



## Consent for Evaluation & Treatment / Practice Policies

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Thank you for entrusting us with your care. Choosing a mental health provider is an important decision. Please review below.

### OUR PRACTICE MODEL

Mind Health Institute, Newport Beach (MHI-NB) and Mind Health Institute, Laguna Beach (MHI-LB) are multi-disciplinary clinics comprised of various mental health providers including psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, psychological testing specialists, administrative support staff, and other related professionals. MHI-NB is the flagship site in Orange County. However, MHI-LB as well as future Orange County sites are part of our same practice. We offer collaborative care that includes interaction between our providers as well as a variety of services to support our team including targeted psychological tests, height/weight monitoring, blood pressure monitoring, pharmacogenomic testing, etc. We also strive to integrate new services as the standard of care changes in an effort to offer you the best care possible. In addition to working collaboratively within our clinic, your MHI-NB and MHI-LB provider practices within a network of colleagues (i.e., primary care doctors, other specialty physicians, psychologists, social workers, therapists, nutritionists, etc.) that we can offer as referrals. If a referral is offered, your provider is also willing to work collaboratively with these professionals and coordinate your care based on your needs. Although we always attempt to identify top quality professionals, we cannot be responsible for services and treatments that other professionals provide. It is your responsibility to determine if a professional referral is acceptable and alternative options can always be considered.

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF

Our office administrative staff is available from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm on weekdays (excluding holidays) and can be contacted by phone (**949-891-0307, ext. 0**) or email ([admin@mhi-nb.com](mailto:admin@mhi-nb.com)) for all administrative issues including scheduling and rescheduling appointments, payment issues, requests for service invoices, etc. Clinical issues should always be addressed with your individual provider and not the administrative staff.

### INITIAL EVALUATION

The initial session is an evaluation only and is also intended to determine if a treatment relationship is appropriate. This session focuses on conducting an initial evaluation and outlining a treatment plan. It is specific for each individual and often serves as the foundation for your ongoing care. Please bring completed patient forms (under “forms” section of our website at [www.mhi-nb.com](http://www.mhi-nb.com) or [www.mhi-lb.com](http://www.mhi-lb.com)) to this appointment and make sure to provide information about previous providers, past treatments, and medication trials. Additionally, collateral information (i.e., school reports, family reports, etc.) is often helpful and will be discussed during this initial session. Please remember that a comprehensive evaluation is necessary regardless of the treatment modality (i.e., psychotherapy, psychiatric medication management, psychological testing, etc.) and prior assessments by other providers. Additionally, during this initial session, we will mutually determine if we are best suited to provide your ongoing care and may choose to help connect you elsewhere. The length of the initial session is dependent on the type of service that you are seeking as well as your chosen provider. Our psychiatrists generally conduct 90-minute initial evaluations whereas our psychologists and therapists often complete their initial sessions in 60-120 minutes. In some situations, extra sessions are needed to complete an appropriate evaluation.

### PSYCHOTHERAPY

Sometimes called talk therapy or merely therapy, this form of treatment can be helpful for individuals, couples, and families. Benefits of psychotherapy can include stress reduction, improved relationships, resolution of specific problems, parent skills training, and improved self-insight. However, psychotherapy is not guaranteed to work for everybody and can be a significant financial investment and time commitment. Psychotherapy may also require exploring unpleasant aspects of your life and can lead to feelings of distress (i.e., guilt, anxiety, frustration, etc.). Such unpleasant aspects are generally temporary but are extremely important to discuss when present. Please remember that anything can be discussed in psychotherapy. Thus, it is important to let your therapist know if you feel that your goals are not being met. All of our providers are willing to help find alternative referrals, if necessary, whether within our practice or elsewhere.

### MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

Psychiatric medications (aka. psychotropic medications) can be used in conjunction with psychotherapy to treat many conditions. It is often important to find the best combination of medication management and psychotherapy to serve your needs. Our psychiatrists can provide an integrated approach as they are trained to administer both psychiatric medications and perform psychotherapy. However, it is often appropriate for your psychiatrist to merely manage your psychiatric medications and share the psychotherapy with an alternative provider within our practice (MHI-NB or MHI-LB) or elsewhere. Often called the ‘split treatment’ model, this may be discussed to determine if it would be a viable option for your care. In situations that warrant the use of psychiatric medications, it is imperative for you to understand the condition or symptoms being targeted and likely outcomes. Moreover, since all medications have the potential for side effects, your psychiatrist will always discuss the risks, benefits, side effects, government warnings, and alternative treatments (including not using medications) with you. We strive to educate you about all treatment options and generally prefer to not rely on psychiatric medications alone.

