

# Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC

Phone: (602) 558-5353

Email: [cindi@cindistoneman.com](mailto:cindi@cindistoneman.com) Website: [www.cindistoneman.com](http://www.cindistoneman.com)

## AGREEMENT/INFORMED CONSENT FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES OFFICE POLICIES & GENERAL INFORMATION

**This form provides you (client) with information that is additional to that detailed in the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices.**

**INFORMED CONSENT TO TREATMENT:** Client and/or guardian consent to treatment by Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC including any testing, diagnosis, and treatment provided by her.

**LENGTH OF TREATMENT:** Treatment typically involves regular sessions, usually 45-50 minutes in length. Duration of treatment varies depending on the nature of the problem(s) and your individual needs.

**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 (client's) written permission, except where disclosure is required by law. Most of the provisions explaining when the law requires disclosure were described to you in the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices that you received with this form.

**When Disclosure Is Required By Law:** Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required by the law are: where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder, abuse, exploitation or neglect; and where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, persistently or acutely disabled, or is gravely disabled, or when client's family member/s communicate to Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC that the client presents a danger to others (for more details see also Notice of Privacy Practices form).

**When Disclosure May Be Required:** Disclosure may be required pursuant to a legal proceeding. 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 Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC. In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC will use her clinical judgment when revealing such information. Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC will not release records to any outside party unless she is authorized to do so by **all** adult family members who were part of the treatment.

**Emergencies:** If there is an emergency during our work together, or in the future after termination, where Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC becomes concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper psychiatric care, she will do whatever she 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, she 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 Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Unless authorized by you explicitly, the Psychotherapy Notes will not be disclosed to your insurance carrier. Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC has no control or knowledge over what insurance companies do with the information she 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 eligibility to obtain health or life insurance. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is entered into insurance companies' computers and soon will also be reported to the, congress-approved, 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 break-ins and unauthorized access. Medical data has been reported to have been sold, stolen, or accessed by enforcement agencies; therefore, you are in a vulnerable position.

**Confidentiality of E-mail, Cell Phone, and Faxes Communication:** It is very important to be aware that e-mail and cell phone communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence, the privacy and

confidentiality of such communication can be compromised. . E-mails, in particular, are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers have unlimited and direct access to all e-mails that go through them. Faxes can easily be sent erroneously to the wrong address. There is no guarantee of confidentiality through e-mail or fax correspondence. Please notify Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC at the beginning of treatment if you decide to avoid or limit in any way the use of any or all of the above-mentioned communication devices. Please do not use e-mail or faxes for emergencies.

**Litigation Limitation:** Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters which may be of a confidential nature, it is agreed that should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you (client) nor your attorney, nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested unless agreed upon with Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC.

**Counselor/Psychotherapist Incapacitation or Termination of Practice:** If Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, should become incapacitated through death, disability, or change in her practice, client will be contacted to who will be the custodian of their records. Client will also be contacted about continuity of service with another mental health practitioner.

**Consultation:** Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC may consult with other professionals regarding her clients in order to provide high quality treatment. However, the client's name or other identifying information is never mentioned. The client's identity remains completely anonymous, and confidentiality is fully maintained. When away from the office for a few days, she has a trusted fellow clinician "cover." This clinician is available to you in emergencies. Therefore, he or she needs to know about you. Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC will only tell this clinician what he or she would need to know for an emergency. Of course, this clinician is bound by the same laws and rules to protect your confidentiality.

\* Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, upon your request, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC will release information to any agency/person you specify unless Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC concludes that releasing such information might be harmful in any way.

**TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** If you need to contact Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC between sessions, please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, checks her messages a few times a day, unless she is out of town. If an emergency situation arises, please indicate it clearly in your message. If you need to talk to someone right away, you can call the 24-hour crisis line 602.222.9444, or the Police (911).

**PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT:** Clients are expected to pay the agreed upon fee at the end of each session or at the end of the month unless other arrangements have been made. Telephone conversations, site visits, report writing and reading, 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 otherwise. Please notify Cindi Stoneman MA, LPC if any problem arises during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. Clients who carry insurance should remember that professional services are rendered and charged to the clients and not to the insurance companies. Unless agreed upon differently, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC will, upon request, provide you with a copy of your receipt on a monthly basis, which you can then submit to your insurance company for reimbursement if you so choose. 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 the focus of psychotherapy, are reimbursed by insurance companies. It is your responsibility to verify the specifics of your coverage.

**MEDIATION & ARBITRATION:** All disputes arising out of or in relation to this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediation, before, and as a pre-condition of, the initiation of arbitration. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC and client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in Maricopa County, Arizona, in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association which are in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC can use legal means (court,

collection agency, etc.) to obtain payment. The prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceedings shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum for attorneys' fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum.

**THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION:** 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. Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, 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 your experiencing considerable discomfort or strong feelings of anger, sadness, worry, fear, etc. or experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations that 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, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, is likely to draw on various psychological & counseling approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and his assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, existential, system/family, developmental (adult, child, family), or psycho-educational.

**Discussion of Treatment Plan:** Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, will discuss with you (client) his working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and his 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, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, 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. If you could benefit from any treatment that Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, does not provide, she has an ethical obligation to assist you in obtaining those treatments.

**Termination:** As set forth above, after the first couple of meetings, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, will assess if she can be of benefit to you. Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, does not accept clients who, in her opinion, she cannot help. In such a case, she will give you a number of referrals that you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, assesses that she is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals, she is obliged to discuss it with you and, if appropriate, to terminate treatment. In such a case, she would give you a number of referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, 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, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, will assist you in finding someone qualified, and, if she has your written consent, she will provide her or him with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate therapy at any time. If you choose to do so, Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

**Dual Relationships:** Not all dual relationships are unethical or avoidable. Therapy never involves sexual or any other dual relationship that impairs Cindi Stoneman's objectivity, clinical judgment, or therapeutic effectiveness or can be exploitative in nature. Cindi Stoneman will assess carefully before entering into non-sexual and non-exploitative dual relationships with clients. Phoenix/Scottsdale is a small community and many clients know each other and Cindi Stoneman from the community. Consequently you may bump into someone you know in the waiting room or into Cindi Stoneman out in the community. Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, will never acknowledge working therapeutically with anyone without his/her written permission. Many clients choose Cindi Stoneman as their therapist because they know her before they enter into therapy with her and/or are aware of her stance on the topic. Nevertheless, Cindi Stoneman will discuss with you, her client(s), the often-existing complexities, potential benefits, and difficulties that may be involved in such relationships. Dual or multiple relationships can enhance therapeutic effectiveness but can also detract from it and often it is impossible to know that ahead of time. It is your, the client's, responsibility to communicate to Cindi Stoneman if any existing dual relationship becomes uncomfortable for you in any way. Cindi Stoneman will always listen carefully and respond accordingly to your feedback. Cindi Stoneman will discontinue the dual relationship if she finds it interfering with the effectiveness of the therapeutic process or the welfare of the client and, of course, you can do the same at any time.

**CANCELLATION:** Since scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a **minimum of 24 hours notice is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment.** Unless we reach a different agreement, a fee will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions, **therefore payment of this fee is the responsibility of the client.**

**OTHER POINTS:** Although the office is shared with other therapists, each of us works independently and each alone is responsible for the quality of the care he or she provides. Because Cindi Stoneman, MA, LPC, does outpatient counseling/therapy, she cannot promise to be available at all times. Although in the office Monday through Thursday, from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. and some Saturdays she usually does not take phone calls when with a client. You can always leave a message on the answering machine/voice mail and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Generally, messages are returned daily except on Sundays and holidays.