



**Susan Farber, MFT**  
Embrace Change and Transformation

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Office Policies & General Information Agreement for Psychotherapy Services or Informed Consent for Psychotherapy

*This form provides you, the client, with information that is additional to that detailed in the **Notice of Privacy Practices** and it is subject to **HIPAA preemptive analysis**.*

**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 written permission except where disclosure is required by law.

**WHEN DISCLOSURE IS REQUIRED OR MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW:** Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required or may be required by law are: where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent, or elder abuse or neglect; where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled; or when a client's family members communicate to Susan Farber that the client presents a danger to others. Disclosure may also be required pursuant to a legal proceeding by or against you. 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 Susan Farber. In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, even over a period of time, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members, unless otherwise agreed upon. Susan Farber will use her clinical judgment when revealing such information. Susan Farber will not release records to any outside party unless she is authorized to do so by all adult parties who were part of the family therapy, couple therapy or other treatment that involved more than one adult client.

**EMERGENCY:** If there is an emergency during therapy, or in the future after termination, where Susan Farber 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 Susan Farber only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Susan Farber has no control over, or knowledge of, 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 capacity to obtain health or life insurance or even a job. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is likely to be entered into big insurance companies' computers and is likely to be reported to the 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 hacking and unauthorized access. Medical data has also been reported to have been legally accessed by law enforcement and other agencies, which also puts you in a vulnerable position.



**LITIGATION:** Sometimes patients are or become involved in litigation while they are in therapy or after therapy has been completed. Sometimes patients (or the opposing attorney, in a legal case) want the records disclosed to the legal system. Due to the nature of the psychotherapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters, clients' records are generally confidential and private in nature. Patients should know that very serious consequences can result from disclosing therapy records to the legal system. Such disclosures may negatively affect the outcome of custody disputes or other legal matters and may negatively affect the therapeutic relationship. If you or the opposing attorney is considering requesting Susan Farber's disclosure of the records, Susan Farber will do her best to discuss with you the risks and benefits of doing so. As noted in this document, you have the right to review your own psychotherapy records anytime. (See also relevant section above: "WHEN DISCLOSURE IS REQUIRED OR MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW")

**CONSULTATION:** Susan Farber consults regularly with other professionals regarding her clients; however, each client's identity remains completely anonymous and confidentiality is fully maintained.

**E-MAILS, CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS, TEXT, and FAXES:** It is very important to be aware that computers and unencrypted email, texts, and e-faxes communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. Susan Farber's email and e-faxes are encrypted and secure. However, text messages are unencrypted and cannot ensure your confidentiality. Therefore Susan Farber does not communicate with clients via text messages and requests that you use voice mail or her encrypted email address. It is always a possibility that e-faxes and email can be sent erroneously to the wrong address and computers. If you communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted email, e-fax or via phonemessages, Susan Farber will assume that you have made an informed decision, and will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted. Please do not use email, voice mail, or faxes for emergencies and call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. Emails and voice mail messages are to be solely used for scheduling purposes and respond to Monday through Friday during business hours.

**RECORDS AND YOUR RIGHT TO REVIEW THEM:** Both the law and the standards of Susan Farber's profession require that she keep treatment records for at least 7 years. Please note that clinically relevant information from emails, texts, and faxes are part of the clinical records. Unless otherwise agreed to be necessary, Susan Farber retains clinical records only as long as is mandated by California law. If you have concerns regarding the treatment records, please discuss them with Susan Farber. As a client, you have the right to review or receive a summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when Susan Farber assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. In such a case, Susan Farber will provide the records to an appropriate and legitimate mental health professional of your choice. Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, and upon your request, Susan Farber will release information to any agency/person you specify unless Susan Farber assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. When more than one client is involved in treatment, such as in cases of couple and family therapy, Susan Farber will release



records only with signed authorizations from all the adults (or all those who legally can authorize such a release) involved in the treatment.

**TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** If you need to contact Susan Farber between sessions, please leave a message on her confidential voice mail at (805) 886-5538 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Susan Farber checks her messages a few times during the daytime only, unless she is out of town. If an emergency situation arises, indicate it clearly in your message and if you need to talk to someone right away, call the Police: 911. Please do not use email or faxes for emergencies.

**PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT:** The fee or copay for service is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for an in person, telehealth, home and telephone session. Susan Farber reserves the right to periodically adjust the fee and will notify client in advance.

Fees (including co-pays) are payable at time service is rendered. You can pay by check, cash, Venmo, Health Savings Account, or credit card via Square. Please note that there is an additional transaction fee of 4% for credit and debit cards. Please ask Susan Farber if you wish to discuss a written agreement that specifies an alternative payment procedure.

Please inform Susan Farber if you wish to utilize health insurance to pay for services. If Susan Farber is a contracted provider for your insurance company, she will discuss the procedure for billing your insurance. The amount of reimbursement and the amount of any co-payments or deductible depends on the requirements of your specific insurance plan. You should be aware that you are responsible for verifying and understanding the limits of your insurance coverage. Although Susan Farber is happy to assist you in your efforts to seek insurance reimbursement, there is no guarantee whether your insurance will provide payment for the services provided to you. This means that you are financially responsible for any unpaid amount. Please discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about this with Susan Farber.

