Date:

Client Name:

**INFORMED CONSENT**

*The purpose of this form is to share some important principles, which guide my counseling process so that your decision to proceed in working together can be based on accurate, informed expectations. Please read this carefully and feel free to ask any questions about what you have read or to have further clarification. Informed consent is the clients’ full and active participation in decisions that affect them and freedom of choice based on the information shared. It is a continuous process throughout the counselling relationship. The client has the right to refuse and/or withdraw from counselling at any time.*

**Qualifications:**

I am a Registered Psychotherapist (RP) #0826 and a member in good standing with both the Canadian Counselling Association and the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO). I am also a Clinical Supervisor of Psychotherapists (CCC-S). I have professional liability insurance with Marsh Canada.

I have a doctorate in Education (Transformative Learning) from Queen’s University, a Masters of Education in Curriculum Design and in addition, completed the course requirements for the Canadian Counselling Association at the Master’s level in the University of Ottawa graduate counseling programme in 2006, and have a Bachelor’s Degree with a Psychology and Music Medial from Queen’s University.

As a professional practitioner, my work and practice are supervised by a clinical and registered psychologist Dr. Deb Thompson from Ottawa, Ontario. Dr. Thompson oversees my clinical work and my professionalism and reads summaries of all insured client progress notes and meets with me in person once a month to discuss my professional work and my cases. As such, Dr. Thompson is informed of my insured clients process and details in their files.

**Difference between a Psychiatrist, a Psychologist and a Psychotherapist\*:**

**Who is a Psychiatrist?** A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who is specialized in mental health. They mainly deal with the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders. Psychiatrists usually prescribe psychiatric medication to treat mental disorders. While many of the greatest therapists in the world are psychiatrists, a typical 21st-century psychiatrist hardly ever gets involved in talk therapy. They mostly use medication and sometimes some other methods such as [Electroconvulsive Therapy](http://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/electroconvulsive-therapy%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) (ECT) to help their patients.

**Who is a Psychologist?** A psychologist is a person who usually holds a doctorate in psychology. Some psychologists offer talk therapy. Others get involved in the diagnosis of mental disorders. Some psychologists do not treat patients. Instead, they offer consultation to organizations and corporations or conduct research or teach at colleges and universities. The term psychologist is a protected term in the US and Canada. In other words, only people who are members of a local regulatory body, such as College of Psychologists of Ontario, may call themselves psychologists. This group of mental health professionals cannot prescribe medication.

**Who is a Psychotherapist?** A psychotherapist is a professional who specifically offer talk therapy for the purpose of treating mental disorders. This title is protected in some jurisdictions. For example, in Ontario, Canada only members of College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO) may call themselves psychotherapists or registered psychotherapists. Members of CRPO usually hold a Master’s degree in psychology or relevant fields. Psychotherapists are not allowed to prescribe medication. When it comes to the treatment of mental disorders, the roles of psychologists and psychotherapists overlap, but, in general, the type of services psychologists offer could go beyond therapy.

\* retrieved from: http://www.pmspeakers.com/what-is-the-difference-between-a-psychotherapist-a-psychologist-and-a-psychiatrist

**Nature and Approach:**

I approach counselling first from a collaborative perspective – with the idea that we are co-creating awareness, respect, understanding and resolution for your presenting issues. This means that you play an important and significant role in the work that we do together. Usinga broad brush perspective, my approach is to close the gap between what you want/need/value/believe and how you live – as much as possible. I have an eclectic and secular perspective for therapy and draw on philosophies and interventions primarily from feminist, narrative and, human centred perspectives. I hold an unconditional positive regard and acceptance for clients and take an anti-oppression non-­judgmental approach, communicated through empathetic understanding and a deep respect for your own experience and understanding of that experience. I consider the client’s perspective, values, beliefs, needs, and dreams as well as their intuitive knowledge of themselves as the foundation for the direction of therapy. I believe that clients have the capacity and resilience to resolve their own problems and make their own decisions and often need an outsider to witness the process and support consolidation and understanding of their experience.

**Counselling Services:**

Counselling is not always easily described. It varies depending on the personalities of the counselor and the client and the particular problems brought to each session. Counselling calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for therapy to be successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home. The therapeutic process can also have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of our life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness. On the other hand, counselling has been shown to have benefits for many people who experience the process. Therapy can lead to better relationships, learning new ways to cope with or solve problems, developing of new skills, significant reduction in feelings of distress, changing unwanted behaviours, and improved self-­esteem. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience. Counselling is a process of personal exploration and may lead to major changes in your life perspectives and decisions which might by default create some dissonance or upheaval in the people and circumstances in your life. Together we will work to achieve the best possible results for you.

Our first few sessions will likely involve closer look at your needs and presenting concerns. This exploration will weave itself into the sessions that follow. We will work together to take steps to your getting closer to matching your lived life experience with your values, needs, and wants. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money and energy. If you have any questions about my procedures, we can discuss them whenever they arise. If doubts persist, I will be happy to refer you to another counselling professional.

**Confidentiality:**

One of the most important rights of the person seeking counseling is confidentiality. Information revealed by you during counseling sessions will be kept strictly confidential and will not be revealed to any other person or agency without your written permission, with the following exceptions:

*(a) Duty to Warn.* If an individual intends to take harmful, dangerous, or criminal action against another human being, or against himself or herself, it is the counsellor's duty to warn appropriate individuals or agencies of such intentions. Also, any actual or suspected acts of child, elder or disabled person abuse (including physical abuse, sexual abuse, unlawful sexual intercourse, neglect, emotional and psychological abuse) will need to be reported to the appropriate agencies by the counsellor.

