any time I desire.

Signed:

Client

Christiane Elsbree, M.S.W.

Parent or Legal Guardian if Client is a Minor

Date

Date