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Welcome to my practice! I am happy you are here to begin the process of counselling, and I look forward to helping you towards your goals.

MY TRAINING:

My professional certification is as a Canadian Certified Counsellor #7094 with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. I hold a Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology from John F. Kennedy University with a specialization in Mind-Body Psychology. I also have extensive post-graduate training in mind-body psychology from the Psycho-Physical Therapy Institute, and am constantly upgrading my skills and knowledge through professional development.

INFORMED CONSENT:

This letter of informed consent is intended to inform you about the process of counselling, my various policies, as well as your rights as a client. The process of counselling begins with your own intention. I encourage you to read this carefully before signing, and to consider your goals or list any concerns about the process before beginning. Please feel free to talk with me about these items before signing this form (or at any time after signing should questions arise).

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Before, during and after the process of counselling you can be ensured of the highest level of confidentiality possible. As a standing rule, I will never share with anyone the contents of your counselling sessions without your consent. I will also not reveal to anyone whether or not you are a client without your consent. The limits of this confidentiality are specific and defined within a counsellor's professional code of ethics. Except in exceptional circumstances, I would contact you before taking any of the actions described below that limit confidentiality:

Self-harm: If I believe that you are at significant risk of suicide, or serious self-harm, I may legally break confidentiality in order to protect you. I would explore all other options with you before doing this, and if at that point you were unwilling to take steps to ensure your safety, I would have to take action to make sure that you were protected from harming yourself.

Harm of others: If you tell me that you are seriously planning to hurt or kill an identifiable person, and I have reason to believe that you will take actions towards this plan, I am legally required to try to inform that person and protect them from harm. I must also inform the police of your intentions.

Child/Dependent Adult: If you tell me about a child or dependent adult who is being abused or neglected, then I am legally required to take steps to protect that child or adult by reporting this information to child protection authorities.

Legal Proceedings: If you are involved in a court case, a legally enforceable request may be made about our counselling work together. In that case I would ask you for written consent to disclose the requested information and we would talk about what would be disclosed. In certain cases I may be required to disclose information regardless of the status of your consent. In that case, I will do all that I can within the law to protect your confidentiality, and I will inform you of anything that I disclose.

Collaboration of Care: To support your progress, you may decide it helpful for me to coordinate with other care providers you are working with. The approval for this step is always in your control and I would explain the benefits and content to be shared. Before doing so, I would obtain a signed release from you and discuss with you what information will be shared, and with whom.

Meeting Outside the Counselling Office: It is also standard within the profession that my default will be to not acknowledge you if we happen to encounter each other in public. You are welcome to approach me, however. If acknowledging each other outside the office is not a concern, you are welcome to let me know how to address you.

Email Communication: As part of my method a client can opt to receive emails from me that summarize the session and any recommendations/action plans that were discussed. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in this method and so I ask clients to opt-in to this step in case it is a potential issue.

One-Way Confidentiality: You are free to talk about our professional relationship and the contents of your session with whomever you choose. You do not have to consult me, or mention it to me at all, before doing so. The counselling process is your own and can often be accelerated when you do speak about your journey with entrusted others in your life.

PROCESS OF COUNSELLING:

Goals: One of the most important aspects of counselling is for me to gain a clear understanding of your current suffering or challenges, as well as any specific or general goals you have. During your first session (and following sessions as necessary) we will have a conversation to explore these two areas. We may also speak about general aspects of your history which are relevant and help me understand your situation. It is important to have goals in counselling and I will help you to formulate them if they are not clear.

Structure of Counselling Process: Another important aspect of counselling is to build a plan regarding the duration/frequency of sessions, which kind of treatment plan that will be most beneficial, and the options you have within the treatment plan. This is to make sure it is the most supportive for your life circumstances and your own unique history. An important aspect is to talk about the financial commitment required, the

investment in yourself that counselling provides, and how the associated costs fits within your budget. I am committed to helping motivated clients and so please speak with me about any questions you have to make this process financially viable. If necessary there are many variables in the process which we can customize including session length, frequency of sessions, communicating via email, homework, and a limited number of sliding scale spots to make it financially viable.

Risks/Rewards of Counselling Process: Similar to any journey in life, there are inherent risks and rewards throughout the counselling process. One of the risks that nearly every client encounters is making contact with uncomfortable feelings as they go through the process of attending to where they are suffering in life, or where they feel things are not working. This is directly connected to one of the most common rewards of counselling which is to have the go through contacting those feelings in the company of their counsellor a professionally trained, empathic and deeply caring person.

Content of Counselling Process: I may ask you about things that you do not normally feel very comfortable thinking about, or that cause you to come into contact with uncomfortable feelings. It is my job to carefully consider explorations or questions that I believe will help the process, but I cannot know for certain how you will respond. Therefore, the most fundamental right of every client is to have full authority to decide what you are comfortable sharing, and at any time you may choose not to discuss certain topics. That foundation creates full safety for you to pace the process and ensure your own boundaries are negotiated with your full control. As part of the therapeutic journey, sometimes it is helpful to push yourself a little and see whether some benefit may come from enduring the discomfort. Counselling is supportive, but it can also be challenging sometimes.

Methods of Counselling Process: I use a lot of different techniques and interventions in my work with clients. If you have any questions about what is happening in therapy, you are welcome to ask them. Trust is one of the most important factors in counselling success, so please engage me to talk about anything you have questions about. You have the right to ask about my experience and my training to work with your particular issues. If you ever find that you are unhappy about what is happening in therapy, I encourage you to talk to me so that we can address your concerns. You also have the right to leave therapy at any time.

Fees and Payment: My session fees are \$105 (including tax) per 60 minute session, and \$147 (including tax) per 90 minute session, unless we have negotiated a different sliding scale fee. Fees are payable by cash or cheque at the start of each session (credit card or debit card are also available when the Elaho Clinic front desk is open).

Cancellation Policy: If you need to cancel or change an appointment, I require 24 hours notice from the start of the session. Session fees will be charged for missed appointments and late cancellations, unless we are able to reschedule for another time within a 5 days (I cannot guarantee my availability, however).

Contact: Feel free to contact me via phone, email or text message. Email and text messages are not guaranteed confidential, so please keep that in mind as your situation dictates. For urgent communication about scheduling, please use phone or text message. I generally respond to all client contact within 24 hours (unless I am away on holiday and occasionally on the weekends). If there is an urgent emergency, please call 911 or the BC Crisis Center at 1-604-872-3311.

INFORMED CONSENT TO COUNSELLING:

I have read and understand the information presented here. I understand the limits to confidentiality required by law. I understand the fees per session, my rights and responsibilities as a client, and my counsellor's responsibilities to me. I know I can end therapy at any time I wish.

First and Last Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ **Mobile Phone:** _____

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____ **Dated:** _____

Counsellor Signature: *_(John Scheunhage)* _____ **Dated:** _____