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## PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

In some cases, psychological testing (aka. psych testing, psychoeducational testing, or neuropsychological testing) is warranted. This is a fairly lengthy and comprehensive assessment done with a highly trained clinical psychologist using norm-referenced tests. This type of testing takes place over many sessions. The first appointment begins by talking about the goals of the assessment and gathering relevant background information. You will then likely meet with the psychologist for chunks of time to complete tests focusing on cognitive, academic, developmental, social/emotional, and behavioral functioning. Some of the tests involve using manipulatives such as blocks, pictures, or toys. Some are verbal and involve answering questions, and some are paper and pencil tests. Norm-referenced tests have been standardized so that test-takers are evaluated in a similar way, no matter where they live or who administers the test. A norm-referenced test of a child's reading abilities, for example, may rank that child's ability compared to other children of similar age or grade level. The purpose of psychological testing is to provide information including a diagnosis, treatment plan, and description of an individual's strengths and weaknesses. Some goals of psychological testing may be to strengthen a child's educational progress by understanding his/her strengths and weaknesses, provide accommodations in school for a child who has learning problems, or decide on treatment options available. Outcomes of psychological testing can assist in better understanding the clinical question as well as help provide a diagnosis and refined treatment plan. There may be discomfort in psychological testing including mental fatigue and emotional discomfort when discussing uncomfortable emotions. In addition, the outcomes of psychological testing are dependent upon the effort put forth by the patient. This includes coming to sessions on time, being well rested, and engaging honestly and openly. Any questions regarding testing should be addressed during this process. For testing, we may use an electronic testing system to collect and process testing data (i.e., Q Interactive, Q Global, MHS, etc.). Your testing record will only be accessed by your provider or by our administrative staff as needed. It is our policy to always protect this information in accordance with all legal and ethical standards.

## PROFESSIONAL FEES

**Our most current list of fees for professional and other clinical services including individual provider rates can always be found under the "policies" tab of our website at [www.mhi-nb.com](http://www.mhi-nb.com) or [www.mhi-lb.com](http://www.mhi-lb.com).** Please remember that a provider's rate is not always directly correlated with quality of care. Many factors go into determining an individual provider's rate including level of training, years of experience, specialized training, as well as other market factors. Please note that our fee schedule is subject to change over time and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Additionally, professional time outside of sessions and other clinical services that require longer than 10 minutes of time are billed per 15-minute increments based on a current hourly rate of \$600 per hour (for psychiatrists), \$400 per hour (for psychologists), and \$300 per hour (for master's level therapists). This includes report writing, telephone conversations, preparation of treatment summaries, etc. We do not provide any forensic services. As such, court proceedings (even if required to testify by another party) are currently billed at an hourly rate of \$1,200 per hour (for psychiatrists), \$800 per hour (for clinical psychologists), and \$500 per hour (for master's level therapists). Moreover, the hourly rate for any out-of-office proceedings (including depositions and court hearings) are based on number of patient hours cancelled to provide this service, even in a situation in which our testimony is required by another party including a court of law. These aforementioned rates for professional time will also be updated on an ongoing basis and updated rates can be found on our website.

## BILLING AND PAYMENTS

Payment for each clinical session and/or service is due prior to each appointment and should be handled with our administrative staff. Additionally, payment for all other professional services will be addressed at the time of your request for such services. Please discuss any billing or payment concerns with your provider as this is an important part of the clinical process. We accept cash, checks, and all major credit cards (MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Discover) for all professional services. Please always inform us immediately if your credit card is replaced or renewed with another card. If your account is overdue for more than 30 days, we reserve the right to assess a penalty of \$50 per 30 days overdue, and potentially use legal means to secure payment. This includes charging a credit card on file and/or utilizing a collections agency or a small claims court. In such cases, certain information may be required by these agencies. This can include name, nature of services provided, clinical notes, and amount due. It is always your responsibility to keep the credit card on file up to date with your clinician and our administrative staff. **As such, our clinic policy is to require an active credit card on file in order to keep your chart open.** In instances when a credit card charge is disputed, we may need to provide personal and clinical information to your credit card company. A \$25 fee is charged for all returned checks.

