

GUIDELINES FOR THERAPY INVOLVING CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

➤ By signing this Agreement to Treat, you have consented to have your child, and possibly other family members, participate in therapy. In situations where parents have joint custody, either parent can consent to treatment, and either parent can withdraw consent and terminate therapy. Using age appropriate language, the ideas of consent and the limits of confidentiality will be explained to your child.

➤ Persons whom I consider to be part of my family and whom I wish to include in the treatment process include:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

➤ Therapy needs to be a safe place for all participants, including your child. Therefore, the therapist will keep most information learned from and about your child confidential, unless the child agrees that it will be shared. Parents will be made aware of a child's progress in therapy either by their direct participation in family sessions, or by receiving summaries of the child's progress and issues. In any event, parents will be provided information about their children that allows them to fulfill their parental responsibilities.

➤ If the therapist believes that the child is at serious risk of harm or is at serious risk of harming another, the therapist may break the child's confidentiality and inform the parent(s). Other potentially serious issues about which parents may want to be informed (alcohol/drug use, sexual relationships, gang involvement, use of pornography, pregnancy/abortion, self-harm, and other high-risk behaviors) will be discussed at the beginning of therapy, and a plan regarding how to handle them will be addressed.

➤ Successful therapy calls for a very active effort from you and your child, both during sessions and at home. Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. There is a chance your child may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, and frustration. On the other hand, psychotherapy also has been shown to have many benefits. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience and noncompliance with treatment is associated with worse outcomes.

➤ When a family is confronted by a parental separation or divorce, it can be very hard on everyone. It may be particularly hard on children. When the parental relationship is unsafe, it is even more important that therapy present a safe environment. That safety is particularly endangered where a child has to worry that what he/she says in therapy will be revealed in court and used against one of his/her parents. In order to protect that safety, it should be agreed that the therapist will not be called as a witness by either party. It should be understood, however, that a judge may decide not to honor this agreement and that the therapist may be required to be a witness, although Amber Fry Counseling, PC will try to prevent this from happening.

Thank you for taking the time to read the above information. Your signature below indicates that you have received and read the guidelines and have authorization to consent to therapy for the child named below.

Name of Client

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date