

## Office Policies & General Information Agreement for Psychotherapy Services or Informed Consent for Psychotherapy

*This form provides you, the client, with information that is additional to that detailed in the [Notice of Privacy Practices](#) and it is subject to HIPAA preemptive analysis.*

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission except where disclosure is required by law.

**WHEN DISCLOSURE IS REQUIRED OR MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW:** Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required or may be required by law are: where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent, or elder abuse or neglect; where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled; or when a client's family members communicate to Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston that the client presents a danger to others. Disclosure may also be required pursuant to a legal proceeding by or against you. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston. In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, even over a period of time, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members, unless otherwise agreed upon. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will use his/her clinical judgment when revealing such information. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will not release records to any outside party unless s/he is authorized in writing to do so by all adult parties who were part of the family therapy, couple therapy or other treatment that involved more than one adult client. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY:** If there is an emergency during therapy, or in the future after termination, where Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston becomes concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper psychiatric care, s/he will do whatever s/he can within the limits of the law, to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive the proper medical care. For this purpose, s/he may also contact the person whose name you have provided on the biographical sheet. \_\_\_\_

**HEALTH INSURANCE & CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS:** Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO/PPO/MCO/EAP in order to process the claims. If you so instruct Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston has no control over, or knowledge of, what insurance companies do with the information s/he submits or who has access to this information. You must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk to confidentiality, privacy or to future capacity to obtain health or life insurance or even a job. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is likely to be entered into big insurance companies' computers and is likely to be reported to the National Medical Data Bank. Accessibility to companies' computers or to the National Medical Data Bank database is always in question as computers are inherently vulnerable to hacking and

unauthorized access. Medical data has also been reported to have been legally accessed by law enforcement and other agencies, which also puts you in a vulnerable position. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**LITIGATION:** Sometimes patients become involved in litigation while they are in therapy or after therapy has been completed. Sometimes patients (or the opposing attorney, in a legal case) want the records disclosed to the legal system. Due to the nature of the psychotherapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters, clients' records are generally confidential and private in nature. Patients should know that very serious consequences can result from disclosing therapy records to the legal system. Such disclosures may negatively affect the outcome of custody disputes or other legal matters and may negatively affect the therapeutic relationship. If you or the opposing attorney are considering requesting Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston's disclosure of the records, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will do his/her best to discuss with you the risks and benefits of doing so. As noted in this document, you have the right to review your own psychotherapy records anytime. (See also relevant section above: "WHEN DISCLOSURE IS REQUIRED OR MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW")

**CONSULTATION:** Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston consults regularly with other professionals regarding her/his clients; however, each client's identity remains completely anonymous and confidentiality is fully maintained. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAILS, CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS, AND FAXES:** It is very important to be aware that computers and unencrypted email, texts, and e-faxes communication (which are part of the clinical records) can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. Emails, texts, and e-faxes, in particular, are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers or communication companies may have unlimited and direct access to all emails, texts and e-faxes that go through them. While data on Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston's laptop is encrypted, general emails, texts and e-fax are not. It is always a possibility that e-faxes, texts, and email can be sent erroneously to the wrong address and computers. The email on [www.TherapyAppointment.com](http://www.TherapyAppointment.com) is encrypted and automatically logs to your record, so we recommend that you communicate with us using that medium. We also use the confidential mode on G-Mail. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston's laptop is equipped with a firewall, a virus protection and a password, and backs up all confidential information from our computer on a regular basis. Also, be aware that phone messages may be transcribed and sent via unencrypted emails to Margaret or Michael. Please notify if you decide to a Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston void or limit, in any way, the use of email, texts, cell phones calls, phone messages, or e-faxes. If you communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted email, texts or e-fax or via phone messages, will assume that you have made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and he will honor your desire to communicate on such matters. Please do not use texts, email, voice mail, or faxes for emergencies. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**RECORDS AND YOUR RIGHT TO REVIEW THEM:** Both the law and the standards of profession require that s/he keep treatment records for at least 6 years. Please note that Margaret

Goger-Cranston's or Michael Cranston's clinically relevant information from emails, texts, and faxes are part of the clinical records. Unless otherwise agreed to be necessary, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston retains clinical records only as long as is mandated by Kansas state law. If you have concerns regarding the treatment records, please discuss them with Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston. As a client, you have the right to review or receive a summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. In such a case, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will provide the records to an appropriate and legitimate mental health professional of your choice. Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, and upon your request, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will release information to any agency/person you specify unless Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. When more than one client is involved in treatment, such as in cases of couple and family therapy, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will release records only with signed authorizations from all the adults (or all those who legally can authorize such a release) involved in the treatment.

**TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** If you need to contact Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston between sessions, please leave a message at the answering service (316) 977-8400 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston checks his/her messages a few times during the daytime only, unless s/he is out of town. If an emergency situation arises, indicate it clearly in your message and if you need to talk to someone right away call Psychiatric Emergency Services. (Sedgwick County): (316) 660-7500, 24-hour crisis line for your town, or the Police: 911. Please do not use email, text or faxes for emergencies. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston do not always check his/her email or faxes daily. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT:** Clients are expected to pay their insurance copay, or patient responsibility amount when in deductible period, or the standard fee of \$175.00 per 45 minute or \$215.00 per 60-75 minute session at the end of each session or at the end of the month unless other arrangements have been made. Initial evaluations are \$250.00. If you give us credit card to keep on file for your copays or deductible you understand and agree to it being used for each session unless you specify otherwise. Telephone conversations, site visits, writing and reading of reports, consultation with other professionals, release of information, reading records, longer sessions, travel time, etc. will be charged at the same rate, unless indicated and agreed upon otherwise. Please notify Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston if any problems arise during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. If we are a contracted provider for your insurance company, then we will submit claims on your behalf, unless you sign a waiver requesting we do not, or you do not provide your up to date insurance information. As was indicated in the section, *Health Insurance & Confidentiality of Records*, you must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk. Not all issues/conditions/problems, which are dealt with in psychotherapy, are reimbursed by insurance companies. It is your responsibility to verify the specifics of your coverage. If your policy only covers a 45 minute session, you may be responsible for the difference if your session goes over 55 minutes. You are responsible for No Show/Late Cancel fees. If your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no written agreement on

a payment plan, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston can use legal or other means (courts, collection agencies, etc.) to obtain payment. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEMEDICINE/TELEHEALTH:** If you choose to use telehealth services for all or some of your appointments, please initial your consent and understanding of the following:

1. You understand “telemedicine” includes the practice of health care delivery, diagnosis, consultation and treatment using audio, video and/or data communications.
2. You have a right to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting your right to future care or treatment, nor risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.
3. The laws that protect confidentiality of your medical information also apply to telemedicine. Certain mandatory permissive exceptions to confidentiality, such as those listed above, also apply to telemedicine. You understand the at the dissemination of any personally identifiable images or information from the telemedicine interaction to researchers, consultants or other entities shall not occur without your written consent.
4. You understand that there are risks and consequences from Telemedicine, including, but not limited to, the possibility, despite reasonable efforts on the part of your psychotherapist, that: the transmission of your medical information could be disrupted or distorted by technical failures; the transmission of your medical information could be interrupted by unauthorized persons; and/or the electronic storage of your medical information could be accessed by unauthorized persons. In addition you understand that Tele medicine based services and care may not be as complete as face to face services. You also understand that if your psychotherapist believes you would be better served by another form of psychotherapeutic services (e.g. face to face services) you will be referred to a psychotherapist or mental health agency who can provide such services in your area. Finally, you understand that there are potential risks and benefits associated with any form of psychotherapy, that despite your efforts and the efforts of your psychotherapist, your condition may not be improved and in some cases may even get worse.
5. You understand that you may benefit from telemedicine, but results cannot be guaranteed or assured.
6. You understand that you're responsible for providing necessary computer telecommunications equipment and Internet access for Tele medicine sessions, the information security on your computer and related devices, and arranging for a location with sufficient lighting and privacy that is free from distractions or intrusions for your telemedicine sessions.
7. You understand that payment for Telemedicine sessions may be difficult to obtain from insurance companies in some cases. You understand that you are responsible to pay in full for any session that your insurance refuses to cover, and your cost will be based on Goger-Cranston LLC full fee if we are not in network with your insurance company. Please let us know if you've been denied reimbursement.
8. You understand that you may use email to communicate about scheduling and other logistics, but confidentiality of emails cannot be guaranteed.
9. You accept that Telemedicine does not provide emergency services. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDIATION & ARBITRATION:** All disputes arising out of, or in relation to, this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall preferably first be referred to mediation before the initiation of arbitration or litigation. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston and the client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed upon. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful or not an agreed-upon option, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should preferably be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration, in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association which are in effect at the time the request for arbitration is filed. Please, note that neither mediation nor arbitration is mandatory. In the event that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston can use legal means (court, collection agency, etc.) to seek payment. If there is arbitration, the prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceedings shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum as and for attorney's fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum. In the case of a court case, the court will determine the sum. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE:**

