

Clinician-Patient Agreement and Financial Responsibility

Informed Consent for Counseling Services:

Welcome to my private practice. Jemese LaChel Psychotherapy and Coaching, LLC is the private practice for Jemese LaChel Edmonson, MSW, LCSW. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and write down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Clients have the freedom to choose whether or not to enter into or remain in a therapeutic relationship and need adequate information about the therapy process and the therapist. Psychotherapists have an obligation to review in writing and verbally with clients the rights and responsibilities of both psychotherapist and clients. Informed consent is an ongoing part of the therapeutic process. The therapeutic relationship is unique in that it is a highly personal and at the same time, a contractual agreement. Given this, it is important for us to reach a clear understanding about how our relationship will work, and what each of us can expect. This consent will provide a clear framework for our work together. Feel free to discuss any of this with me. Please read and indicate that you have reviewed this information and agree to it by signing your name the end of this document.

About Jemese Edmonson, MSW, LCSW:

My name is Jemese LaChel Edmonson and I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and psychotherapist in the state of Missouri (License # 2016016566).

I entered the social work profession with a deep-seated belief that everybody, no matter what they've experienced or been through, has the capacity to change, grow and heal. I believe within each of us is a story, and we influence the way the story is told, what we believe about the story, and how the story develops over time.

I obtained my Bachelor of Science in Social Work from University of Missouri—Columbia (Columbia, MO) and my Master of Social Work from Western Carolina University (Cullowhee, NC). I utilize an eclectic mix of therapeutic practices that are based on but not limited to the following: cognitive behavioral therapy, reality therapy, mindfulness, acceptance & commitment, motivational interviewing, and person-centered strategies.

My previous work history includes counseling in a substance abuse treatment facility, providing case management at a community public health center, and serving individuals within clinical and community settings. I also served an honorable enlistment in the United States Marine Corps. My educational and work histories have served to cultivate my current counseling specialties and a belief in the process and experience of value-directed change.

I consider myself a lifelong learner, and I learn from those I serve on a daily basis.

I am passionate about helping my clients experience change and a greater sense of peace, empowerment, and purpose. With creativity, empathy, and laughter, I endeavor to work alongside you and witness within you the changes that arise.

The Therapeutic Process (Risks & Benefits):

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychotherapist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy 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.

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- You may ask questions about any aspect of the psychotherapy process.
- If you have been referred by a court or state agency, you have the right to divulge only what you want to be included in a report.
- Therapy is most effective when you are open and can speak honestly about your emotions and experiences.
- Therapy may include talking about emotionally provoking subjects and scenarios.
- The outcome of your treatment depends largely on your willingness to engage in this process, which may, at times, result in considerable discomfort. Therapy has potential emotional risks. Expressing or unearthing feelings or thoughts that you have tried not to think about for a long time may be painful. Making changes in your beliefs or behaviors can be frightening, and sometimes even detrimental to the relationships you have with friends and family members. You may find your relationship with me to be a source of strong feelings, some of them painful at times, but many of them potentially empowering. It is important that you consider carefully whether these risks are worth the benefits to your making desired changes. Most people who take these risks find that therapy is beneficial.
- There are no miracle cures. I cannot promise that your behavior or circumstance will change. I can promise to support you and do my very best to understand you and to help you clarify what it is that you want for yourself.
- I have found that using a person-centered approach to therapy, or, an approach that emphasizes your choices within a supportive and non-judgmental environment, is most conducive to exploring your potential and becoming that which you are capable of becoming. While this is my most consistent approach, and one that is present at all times, I may also draw from other therapeutic approaches such as Narrative Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, Cognitive Therapy, or Crisis-Intervention methods in order to best serve you as the client.
- If I propose a specific technique that may have certain risks attached, I will inform you of that, and discuss with you the risks and benefits of what I am suggesting.
- I may suggest that you consult with a physical health care provider regarding somatic treatments that could help your problems or refer you to non-traditional practitioners (homeopathic providers, yoga studios, etc.), and will be glad to discuss with you the pros and cons of various alternatives.
- I may suggest that you get involved in a therapy or support group as part of your work with me.
- If another health care person is working with you, I will need a release of information from you so that we can communicate freely with that person about your care. You have the right to refuse anything that I suggest.