If for some reason you are unable you continue paying for therapy, you should inform Susan Farber. She will help you to consider any options that may be available to you at this time.

**DELINQUENT ACCOUNT POLICY:** If your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no written agreement on a payment plan, Susan Farber can use legal or other means (courts, collection agencies, etc.) to obtain payment.

**MEDIATION & ARBITRATION:** All disputes arising out of, or in relation to, this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall preferably first be referred to mediation before the initiation of arbitration or litigation. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Susan Farber and the client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed upon. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful or not an agreed-upon option, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should preferably be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration, in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association which are in effect at the time the request for arbitration is filed. Please, note that neither mediation nor arbitration is mandatory. In the



event that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, Susan Farber can use legal means (court, collection agency, etc.) to seek payment. If there is arbitration, the prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceedings shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum as and for attorney's fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum. In the case of a court case, the court will determine the sum.

**PATIENT LITIGATION:** Susan Farber will not voluntarily participate in any litigation, or custody dispute in which client and another individual, or entity, are parties. Susan Farber has a policy of not communicating with client's attorney and will not write or sign letters, reports, declarations, or affidavits be used in client's legal matter. Susan Farber will not provide records or testimony to be used in client's legal matter. There are occasions where Susan Farber will make an exception and charge the fee of \$225.00 per hour for writing a clinical summary and treatment recommendations. Should Susan Farber be subpoenaed, or ordered by a court of law, to appear as a witness in an action involving the client, client agrees to reimburse at \$400.00 per hour for a minimal of ½ day of service.

**THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE:** 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. Susan Farber 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 you experiencing considerable discomfort or strong feelings of anger, sadness, worry, fear, etc., or experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. Susan Farber may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations, which 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, Susan Farber is likely to draw on various psychological approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and his/her assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include, but are not limited to, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, mind/body modalities, existential, family systems, developmental (adult, child, family), humanistic and/or psycho-educational. Susan Farber provides neither custody evaluation recommendation nor medication or prescription recommendation nor legal advice, as these activities do not fall within her scope of practice.



**TREATMENT PLANS:** Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, Susan Farber will discuss with you her working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and her 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, Susan Farber's 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.

**TERMINATION:** As set forth above, after the first couple of meetings, Susan Farber will assess if she can be of benefit to you. Susan Farber does not work with clients who, in her opinion, she cannot help. In such a case, if appropriate, she will give you referrals that you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy Susan Farber either assesses that she is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals or perceived you as non-compliant or non-responsive, and if you are available and/or it is possible and appropriate to do, she will discuss with you the termination of treatment and conduct pre-termination counseling. In such a case, if appropriate and/or necessary, she would give you a couple of referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, Susan Farber 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, Susan Farber will give you a couple of referrals that you may want to contact, 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 and communication at any time. If you choose to do so, upon your request and if appropriate and possible, Susan Farber will provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

**DUAL RELATIONSHIPS:** Despite a popular perception, not all dual or multiple relationships are unethical or avoidable. Therapy never involves sexual or any other dual relationship that impairs Susan Farber's objectivity, clinical judgment or can be exploitative in nature. Susan Farber will assess carefully before entering into non-sexual and non-exploitative dual relationships with clients. It is important to realize that in some communities, particularly small towns, small communities, military bases, university campuses, spiritual and rehabilitation communities, etc., multiple relationships are either unavoidable or expected. Susan Farber will never acknowledge working with anyone without his/her written permission. Many clients have chosen Susan Farber as their therapist because they knew her before they entered therapy with her, and/or are personally aware of her professional work and achievements. Nevertheless, Susan Farber will discuss with you the often-existing complexities, potential benefits and difficulties that may be involved in dual or multiple relationships. Dual or multiple relationships can enhance trust and therapeutic effectiveness but can also detract from it and often it is impossible to know which ahead of time. It is your responsibility to advise Susan Farber if the dual or multiple relationship becomes uncomfortable for you in any way. Susan Farber will always listen carefully and respond to your feedback and will discontinue the dual relationship if she finds it interfering with the effectiveness of the therapy or your welfare and, of course, you can do the same at any time.



**SOCIAL NETWORKING:** Susan Farber does not accept friend requests from current or former clients on social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, etc. Susan Farber believes that adding clients as friends on these sites and/or communicating via such sites can compromise their privacy and confidentiality. For this same reason, Susan Farber requests that clients not communicate with her via any interactive or social networking web sites.

**AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING:** Unless otherwise agreed to by all parties beforehand, there shall be no audio or video recording of therapy sessions, phone calls, or any other services provided by Susan Farber.

**CANCELLATION:** Since the scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24 hour notice by phone is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment. Please note that Susan Farber does not use text messaging as a form of communication to maintain your privacy. Unless we reach a different agreement, the full fee of \_\_\_\_\_ will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions.

**HOLMAN 24-HOUR CANCELLATION POLICY :** A client may cancel an appointment if 24 hours advanced notice is given. Late cancellations and/or no-shows may result in loss of your reserved therapy slot with Susan Farber and being referred back to the Holman Group for reassignment.

I have read the above Office Policies and General Information, Agreement for Psychotherapy Services or Informed Consent for Psychotherapy carefully (a total of 5 pages). I understand them and agree to comply with them:

**Client's Name or Authorized Person (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Psychotherapist's Name (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_