



FIGURE & GROUND COUNSELING LLC

Couple Information & Consent to Treatment Form

Why counseling or therapy?

Everyone has problems. In a relationship, our problems feed off each other. Bad news ahead. 69% of the problems that bring us to therapy are issues that are not resolvable, they are a static. <https://www.gottman.com/about/research>. That means that together we have the statistical probability of changing only 31% of your relationship issues. The average couple waits six years until seeking help (Gottman). During this time their grievances build up and as all humans, they are mostly subconscious of familially rooted relational patterns.

In twenty year of being a therapist I have witnessed that most people have not learned the skills for keeping a relationship healthy. In his thirty years of research, Dr. Gottman declares four key factors that predict the likelihood of a marriage ending. Of those marriages that stay together, only a percent is happy. Marital problems affect our physical health, mental health, even impacting our children's ability to handle conflict and be in loving relationships. Research from the University of Texas indicates that only 24% of people who marry remain happily married. That's the bad news (Markman, Stanley & Blumberg,

Knowing statistics, learning basic psychological theories, learning the research predicted pitfalls, understanding common communication errors is just the beginning of what you may experience in couples counseling. You will have the opportunity to dig deeper and mobilize anger into a experientially constructive therapeutic process.

Embodied gestalt couples work take each deeper into process, how they do what they do. Markman, Stanley & Blumberg in their book titled Fighting for Your Marriage state that ,
"...twenty five years of research tell us that success in marriage is related not so much to the nature of the differences between two partners as to how the partners handle the differences they have".

To keep a relationship healthy, we need a 5:1 ration of positive to negative behaviors. Such behaviors are both innate and learned.

Intake & Assessment Phase

We understand that couples therapy begins with an evaluation of our relationship, past and present. While Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S is deciding whether she is the appropriate therapist for us, we will decide whether we wish to begin couples therapy with her. We understand that because of the commitment of time and money, plus the potential impact on us and others (see below), it is important to make an informed choice for a couples therapist. We agree to four sessions as the initial process of evaluating and treatment planning before decided if counseling is a good fit. We understand that the process of diagnostic assessment will bring up a lot of questions that will evoke emotions. We understand that Jessie Moncrief will meet alone with each of us on the second and third session how; this is an opportunity to be seen as an individual, who has their own unique history, present understanding of problems and interactive style. On the fourth session, we will meet again, at which time we decide whether or not couples work is recommended.

[The therapeutic focus in couples therapy is on preserving and enhancing the relationship rather than a focus on individual happiness

/OR/

*If remaining together is harmful to one or both partners,
the focus will be on facilitating an amicable separation.]*

Therapeutic Process

We agree to the therapeutic process. While one partner may be the identified client, the actual process of an experiential, embodied therapeutic approach of a Gestalt therapist looks at both persons equally. A crude definition of Gestalt is patterns and process. Another definition: *the sum of the parts is different than the parts.* we will connect the parts. During our time that we look at multiple variables in the field: individual personality traits, values, behaviors as well as how partners interact and relationality, environmental and cultural factors, family of origin conditioning and values. We treat the WHOLE.

Couples counseling/therapy will bring up strengths, non strengths with a focus on our interactive process of dialogue and non verbal communication. Couples counseling/therapy gives us insight into our interactive style and attachment process. Couples therapy is contingent upon work outside of therapy session, doing homework and using communication & intimacy tools learned in session.

Goal Setting & Treatment Recommendation

We agree to share responsibility with Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S for the therapy process, including goal setting and termination. By entering into couples therapy, we accept that we both understand that working toward change may involve experiencing difficult and intense feelings, some of which may be painful, in order to reach therapy goals. We understand that the changes one or both of us makes will have an impact on our partner and on others around us. We are advised that doing our “homework” is **essential** for therapy to work. We accept that such changes can have both positive and negative effects and agree to clarify and evaluate potential effects of changes before undertaking them.

Limited Confidentiality

We have been given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss confidentiality and disclosure policies with Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S. As a couple, none of our identifying information will be shared outside of couple or dyadic work, unless the following: insurance company audits, a subpoena is received or there is risk of direct harm such as abuse.

While Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S will provide confidentiality to partners as whole, Jessie Moncrief can not guarantee confidentiality between partners. Understanding the many layers of a couple or dyadic system, a clinician is taking in information and assimilating information through a constant feedback loop of reformulating a therapeutic case. For this reason, Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S can not guarantee confidentiality between partners, due to human error, rather than intention. **Due to information shared in and outside of couples sessions, we understand that separating information can be challenging and there is a risk that information shared in private may UNINTENTIONALLY be disclosed.**

We have read and understand the potential limits of confidentiality, including those imposed by Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S’s policies and by state law, and we have received a copy to keep. *[If we have dependent children, we have read and understood the potential limits of confidentiality regarding access to records in child custody cases].*

Information Sharing

We understand that information sharing is done during the scheduled session time. Personal texts, calls and emails would be considered time outside of session and limits transparency between parties as well as perceptions of therapist’s ability to be non-bias.

It is important for a couples therapist to be nonbiased and clinically objective to both parties. When one partner talks or discloses more than the other, this may appear like alignment or triangulation. Triangulation is a term that occurs when information sharing is done between

one partner and therapist, leaving the other partner with less information. We will work to avoid this triangulation as it prohibits growth as a couple. We understand that while working as a couple, anything either of us might say to Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S individually, whether by phone or in an individual session, will not be shared directly to the other partner, but may come up in our work together.

Financial Responsibility

We understand all policies as described on the Clinician-Patient Agreement & Financial Responsibility Form and accept them as conditions for entering into couples therapy with Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S. We understand the limits and benefits of using insurance to pay for couples therapy. If we use insurance, we agree to provide all information needed to comply with insurance regulations. We understand that if we use insurance, Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S will have to generate invoices and may have to provide progress on treatment if requested by our insurance company

Legal Purposes

We understand that information discussed in couples therapy is for therapeutic purposes and is not intended for use in any legal proceedings involving the partners. We agree not to subpoena Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S to testify for or against either party or to provide records in a court action.

We understand that the therapist serves the dyadic relationship as a whole. Objectivity, boundaries and the ability to serve the whole would be impeded by asking for individualized therapy and consults. For this reason, it may be in our best interest to have our own individual therapist to help us manage the difficulties that come about as a result of the marriage.

We agree to pay for all services provided by Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S, including any charges not fully reimbursed by the insurance company. We understand that no insurance company

will pay for missed sessions, and we agree to Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S's policy of charging if we fail to cancel appointments 48 hours in advance. On a periodic basis, if one of us is unavailable to attend, Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S will see the other person with an intended focus on how that individual (as the identified client) manages self in the marriage, without therapeutic focus directly on the other person in the couple system. If we do not give advance notice of cancellation, we will be charged in full for the session. This credit card information will be stored and used from Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S's file.

Termination

We understand that an unexplained break in therapy is acceptable, but without communication our case can not stay opened. After 30 days of no contact, Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S will terminate our case.

If we terminate as a couple and one of us wants to resume individual therapy with Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S, this would be possible only if early in the treatment process or if both parties agree. Most likely, Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S would refer us to an individual therapist.

Couple Informed Consent and Agreement

By signing below, we understand this is not a quick fix, but sometimes a long process, as explained above.

By signing below, we agree to accept mental health services, understand the limits of confidentiality and the treatment process from Jessie Moncrief, LISW-S and accept full responsibility for payment for such services.

Client

Date

Client

Date