

*“Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together; certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.”*

~ Dinah Maria Craik, British poet, (1859)

## **PSYCHOTHERAPY AT THE CENTER AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT**

You have taken a very major positive step in the resolution of your sexual trauma by coming to the Center Against Sexual Assault for help. We look forward to being of service to you. The Center provides mental health treatment to you in a client-centered collaboration until your agreed upon goals are achieved. What does this mean? It means that psychotherapy is directed by you and those issues you want to work on. That is what makes our therapy client-centered. We are committed to work with one client individually at a time, and we endeavor to provide a safe place in which you may talk about, emotionally understand, and resolve the issues you present.

### **BEGINNING THERAPY**

Your first two interviews are intake and assessment in which we begin to learn about you and you begin to learn about the Center and your therapist. You will likely be given a “Welcome Packet” containing a Life History Questionnaire, Beck Anxiety Inventory, Beck Depression Inventory and a Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Scale to take home and fill out. Please complete as many of these documents in as much detail as you feel comfortable doing. If any of these documents are too emotionally difficult to complete, please stop and talk with your therapist at your next appointment about your difficulty. These materials enable us to get to know you more completely at the beginning so we have more of an appreciation of who you are and what you have been through.

At your third session, you and your therapist will create a treatment plan describing your current difficulties, goals (what you want to achieve), and objectives (how you will achieve your goals). This plan will be reviewed by you and your therapist at least every four months.

We welcome any questions, thoughts, or feelings you have along the way. Please feel free to discuss these openly and honestly with your therapist because this is the way psychotherapy works best. Your therapist is always interested in how you feel about your therapy. Our primary goal is to have your therapy work for you!

### **GUIDELINES FOR THERAPY**

One way to ensure that your therapy works for you is by attending all scheduled psychotherapy sessions. Attendance at your therapy sessions is vital for effective treatment. *If you go for an unplanned period of at least 30 days or more without contacting your therapist, the Center will consider this as a voluntary withdrawal from services and your file will be closed. Treatment may also be ended if a client demonstrates physically abusive behaviors or verbally harassing communication to a therapist or any other Center staff.* If ever you require services that cannot for any reason be provided by our organization, you will be referred to other appropriate community resources. If you need to cancel or re-schedule your appointment, please notify the office at least 24 hours in advance.

### **BENEFITS, LIMITATIONS, AND RISKS**

Psychotherapy has been compared to a journey of discovery. As you and your therapist travel on this road you will begin to understand the reasons you think, feel, and act as you do. Many aspects of your life will become clearer to you. As with any treatment, there are benefits, limitations, and risks.

**Benefits:** enhanced awareness and emotional understanding of yourself and others; improvement in interpersonal relationships; reduction in presenting symptoms or problems; improvement in job or school performance; a strengthened sense of self; and an overall sense of well-being.

**Limitations and risks:** no experience of change; feeling worse before feeling better; an increase in feelings such as grief, sadness, and anger; or feeling better but having increased differences with others as you grow and change.

Any of these positive or negative experiences are important to discuss with your therapist. Your therapist is always interested in how you are doing. Some important things to discuss with your therapist might include: if you feel the therapist is not right for you, if you want to take a break, if you want to end the journey at least for right now, if you think you've achieved your goals and it's time to end. Again, it is vital that all of these thoughts and feelings be talked about with your therapist.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Psychotherapy is best conducted in an atmosphere that provides privacy and trust. What you say in a session is confidential under most circumstances. Some exceptions are:

- if, in your therapist's clinical judgment, you are presenting a danger to yourself or others
- if you discuss situations that indicate there is abuse or neglect of a child or an incapacitated adult
- if your case file is subpoenaed
- if you give permission, in writing, for information about your contact here to be shared with a specific party

At times, in order to provide you with the best possible therapeutic experience, your therapist may seek consultation from other members of the Center team or other outside professionals. If consultation is sought from an outside professional, any identifying information will be presented in a manner to maintain your confidentiality unless you sign a release for those specifics to be shared.

If you have any questions about confidentiality, we encourage you to discuss them with your therapist.

## **ABOUT OUR GROUPS**

Some people feel very helped when they are participating in a group with other people. At the Center we offer two kinds of groups: coping skills groups and psychotherapy groups. We have two coping skills groups that assist people to better cope with the possible aftermath of sexual trauma: panic, anxiety, depression, intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, isolation, worry, fear, and other symptoms. We also offer women's and men's psychotherapy groups where people may share their experiences, relate with others, learn and grow from listening to others, and come to feel less alone and more empowered. If you are interested in any of these groups, please discuss your interest with your therapist. Remember that a group experience is not right for everyone.

## **EYE MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION AND REPROCESSING (EMDR)**

Most Center therapists are certified in EMDR. This approach may be used as an addition to your psychotherapy, and can relieve the symptoms of disturbing memories. EMDR allows for putting stored traumatic memory into words, and provides a language for feeling. Its aim is the integration of unprocessed, stored feelings associated with traumatic memory. The goal of EMDR is to free a person from a dysfunctional storage of feeling. It is called a "reprocessing therapy," and desensitization is a possible result of the reprocessing. Again, EMDR is not right for everyone. If you are interested in considering this approach, please speak with your therapist.

*Thank you for coming to the CENTER AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT.*

The Mental Health Services Team  
Southern Arizona Center Against Sexual Assault

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