

Magdalene Holtam, PhD, Licensed Psychologist, CA PSY 23823  
 Richard Lam, Marriage and Family Therapist, Registered Intern (no. IMF91288)  
**OUTPATIENT SERVICES AGREEMENT/INFORMED CONSENT**

This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. We look forward to discussing any questions with you so that we can be clear on the policies and expectations.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

Psychological counseling varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. Counseling will frequently involve discussing your personal concerns, thoughts, and feelings. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and between sessions. We believe that homework assignments are a necessary part of the recovery process, thus we only work with clients who are willing to engage in homework assignments.

Psychotherapy can have risks and benefits. Initially you may experience uncomfortable levels of sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness, helplessness, or other negative feelings. While you consider these risks, you should also know that the benefits of therapy have been shown by scientists in hundreds of well-designed research studies. Therapy often leads to significant reductions in feelings of distress, improvement in relationships, acquisition of skills to cope with stress, and improvement in overall well-being. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

Our first few hours together will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, we will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our 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 of whether you feel comfortable working together. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about our procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. We are happy to provide outside referrals if your concerns persist.

### **MEETINGS AND CANCELLATION POLICIES**

We offer both 50-minute “traditional” appointments as well as an “Intensive Therapy” model (e.g., 2-6 hours at a time; multiple days per week). The exact timing of sessions will be determined in consultation with you, based on your needs.

A phone consultation is recommended prior to arranging treatment. The 15-minute consultation will be done free of charge. During the consultation, we can both decide whether I am the best match to provide the services you need. Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be charged for it unless you provide **48 hours advance notice of cancellation** (unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control).

### **SUPERVISION INFORMATION FOR RICHARD LAM, MFT INTERN**

Mr. Lam has completed training as a mental health practitioner and is currently gaining hours towards independent licensure. He is registered as a MFT Intern and is supervised by Dr. Holtam. This means that he works collaboratively with Dr. Holtam to provide you with the best care possible. In order to provide supervision, Dr. Holtam has full access to clinical records of clients seen by Mr. Lam. If you have any concerns about your counseling experience, we ask you to first discuss the concerns with your counselor and then to contact Dr. Holtam if concerns remain unresolved.

### **TELEMENTALHEALTH**

In some instances, it may be clinically indicated to provide services via telephone or via a video phone service. TeleMentalHealth has been defined as the use of technology (e.g., phone, video calls) for the delivery of psychological services. A potential benefit of this format is that sessions can be provided when clients are not able to attend in-person sessions due to various reasons including physical limitations, physical distance, or lack of transportation. Ample research indicates that telementalhealth has led to effective treatment of various disorders (Journal of Technology in Human Services, 2008, Vol. 26, No. 2; Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, Vol. 16, No. 3). However, some potential risks of telementalhealth include: less control over confidentiality, decreased emotional connection between therapist and client due to lack physical proximity, reducing the likelihood of insurance reimbursement, and necessity of using different forms of crisis intervention (e.g., client is required to visit a local emergency room). We use [www.securevideo.com](http://www.securevideo.com) for client video sessions. The service claims to be HIPAA compliant and reliable, however we cannot guarantee there will not be concerns of service reliability, potential interruptions of services, security, or confidentiality. Clients are encouraged to research and understand the benefits and limits of this form of technology before agreeing to engage with the technology. Signing this consent indicates that you understand the potential benefits and risks.

**HOMEWORK**

We practice a model of psychotherapy that requires weekly homework. It is our experience that clients who do homework make significantly more progress toward their goals than clients who do not do homework. If you are not comfortable completing weekly homework, we would be happy to refer you to a clinician who does not require homework. **Please initial here to indicate your willingness to complete homework assignments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ENDING THERAPY**

Our hope is to help you end therapy as soon as you have met your goals and are feeling ready to do so. If you experience a readiness to end therapy, we ask that you commit to a final session together so that we can understand your decision, assist with solidifying gains, and support your transition.