## CANCELLATIONS AND NO-SHOW POLICY

All scheduling issues should be handled with our administrative staff. They can be reached during business hours by telephone (949-891-0307, ext. 0) or email ([admin@mhi-nb.com](mailto:admin@mhi-nb.com)). **Once an appointment is scheduled, you are expected to pay the full professional fee unless you provide 48 business hours advance notice for a cancellation.** For testing services, we will charge for a clinical hour of the Clinical Psychologist's time for late canceled or missed sessions. Telephone and email are the only acceptable ways to alert us of a cancellation. Please remember that business hours are considered weekdays (i.e., Monday through Friday) and exclude all standard holidays. Insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions or those cancelled too late. We currently use a scheduling system called 'DaySmart® Appointments' which can send automatic email reminders. However, please remember that this is merely a courtesy and managing your appointments is your responsibility. You can always contact our administrative staff

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to clarify the time/date of your next scheduled appointment. It is also our policy to require an active appointment on the schedule with your provider to keep your chart open with us and/or that specific provider.

### **INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

Our clinic or providers are not part of any insurance panels. As such, our services are considered “out of network” for all PPO plans. If you have a health insurance policy that provides mental health coverage, you still may be entitled to insurance reimbursement for our professional services. However, you must address this with your insurance company directly. Regardless of insurance reimbursement, full payment for all services is required at the time of each appointment. We can provide you with a service invoice that can be submitted directly by you to your insurance company. Please note that if reimbursement is pursued by you, your insurance agreement may require that you authorize us to provide clinical information to them. This can include a clinical diagnosis and history, treatment plans or summaries, and sometimes a copy of your clinical records. In such cases, this information will become a part of the insurance company’s files.

### **CONTACTING YOUR PROVIDER**

Our providers always attempt to be accessible for urgent issues. If your provider is not immediately available by phone (949- 891- 0307) at his/her extension, please leave a voice message and he/she will return your call as soon as possible. If you do not receive a response in a timely manner, you can always contact our Director directly by leaving a voice message at **949-891- 0307, ext. 1** even during non-business hours. In the event that your provider or our Director is out of the office and unavailable, instructions will be left on their voicemail on how to get in touch with the professional covering for them. Non-urgent calls are generally returned within one business day and urgent calls as soon as possible. Please always leave a phone number where you can be reached. If your call is an emergency, please contact 911 immediately instead of calling the office. Emergency psychiatric services are provided by all hospitals in their emergency rooms and do not require appointments. Emergency room physicians can contact your provider at any time so please provide them with your provider’s contact information. When your provider is unavailable for extended periods of time (i.e., vacation, conferences, etc.), a trusted colleague in our clinic will provide coverage and contact information will be provided on your provider’s office voicemail. The covering provider will also have access to your medical records so that they can provide the highest level of care possible. **Please note that email should never be used for clinical issues including urgent or emergency issues. Email is not a confidential means of communication, and we cannot ensure that email messages will be received or responded to in a timely fashion. In instances that you do email your provider, we cannot guarantee confidentiality, so you are accepting this inherent risk for all sent and received emails.**

### **MEDICATION REFILLS**

Medication refills should always be handled during appointment times and your provider will generally provide enough medication to last until your next appointment. Pharmacies should not submit automatic refills to our office. In instances that a refill is needed to last until your next scheduled appointment because of an unavoidable scheduling change, you should contact your provider directly via phone or email. Your provider will use his/her discretion in determining if a refill is appropriate. Our providers do not generally respond to automatic refill requests generated by pharmacies.