Confidentiality:

The session content and all relevant materials to the client's treatment will be held confidential unless the client requests in writing to have all or portions of such content released to a specifically named person/persons. Limitations of such client held privilege of confidentiality do exist and are itemized below:

- If a client threatens or attempts to commit suicide or otherwise conducts him/her self in a manner in which there is a substantial risk of incurring serious bodily harm.
- If a client threatens grave bodily harm or death to themselves or another person.
- If the therapist has a reasonable suspicion that a client or other named victim is the perpetrator, observer of, or actual victim of physical, emotional or sexual abuse of children under the age of 18 years.
- Suspicions as stated above in the case of an elderly or differently-abled person who may be subjected to these abuses.
- If a court of law issues a legitimate subpoena for information stated on the subpoena.
- If a client is in therapy or being treated by order of a court of law, or if information is obtained for the purpose of rendering an expert's report to an attorney.
- Occasionally I may need to consult with other professionals in their areas of expertise in order to

- provide the best treatment for you. Information about you may be shared in this context without using your name.
- If we see each other accidentally outside of the therapy office, I will not acknowledge you first. Your right to privacy and confidentiality is of the utmost importance to me, and I do not wish to jeopardize your privacy. However, if you acknowledge me first, I will be more than happy to speak briefly with you, but feel it appropriate not to engage in any lengthy discussions in public or outside of the therapy office.

Appointments:

- All office visits are by appointment only and may be scheduled by your therapist directly.
- Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation (unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control.)
- Please arrive on time, as you use up your own time when you arrive late for an appointment.
- If you are more than 15 minutes late for an appointment, your session will be cancelled
- I will usually schedule one 50-minute session (one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent.
- **Late cancellation (less than 24 hours before) and/or no-show appointments are billed to the client for the full amount.** In the case of illness, please notify us no later than 9:00 a.m. the day of the appointment. Please leave a message if you get voice mail. If your appointment is cancelled or missed, contact the office for a new appointment time. Insurance companies will not pay for no-show charges or late cancellation charges or for telephone consultations.

Contacting The Therapist:

- The best number to reach my office is (573) 427-2992.
- Please note that I am frequently in session with other clients during my business hours and voicemails may not be returned for several hours. If you receive the voice mail, I may be on the phone, in therapy with someone else, or out of the office. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by a voice mail answering service.
- I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays.
- If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist, psychiatrist or social worker on call.
- If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

Emergencies:

- If you are experiencing a crisis or emergent situation and I cannot be reached you may **call Central Missouri's 24-hour Mental Health Crisis Line: 1-800-395-2132, or go immediately to your local hospital emergency room. You may also call 911 if you are experiencing an emergency.**
- In the event of death or incapacitation of the counselor, services will be terminated and it will be the client's responsibility to find continued care. It is recommended by Jemese LaChel Psychotherapy and Coaching, LLC that client's contact potential service providers in the "resources" area of Jemese LaChel Psychotherapy and Coaching, LLC's website.

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. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my

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- fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.
- You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Of course I will provide you with whatever information I can based on my experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, I will be willing to call the company on your behalf.
 - Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. "Managed Health Care" plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. [Some managed-care plans will not allow me to provide services to you once your benefits end. If this is the case, I will do my best to find another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy.]
 - You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to allow me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I 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 and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I 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. I will provide you with a copy of any report I submit, if you request it. I understand that by using your insurance I am aware that such information may be provided to them. I will try to keep that information limited to the minimum necessary.
 - Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end our sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above [unless prohibited by contract].

