

Couples Therapy Informed Consent Counseling and Mental Health Center University of Houston-Clear Lake

This consent form is an attempt to be transparent about the nature of the couples therapy process so that you are fully informed prior to starting the therapy. Couples therapy services are available to current UHCL students and their partner(s). The partner does not need to be a student, however, one member of the couple must be a current student in order to be eligible for couples therapy. Non-students are not eligible for any other form of treatment at UHCL CMHC.

CMHC endorses a co-therapy model for couples work, which means that you could have one or two therapists working together in your therapy sessions. Couples therapy is a process of identifying interaction and communication patterns that are negatively impacting the friendship, intimacy, and fulfillment of needs of one or all partners in a relationship. Each partner is expected to honestly examine their own interaction and communication styles, identify and express their own feelings, and expected to attempt experimenting with alternative methods of communicating and interacting. The therapist will attempt to help each partner to further clarify their own values and their own level of commitment to the relationship, and more effectively communicate their needs to their partner. All couples have different needs. As your therapist works with you to help identify and strengthen the identified relationship areas that need work, they may utilize readings, homework assignments, or in-session exercises as part of your work together.

Read this section carefully. Clients are REQUIRED to respond to each statement indicating their understanding of, and agreement with, each statement. Please notify your couples initial consultation therapist immediately if any of the following apply to you or your situation so that a determination can be made regarding the appropriateness of couples therapy at the UHCL Counseling and Mental Health Center, or whether an outside referral is needed:

- You understand that when you attend couples therapy sessions, you as a couple are considered to be “the client”. Therapists work to create a safe space for each person to openly and honestly share their feelings without “choosing a side”.
- CMHC will need a separate written consent from each of you in order to disclose any information from your record to a third party. This means that couples therapy-related notes and documentation of any kind will not be released without the written consent of all individuals in the relationship.
- CMHC has a “No Secrets” policy, which means that we cannot promise to protect secrets of one partner from the other person(s), especially if the secret is harmful or destructive to the process of therapy itself, or undermines the agreed upon intention of the therapy. No secrets also applies to all individual contact with the couples therapist. Secrets or information related to physical safety (i.e. disclosures of domestic violence) may be withheld at the discretion of the therapist, as clinically and legally appropriate.
- Because the relationship is the main focus of couples therapy, each partner must be present for the session to start. It is often not in the best interest of the couple to distribute time unevenly between partners or to have unplanned meetings with only one partner present. If one partner

is late in arriving or does not show for the appointment, the therapist reserves the right to delay the start of the session or to cancel the session if necessary.

- Couples therapy is only effective when each partner puts in a good faith effort to work on their problems and their relationship. Deliberate dishonesty or deceit, unwillingness to introspect and take responsibility for one's actions, or lack of interest and motivation to engage in the couples therapy process by one or both partners undermines the therapy process.

- Couples therapy may not be advisable if any party has:
 - an active alcohol and/or drug addiction
 - serious domestic violence behaviors
 - an untreated severe mental illness (such as schizophrenia, recurrent psychotic depression, or bipolar/manic-depressive illness)
 - an undisclosed, current affair that the person is not willing to disclose
 - current suicidal or homicidal thoughts, or a history of serious inflicted harm on themselves or another person

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the above information; that in order to receive couples therapy at the UHCL CMHC you must agree to each of the above items; and that if you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the items, you will discuss them when you meet the therapist. You agree that an electronic signature and/or all other forms of electronic acknowledgement contained herein shall have the same force and effect as an original signature.