### **PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

All records are currently stored using an electronic health record called Practice Fusion. At MHI-NB and MHI-LB, your records will only be accessed by your current provider, a covering provider during periods requiring coverage, or by our administrative staff as needed. It is our policy to always protect this information in accordance with all legal and ethical standards. Practice Fusion also has access to your records as regulated by federal law. Although you are generally entitled to a copy of your records, they can be misinterpreted given their professional nature. In instances when it is deemed potentially damaging to provide you with the full records, these records are available to be sent to an appropriate mental health professional of your choice. Alternatively, we can review them together and/or treatment summaries can be provided. Please note that professional fees will be charged for any preparation time required to comply with such requests. All records requests should be emailed directly to your provider or our administrative staff (admin@mhi-nb.com), or faxed (800-217-8204) to us with a signed (with both guardians’ signature when necessary) release of information form filled out and attached.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is a cornerstone of mental health treatment and is protected by law. Aside from emergency situations, information can only be released about your care with your written permission (or written permission from your legal guardian(s) for those under 18). If insurance reimbursement is pursued, insurance companies often require information about diagnosis, treatment, and other important information as a condition of your coverage. Additionally, several other exceptions to confidentiality exist that require disclosure by law: (1) **danger to self** – if there is threat to harm yourself, we are required to seek hospitalization for you, or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection; (2) **danger to others** – if there is threat of serious bodily harm to others, we are required to take protective actions, which may include notifying the potential victim, police, or seeking appropriate hospitalization; (3) **grave disability** – if due to mental illness, you are unable to meet your basic needs, such as food, clothing, and/or shelter, we may have to disclose information in order to access services to provide for your basic needs; (4) **suspicion of child, elder, or dependent**

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abuse – if there is a suspicion or report of abuse to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person, even if it is about a party other than yourself, we must file a report with the appropriate state agency; (5) certain judicial proceedings – if you are involved in judicial proceedings, you have the right to prevent us from providing any information about your treatment but, in some circumstances, a judge may require testimony through a court order. We also reserve the right to consult with other professionals, whether within our practice or with an outside provider that may have a specialized knowledge in a certain area. In these circumstances, your identity will not be revealed, and only necessary clinical information will be discussed. Please note that such consultants are also legally bound to keep this information confidential. By signing this form, I also authorize the release of treatment information for insurance payment purposes or other financial matters (i.e., credit card disputes, etc.). I also authorize the sharing and exchange of my information by my treating providers for treatment and consultation purposes.

#### OPEN PAYMENTS DATABASE

Pursuant to California Assembly Bill (AB) 1278, physicians are required to provide a notice to their patients regarding the Open Payments Database which is managed by the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as of January 1, 2023. The Open Payments database is a federal tool used to search payments made by drug and device companies to physicians and teaching hospitals. It can be found at <https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov>.

#### MEDICAL LICENSURE NOTICE

Medical doctors are licensed and regulated by the Medical Board of California. To check up on a license or to file a complaint go to [www.mbc.ca.gov](http://www.mbc.ca.gov), email: [licensecheck@mbc.ca.gov](mailto:licensecheck@mbc.ca.gov), or call (800) 633-2322.

#### ELECTRONIC MAIL (EMAIL) & TEXTING

Email is not a confidential means of communication as it is generally not encrypted. As such, it is not an appropriate way to communicate clinical information including any confidential or urgent matters. If you email such clinical information to your provider, s/he may respond by requesting a scheduled appointment or phone call. We cannot guarantee that email messages will be received or responded to in a timely fashion. Moreover, by emailing your provider, you are accepting the risks inherent to this confidentiality limitation both in your sent email and in any email responses from your provider or our staff. Our clinic policy is also not to text with patients because of our interest in protecting your confidentiality at the highest level.

#### LEGAL TESTIMONY

Legal matters requiring the testimony of a mental health professional can arise. This, however, can be damaging to the relationship between a patient and provider. As such, we recommend that you hire an independent forensic mental health professional for such services. We generally do not provide this type of legal testimony or support.

#### CHART CLOSURE

It is our clinic's policy that an active appointment must always exist in order to keep your chart open with us. It is of utmost importance to us to provide the best possible level of mental health care. This requires maintaining regular appointments. If an appointment is missed or cancelled by you, it is your responsibility to reschedule it as soon as possible. Our administrative staff may attempt to contact you to help make this as easy as possible for you. However, if you do not return our calls and/or emails, we cannot keep your chart open indefinitely and will need to close your chart. Please remember that you can always contact us to consider reopening your chart or if you need any alternative referrals.

***Your signature below indicates that you have read the entire 'Consent for Evaluation & Treatment / Practice Policies' form (4 pages) – which contains information about our services, sessions, professional fees, billing & payments, cancellation & no-show policies, insurance reimbursement, contacting providers, professional records, confidentiality, notice of the Open Payments Database, email & texting policy, legal testimony, and chart closures – and you agree to abide by its terms during***

Printed name of patient: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of legal guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
(Only if patient is under 18 or a dependent adult)

Signature of patient or guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(MHI-NB or MHI-LB provider)

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