Fees:

- My hourly fee is \$90.00. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though I will prorate the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 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 me.
- The client portion (co-pay) of fees is expected at the time of service.
- Your health insurance may help you recover some of your counseling costs. Most group policies, but few individual policies cover outpatient psychotherapy. Please verify with your company the amounts of coverage for outpatient psychotherapy by licensed professionals. **If your policy requires preauthorization to receive services, it is your responsibility and needs to be handled prior to your first visit.**
- Insured clients are expected to take care of their fees as services are rendered. Our office will bill your insurance company for services provided. You will receive a statement each month reflecting any balance due on your account. This office cannot accept responsibility for collecting your insurance claims or for negotiating a settlement on a disputed claim. You are responsible for payment (and insurance claims) on your account. **Failure to pay your part may jeopardize your benefits. Copays are not negotiable.**
- Clients referred by Spectrum Healthcare (formerly known as Rain of Central Missouri) must have a Ryan White Mental Health referral open and active to receive psychotherapy services

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- from Jemese LaChel Edmonson, MSW, LCSW and Jemese LaChel Psychotherapy & Coaching. It is the client's responsibility to ensure their referral is active and open prior to receiving services.
- Clients paying on a cash basis, and not billing any insurance company are expected to pay in full at time of service unless a payment plan has been previously arranged.
 - Except in the case of minors or when other arrangements are made, the person receiving the counseling service is financially liable.
 - Accounts become delinquent after thirty (30) days. **Accounts go days in arrears will be terminated.**
 - Any change in my financial situation I will discuss with my therapist. In the event you find it necessary to change mental health providers and require records to be sent from **Jemese LaChel Psychotherapy and Coaching, LLC** your account will need to be paid in full.
 - **If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, a non-refundable \$500 retainer will be required.** If \$500 retainer is exhausted to cover expenses, a second non-refundable retainer will be required before further legal related activity can be continued. Expenses incurred shall be as follows:
 - Time in waiting for and/or attending court: \$300 per hour, pro-rated on the half hour, rounding up.
 - Preparation of documents, review of documents, correspondence with third-parties on behalf of the client, time spent on the phone with the client and/or appropriate third parties, will be billed at \$200 per hour, pro-rated on half-hour increments rounded up.

Termination of Services:

Ideally, termination of a therapeutic relationship occurs when both you and your therapist agree that goals have been met and you are capable of navigating difficulties or concerns on your own. However, it is your right to terminate therapy at any time. There are certain circumstances by which the therapist may terminate services:

- If it is not in my judgment to be able to help you, because of the kind of concern you have or because my training and skills are, in my judgment not appropriate, I will inform you of this fact and refer you to another therapist who may be able to meet your needs.
- If you become violent, make threats, or become abusive to me, my staff, or family, I reserve the right to terminate you unilaterally and immediately from treatment.
- If I terminate you from therapy, I will offer you referrals to other sources of care, but cannot guarantee that they will accept you for therapy.

Other Rights

- If you are unhappy with what is happening in therapy, I hope you will talk with me so that I can respond to your concerns. Such comments will be taken seriously and handled with care and respect. You may also request that I refer you to another therapist and are free to end therapy at any time.
- You have the right to considerate, safe and respectful care, without discrimination as to race, ethnicity, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or source of payment.
- You have the right to ask questions about any aspects of therapy and about my specific training and experience.
- You have the right to expect that I will not have social or sexual relationships with clients or with former clients.

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I have read, understand and agree to the above policies. I have been offered a copy of these policies to take with me if desired. I hereby authorize **Jemese LaChel Psychotherapy and Coaching, LLC** and my therapist Jemese LaChel Edmonson, MSW, LCSW to release any information acquired in the course of my therapy to my insurance company (if client is a minor, parent or guardian sign). I understand my insurance coverage is a relationship between me and my insurance company, and I agree to accept financial responsibility for payment of charges incurred. I understand that a re-billing fee/financial charge complying with Missouri State Law will be applied to any overdue balance, and in the event of non-payment, I will bear the cost of collection and/or court costs and reasonable legal fees should this be required. I have read and/or received a copy of **Jemese LaChel Psychotherapy and Coaching, LLC's** Privacy Policy

Client(s) Printed Name

Client(s) Signature

Date

Jemese LaChel Edmonson, MSW, LCSW
Therapist Printed Name

Therapist's Signature

Date