*(b) Court Subpoenas’.* When lawyers believe that a client’s counsellor may have valuable information for their case, they will subpoena her/his notes, records, and in some instances, even the counsellor themselves. In general, once a subpoena is served on a counsellor, it must be obeyed or the counsellor can be charged with contempt.

*(c) Consultation.* Information about you may be discussed in confidence, without revealing your identity, with other counselling professionals for the purpose of consultation and providing you with the best possible service.

*(d) Supervision*. If you are covered under third party insurance, a session summary of our work together will be shared with my psychological supervisor Dr. Deb Thompson on a monthly basis. Dr. Thompson reviews my files and is up-to-date on our work together.

**Minors:**

I am no longer taking clients who are under the age of 18 and/or living with their parents.

**Counselling Sessions:**

I normally conduct an intake of your needs and issues as an ongoing process in sessions. I encourage you to use either a free 20 minute meet and greet session or our first paid session as your own assessment of the appropriateness of our ‘match’ as a therapist and client. Your goals and needs must meet my competence and skills as a therapist. If you or I feel that your needs may be better cared for with another practitioner, that will be discussed by the end of the second session. Once therapy has begun, I will usually schedule one 55-­minute session per week for the first few weeks and then we will discuss the frequency of sessions after that that time.

Please book appointments by text message or email. I do not send reminder notices for your appointments. There is a charge for missed appointments that do not leave 24 hours notice. Should there ever be the unfortunate situation where I double book you or miss an appointment with you for non crisis reasons, I will in turn, provide you with a session for free. If you are more than 20 minutes late for your appointment, I consider that you are not coming to session. Please note that funds collected from ‘no show’ appointments are applied to accounts where clients are unable to pay for services. Receipts will be given for all appointments.

**Record Keeping:**

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep client notes and records. I keep brief records, noting mainly that you have been here, what interventions happened in session, and the topics we discussed. You will notice that during our sessions, I am writing ‘progress notes’ – jotting down what we are discussing. Should you wish, you are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or I can prepare a summary for you or another practitioner, instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted by untrained readers. If you do want to see your records, I will offer for you to review them in my presence so we can discuss the contents. You have the right to request that I correct any perceived errors in your file. I maintain your records (for 7 years after termination session) in a secure location.

Current and active files are stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office with only your first name on the file.

**Please note that a $50. charge will be incurred for accommodation letters for academic and work-related purposes and summary reports for other practitioners. If medical or insurance reports are required and are extensive, a $100 fee is charged if the insurance company does not pay for my work.**

**Clients’ Rights:**

You have the right to ask questions about anything that happens in therapy. I'm always willing to discuss how and why I've decided to do what I'm doing, and to look at alternatives that might work better. You can feel free to ask me to try something that you think will be helpful, as well as to refuse any counselling techniques. You can ask me about my training for working with your concerns, and can request that I refer you to someone else if you decide I'm not the right therapist for you. You are free to leave therapy at any time – though I recommend that you participate in a termination session and I invite you to openly share your reasons for leaving in person or by email.

If you are dissatisfied with my services, please let me know. If I am not able to resolve your concerns, you may contact the Canadian Professional Counselling Association to file a formal complaint. You are also invited to contact my professional supervisor Dr. Deb Thompson should you have concerns about any part of my practice.

**Inclusion:**

By respecting race, religion, skin color, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical abilities, age, parental or veteran status, work and behavioral styles as well as the perspectives of each individual as shaped by their environment and experiences, I will be vigilant in my efforts and my ability, to appreciate diversity and its implications. I am open to learning and feedback in this respect and hope that you will feel comfortable to indicate if you need something that I am not providing or understanding.

**Team Approach:**

My approach to counseling includes working in a team of professionals to support all realms of your care. Often I will recommend the support of medical professional, psychiatrist, psychologists, registered dietitian or nutritional specialist, a naturopathic doctor or other mental health professionals who may expertly address issues that are arising for you and that require skills that lie outside my competence. If you are currently taking medication for mental health issues or medical issues, it will be required that I have the name and contact information of the attending physician. Communication between team members will require your permission to disclose and, what to disclose.

**Contacting Me:**

I am often not immediately available by phone because of the nature of therapy – I cannot answer my phone when I am in session. The best way to contact me is via email at heidi@heidimack.ca. Alternative is text message on my work phone at 613 572 1035. I will make every effort to return your email/text within 24 working hours of receiving it. I will be unavailable for an extended time, one of my office colleague Carrie Watson or Joanne Roston will be covering my practice and can see you within a reasonable time.

**Emergencies:**

If you have an emergency between sessions, please contact your physician, the local hospital emergency, our local crisis line or **911.**

**Acknowledgement and Consent:**

**Upon signing below, you are indicating that you have read and understood this consent form and the general information letter. You are also indicating that any questions you have about this consent form or the information form were answered to your satisfaction, and that you were provided a copy of this document and the general information letter. You agree to accept the counseling services offered herein. You understand that counseling is a process of collaboratively working to resolve issues presenting for you.**

Client Name (printed in full) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Today’s Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_