

Nicolle Gottfried Zapien Psychotherapy

Consent to Treatment and Office Policies

I. The Process of Evaluation and Psychotherapy Treatment

Participation in psychotherapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improved interpersonal relationships, more comfort with yourself and your emotional life, and the resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek psychotherapy. From the very first conversation we have, I will aim to develop our therapeutic relationship, a unique kind of relationship that is intended to facilitate development in patients of psychotherapy. I will also be working to evaluate your concerns in order to determine if psychotherapy, and in particular, if psychotherapy with me, is likely to be of benefit and how we might best proceed with your concerns.

In most cases psychotherapy can be conducted effectively in weekly 50-minute sessions. It can also be structured in more frequent meetings (e.g. 2 – 4 x week) for more in-depth work, during a crisis, or for psychoanalysis in some cases.

Psychotherapy can be thought of as a confidential space to explore yourself and your concerns through developmental conversations. At points in psychotherapy you may find that remembering or talking about unpleasant events or feelings or thoughts can be uncomfortable. The dialogue between therapist and patient and the structure of therapy, while designed specifically to help you, can be evocative and can unearth, at times, unexpected ideas and/or difficult feelings. Successful therapy usually requires, self-awareness and reflectiveness, openness and willingness to explore your experiences, including difficult ones, and regular attendance. Changes made in therapy may sometimes be easy and swift and satisfying and other times may be slow or even frustrating. It is difficult to predict at the outset how long a therapy will take to address your goals. If at any time Dr. Zapien feels she cannot help you, she will either provide referrals to other professionals who can, or will recommend changes to the work to better address your needs.

II. Scope of practice/Limits of Service

Dr. Nicolle Zapien is a licensed marriage and family therapist and a certified sex therapist. She is also a candidate at the Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California, training in psychoanalysis. This means she is qualified to treat a wide range of mental health concerns, sexual issues, relationship difficulties and developmental problems for adults, couples, families, children and elders. There may be cases where she believes that she cannot help you because your concerns are outside of

her core competencies or would be better suited to another clinician. In these cases, she is ethically bound to either refer you to someone who can better address your needs or to recommend that you add additional services to your psychotherapy treatment with Dr. Zapien to enhance or support results.

Dr. Zapien provides both sex therapy and psychotherapy. Dr. Zapien does not prescribe medications. During sex therapy, which is a form of psychotherapy that addresses the psychological and relational aspects of sexuality, Dr. Zapien does not touch patients.

Should you have concerns about your work with Dr. Zapien, the Board of Behavioral Sciences in CA or the American Association of Certified Sex Counselors and Therapists are the agencies to whom to complain.

III. Confidentiality

All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission, except where disclosure is required by law. Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required by law are: When there is reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect, and where a patient presents an imminent danger to self or others, to property or is gravely disabled. If you have questions about privacy or confidentiality please ask.

Disclosure may also be required pursuant to a legal proceeding. If you place your mental status at issue in any litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have rights to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by Dr. Zapien. In couple or family therapy, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. Dr. Zapien will not release records or even acknowledge that you are/were a patient to any third party unless authorized in writing to do so by all adult family members who were part of the treatment.

In order to authorize disclosure to a third party, please fill out the release of information form. This can be found on www.nicollegottfriedzapien.com.

IV. Termination/Ending Psychotherapy

You have the right to terminate or end therapy at any time for any reason. If you choose to do so, Dr. Zapien will invite you to engage in a termination process, designed to reflect upon the therapy process and deepen any learnings that may have arisen and to identify any concerns that remain. This process includes considering the impact of not being in psychotherapy and the ending of this particular relationship. Dr. Zapien will also provide referrals if you wish to have referrals to another

provider. You are also welcome to return to psychotherapy at a future date. You, of course, have the right to not participate in a termination process.

V. Payments and Insurance Reimbursement

You and Dr. Zapien will agree upon a fee for your sessions that will either be the full fee for Dr. Zapien's services, which is set to the rate for other professionals with similar education, experience and qualifications in the area, or a sliding scale fee, that is lower than the full fee, based on your financial need. Each year, fees are reviewed and revised in January. If something changes in your financial circumstances during treatment, your fees may be adjusted.

Dr. Zapien is not currently on any insurance panels and does not accept insurance as a form of payment at this time. Acceptable forms of payment include: Cash, check, debit and credit card, with the exception of American Express. Regardless of how you pay, Dr. Zapien will provide you with a superbill that you can use for reimbursement purposes. Please check with your insurance provider or HR department about medical expenses and reimbursements if you have questions about reimbursements.

VI. Cancellation policies and scheduling

Once we begin working together, Dr. Zapien reserves a particular time or times each week for your sessions and plans session frequency to match your treatment objectives. There is significant evidence to suggest that regular attendance in psychotherapy is important to treatment outcomes, particularly lasting ones. In the event you cannot attend a session, please call or email to try to reschedule for another time that week. In every case, Dr. Zapien will try to find an alternative time. If an alternative time cannot be found, you will be responsible for the session fee with a few exceptions. Dr. Zapien allows up to 4 weeks worth of missed sessions, for which you are not responsible for payment per year. Otherwise, you are responsible for payment for our sessions at the agreed upon rate.

Dr. Zapien also does not charge for missed sessions when she takes vacation or is sick.

VII. Contact policies

Dr. Zapien can be reached via her private confidential voicemail (415) 835-2195 or via a HIPAA compliant email (drzapien@nicollegottfriedzapien.com). If you leave a voicemail, please speak slowly and clearly. You can expect to receive a response within 48 hours unless Dr. Zapien is on vacation, in which case the contact number for a colleague will be provided. If you do not receive a call back, please

call again in case your phone number was not clear or your message was not received.

In the event you experience a psychiatric emergency, a crisis, or an urgent concern arises, please leave a voicemail for Dr. Zapien and then call the 24-hour crisis hotline at (415) 0500 and/or 911.

VIII. Mediation and Arbitration

Dr. Nicolle Zapien is a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT#49694) and an AASECT certified sex therapist. She is also a candidate at PINC. Concerns and complaints can be filed with the Board of Behavioral Sciences in California or the American Association of Sexuality, Educators, Counselors and Therapists and the PINC ethics committee.

All disputes arising out of, or in relation to, this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediation before, and as a precondition of, the initiation of arbitration. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Nicolle Zapien and patient(s). The cost of mediation is to be split equally, unless otherwise agreed. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to binding arbitration in San Francisco County in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association, that are in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed.

I have received the consent to treatment and office policies documents and have reviewed these with Dr. Zapien.

Printed Name

Signature

Date