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. Working toward these benefits, however, requires effort on your part. Psychotherapy requires your very active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings, and/or behavior. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will ask for your feedback and views on your therapy, its progress, and other aspects of the therapy and will expect you to respond openly and honestly. Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful in dealing with a certain situation. During evaluation or therapy, remembering or talking about unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts can result in you experiencing considerable discomfort or strong feelings of anger, sadness, worry, fear, etc., or experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations, which can cause you to feel very upset, angry, depressed, challenged, or disappointed. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to therapy in the first place, such as personal or interpersonal relationships, may result in changes that were not originally intended. Psychotherapy may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing, or relationships. Sometimes a decision that is positive for one family member is viewed quite negatively by another family member. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and even frustrating. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results. During the course of therapy, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston is likely to draw on various psychological approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and his/her assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include, but are not limited to, Internal Family Systems, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, cognitive, psychodynamic, existential, mindfulness/meditation, system/family, developmental (adult, child, family), humanistic or psycho-educational. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston **provides neither custody evaluation recommendation nor medication or prescription recommendation nor legal advice**, as these activities do not fall within his/her scope of practice. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**TREATMENT PLANS:** Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will discuss with you his/her working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and his/her view of the possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your therapy, their possible risks, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston's expertise in employing them, or about the treatment plan, please ask and you will be answered fully. You also have the right to ask about other treatments for your condition and their risks and benefits.

**TERMINATION:** As set forth above, after the first couple of meetings, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will assess if they can be of benefit to you. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston do not work with clients who, in her/his opinion, she/he cannot help. In such a case, if appropriate, she/he will give you referrals that you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston either assesses that she/he is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals or perceived you as non-compliant or non-responsive, and if you are available and/or it is possible and appropriate to do, she/he will discuss with you the termination of treatment and conduct pre-termination counseling. In such a case, if appropriate and/or necessary, she/he would give you a couple of referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will talk to the psychotherapist of your choice in order to help with the transition. If at any time you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another therapist, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will give you a couple of referrals that you may want to contact, and if we have your written consent, we will provide her or him with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate therapy and communication at any time. If you choose to do so, upon your request and if appropriate and possible, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer. If you have not sought to reschedule your appointment and have not been seen at Goger-Cranston LLC for 30 days, then we will not consider you an active client and will assume you have terminated therapy.

Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**DUAL RELATIONSHIPS:** Despite a popular perception, not all dual or multiple relationships are unethical or avoidable. Therapy never involves sexual or any other dual relationship that impairs Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston's objectivity, clinical judgment or can be exploitative in nature. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will assess carefully before entering into non-sexual and non-exploitative dual relationships with clients. It is important to realize that in some communities, particularly small towns, small communities, military bases, university campuses, spiritual and rehabilitation communities, etc., multiple relationships are either unavoidable or expected. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will never acknowledge working with anyone without his/her written permission. Many clients have chosen Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston as their therapist because they knew him/her before they entered therapy with him/her, and/or are personally aware of his/her professional work and achievements. Nevertheless, Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will discuss with you the often-existing complexities, potential benefits and difficulties that may be involved in dual or multiple relationships. Dual or multiple relationships can enhance trust and therapeutic effectiveness but can also detract from it and often it is impossible to know which

ahead of time. It is your responsibility to advise Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston if the dual or multiple relationship becomes uncomfortable for you in any way. Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston will always listen carefully and respond to your feedback and will discontinue the dual relationship if s/he finds it interfering with the effectiveness of the therapy or your welfare and, of course, you can do the same at any time. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**SOCIAL NETWORKING AND INTERNET SEARCHES:** At times, I may conduct a web search on clients before the beginning of therapy or during therapy, such as if I am not able to reach you and mail is returned. If you have concerns or questions regarding this practice, please discuss them with me. I do not accept friend requests from current or former clients on social networking sites, such as Facebook or LinkedIn. I believe that adding clients as friends on these sites and/or communicating via such sites can compromise their privacy and confidentiality. For this same reason, I request that clients not communicate with me via any interactive or social networking web sites.

**AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING:** Unless otherwise agreed to by all parties beforehand, there shall be no audio or video recording of therapy sessions, phone calls, or any other services provided by Margaret Goger-Cranston or Michael Cranston.

**CANCELLATION:** Since the scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24 hours (1 day) notice is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless we reach a different agreement, \$100 will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions. Initial \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the above Office Policies and General Information, Agreement for Psychotherapy Services or Informed Consent for Psychotherapy carefully (a total of 6 pages); I understand them and agree to comply with them:

**Client's Name (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Client's Name (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Psychotherapist's Name (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_