



Consent to Treatment

Informed Consent & Client Rights

Congratulations on starting this journey! For many people, starting therapy is a difficult process – I completely understand this, having been to therapy myself. Hopefully this document will help assuage any concerns, fears, or worries that you may have about what counseling and therapy is, and how it can help.

My name is Samantha Heuwagen, and I will be your therapist. I hold a bachelor's degree from Oakland University in Spanish Language and Literature minor in Women and Gender Studies, my first master's degree in Women and Gender Studies from the University of South Florida, and a second master's degree in Couple and Family Therapy from Mercer University. I am a licensed marriage and family therapist in the state of Georgia (GA # MFT001641). I am also a Certified Sex Educator from the American College of Sexologists and Certified Sexologist from the American Board of Sexology. I identify as a multiracial, pansexual, middle class cisgender woman with an invisible disability. I am fluent in Spanish and can provide therapy services in both English and Spanish. I enjoy primarily working with sexual issues, relationships, and self-confidence, but I am well versed, trained, and experienced in many presenting concerns and modalities. I am confident I can help you achieve your goals in therapy – and if not, I can refer you to someone who can.

I cannot guarantee any results in therapy – no therapist can. I can guarantee you that I will work as hard as you do toward achieving lasting change. Therapy is much more of an art form than an exact science. There is no magical formula to alleviate all of your concerns and difficulties. However, research does show that people who attend therapy feel better and are more well-adjusted than those people who do not. This is not to say that therapy will always be easy – often you will leave not feeling as good as when you came in. This is a good thing! It means that you are moving toward change and working hard. In our sessions we will talk about difficult topics, explore areas that are painful, and may uncover unpleasant information. My goal is that therapy will be a positive affective experience, and in the end, you will leave living your best life.

I treat **confidentiality** very seriously within my practice. I will be the only person to have immediate access to your case, documents, and total file. You should know that first and foremost, my concern and belief is to provide the most secure and helpful experience possible for my clients. There may be times, however, when I have to breach that confidentiality. This may occur when:

1. There is any suspected, confirmed, reported, or observed child abuse (sexual, physical, monetary) or neglect.
2. There is any suspected, confirmed, reported, or observed adult, geriatric, or disabled persons' being abused (sexual, physical, monetary) or neglected.
3. Whenever any legal proceedings are opened or required by you, the client, or as a component of a legal proceeding in which you are a part of – this includes subpoena's and signed, legal orders compelling testimony or release of records. This includes complaints and concerns you may allege against me.
4. You request or require a release of records or information to another party or yourself via written request or release of information documentation.

Only the absolute bare minimum information will be provided in any of the above instances. You will additionally be informed of any release of information prior to the disclosure.

For couples and families – I view the relationship as my client, not each individual. As such, I have a **“no secrets” policy** – this is simply a fancy way of saying that I will not be your secret keeper. If you have something occurring that may be damaging to the relationship, and/or is something that needs to be disclosed to a loved one, that is something that we will work on doing together. I will not conduct treatment holding secret information that could be damaging to a relationship or a person, as I cannot guarantee that it won't slip out at some point during a session!

Social media is a big deal in today's society. I get this – I am very active on social media myself! However, you should know that I will never friend you, follow you, or request you to disclose or divulge your relationship as a client in the public forum of social media platforms. If you chose to follow one of my professional pages/profiles, that is your decision. You should know that by doing so, you are publicly affiliating yourself with me as a helping professional, and it may result in (albeit minor) assumptions of connection. I am not – and will not – request any follows, views, likes, or shares of any content.