**PROFESSIONAL FEES**

Fees are as follows:

90-minute Intake/Initial Appointment with Dr. Holtam: \$300

50-minute Session with Dr. Holtam: \$225.

75-minute Intake/Initial Appointment with Mr. Lam: \$120

50-minute Session with Mr. Lam: \$95

In addition to appointments, we charge these amounts (pro-rated) for other professional services you may need. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of us. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if we are called to testify by another party.

**BILLING AND PAYMENTS**

Payment is always collected at the beginning of each session. We accept cash, check, and credit cards (visa or mastercard). If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payments have not been agreed upon, we may use legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its cost will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information we release regarding a client's treatment is the name of the client, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

**INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. We are not currently listed on any insurance panels, which means that we are not "in-network" for any insurance provider. We will give you a receipt and you are welcome to apply for reimbursement of a portion of the fee through your insurance provider. We cannot guarantee whether your insurance provider will cover this expense. Many carriers will provide only very limited coverage. Please consult with your insurance carrier prior to starting services.

Many insurance companies require you to authorize us to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes we have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, we have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank.

**THE FEELING GOOD INSTITUTE**

Dr. Holtam and Mr. Lam work with a group of independent mental health professionals under the name Feeling Good Institute (FGI). This group is an association of independently practicing professionals who share certain expenses and administrative functions. While the members share a name and space, Dr. Holtam is completely independent in providing clinical services and fully responsible for services provided. Many clients at FGI work with multiple clinicians. By signing this document, you are giving Dr. Holtam permission to consult with those clinicians at FGI who may be involved in your treatment. You should be aware that if you choose to use our online booking system (Bookeo.com) other clinicians at FGI may have access to your name and appointment times. These clinicians are bound by confidentiality under professional ethics codes. Professional records (with details of your case) are separately maintained and no member of FGI can have access to them without your written permission.

**PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

The laws and standards of my profession require that we keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or we can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting. If you wish to see your records, we recommend that you review them in our presence.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist 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 (described below). In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent us from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it. There are some situations in which we are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if we have to reveal some information about a patient’s treatment. For example, if we believe that a child, dependent elder, or disabled person is being abused, we may be required to file a report with the appropriate state agency. If we believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, we may be required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If the patient threatens to harm himself/herself, we may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. These situations have rarely occurred in our practice.

We may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I will not reveal the identity of my patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. California law allows us to consult with your medical and mental health treatment providers in order to provide you with the best possible care.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that we provide you with a Notice of Privacy Practices (the Notice) for use and disclosure of PHI for treatment, payment and health care operations. The Notice, which you should download with this document, explains HIPAA and its application to your personal health information in greater detail. Your signature on this document indicates that the HIPAA policies have been made available to you.

**COMPLAINTS OR CONCERNS**

We ask clients to complete weekly evaluations to provide feedback on whether you are getting your needs met in therapy. We hope you will discuss any concerns with us. You may also report any concerns you have to the Board of Psychology at 800-633-2322 and/or the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services at 877-696-6775.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

We are not able to provide crisis mental health treatment outside of regularly scheduled sessions. Dr. Holtam and Mr. Lam maintain separate phone lines that are answered by confidential voicemail boxes. We will make every effort to return your call within two business days, with the exception of weekends and holidays. In the case of an emergency, please call the Santa Clara County Crisis Line (408-279-3312), dial 911, or go to your local emergency room. If you require regular contact outside of scheduled sessions or crisis mental health services, we can provide referrals to clinicians who can provide this service. Email is a convenient method for scheduling purposes and arranging treatment, however the confidentiality of email cannot be guaranteed.

Magdalene Holtam, PhD: 650-209-0555 or magdalene.holtam@gmail.com  
Richard Lam, MFT Intern: 619-800-0549 or richard@feelinggoodinstitute.com

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

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*If different from above:*

Party Responsible for Payment (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

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