

**INFORMED CONSENT for Medication Management/Therapy Services**

**Vanessa Underwood, PMHNP Journeys…A Center for Your Soul**

This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

My name is Vanessa Underwood, PMHNP. I am a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner with prescriptive authority practicing in Salem Oregon. PMHNP’s are advanced practice nurses with graduate training in evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health disorders. I see children, adolescents and adults for medication management. I also may do some combination of medication and therapy appointments.

**Philosophy and Approach:** I believe in supporting my clients and families to make constructive and positive choices for themselves in order to distinguish different and more effective approaches to their lives. My approach is to utilize medications if deemed necessary as well as many theoretical approaches including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Mindfulness, Motivational Interviewing, and Supportive therapy. I subscribe to, and follow, the Oregon State Board of Nursing and nursing ethics. I am a Licensed Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, (0184NP) working with the OSBN board. Their number is (971) 673-0685.

**Education and Training:** I received my Associate Nursing Degree from Chemeketa Community College, in Salem, OR. I advanced my education at Phoenix University, receiving my Bachelor in nursing. Finally, I completed my education at Oregon Health & Science University, receiving my Masters Degree in Nursing, specializing in psychiatric mental health care. Beyond my schooling, I gained experience working at Salem Hospital doing critical care nursing and dialysis**.** Beforenursing, I worked for many years with people with developmental challenges and disabilities. I do not do disability evaluations.

**Medication Management:** Medication management/therapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the clinician and client, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Medication and or therapy are not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home. As well as take your medication as prescribed to receive the most benefit.

Therapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, therapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience. Medication also has benefits and risks which will be discussed and consents obtained prior to prescribing. As many psychiatric medications are prescribed “off-label” for mental health disorders. Off-label means prescribing a medication that does not have FDA approval but has been shown in historical use to provide many benefits for the mental disorder or symptoms you may be experiencing.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

**Prescriptions:** Medication prescriptions will be either written and given to you during a scheduled appointment or done over the computer via e-prescribing and sent directly to your choice of pharmacy. For prescription refills, these are not considered an emergency and therefore will be done during business hours only. If you have not been seen due some fault of ours and your script runs out, I will give a one week dose and then you must be seen to receive more. As I work part-time, it will be done on the days I am in the office, which currently will be Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Please send all refill requests to your pharmacy and have them fax me a refill request at (503) 990-6828. Allow for 48-72 hours for refills to be completed on business days.

**Meetings:** I normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 1 to 3 sessions. During this time, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If medication is begun, I will schedule a 30-minute session within 1 to 2 weeks at a time we agree on and then on a monthly basis or less depending on your needs and the type of medication prescribed. This is so I can monitor for the effectiveness of the medication, make any necessary adjustments, and for any side effects. It is also an important time for you to bring in any questions or concerns you wish to discuss. Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation, unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. If it is possible within the current week, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment.

**Professional Fees:** My hourly fee is $165.00. If the session goes over the one hour time, the time will be prorated according to the hourly fee. Medication management checkup appointments are charged at $85.00 for thirty minutes and $75 for 15-20 minutes. In addition to weekly or monthly appointments, I charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge $220 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

**Billing and Payments:** You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

If you cancel under the 24 hour notice, or miss an appointment, you will be charged the total appointment fee and it will be your responsibility to pay these costs. Insurance companies do not typically pay charges for phone sessions or written documentation. You will be asked to pay for these charges directly. All checks are to be made out to Vanessa Underwood, PMNHP. There will be a $35 service charge for NSF/Returned checks.

If your account has not been paid for more than 90 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a patient’s treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due. Payments must be made or services may be discontinued.

**Insurance Reimbursement:** I do not currently accept insurance. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I will give you the necessary information to fill out the forms and provide you with what assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled. However, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

**Contacting me:** I am often not immediately available by telephone. I currently work part-time Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. While I am usually in my office between 9 AM and 6 PM, I probably will not answer the phone when I am with a client. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by voice mail. I will make every effort to return your call within 24 hours, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can’t wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychiatrist on call. Or you can contact the 24 hour crisis and information hotline at (503) 581-5535. **However, in a psychiatric crisis call 911**. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

**Professional Records:** The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or I can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

**Confidentiality:** All counseling is strictly confidential to Journeys…A Center for Your Soul. My colleagues at Journeys, and I may consult on difficult cases to ensure the best services are provided. If you have a reason you would not like me to consult with my colleagues, let me know.

The following are **exceptions to confidentiality** as mandated by state law:

* When clients indicate they are going to harm themselves or others.
* When present or past physical, sexual, or emotional abuse is reported, is suspected, or is known to have happened to: a minor under the age of 18; an elder; resident; or disabled individual.
* In select cases, under order of the Courts.
* Defending claims brought by client against licensee
* Note: If Vanessa Underwood, PMHNP has a reason to be concerned about chemical use by a minor, she reserves the right to inform the parent or guardian.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at our next meeting. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and I am not an attorney.

**Client Rights:** As a client of Vanessa Underwood, PMHNP, you have a right to:

* Receive service regardless of your race, sex, religion, age, ethnic background, linguistic preference, education, social class, economic status, sexual orientation, or handicap.
* Expect that our providers be sensitive to your needs and feelings, and to be treated with respect and dignity as human beings.
* Consideration for your patient privacy. Treatment is confidential and should be conducted discreetly in all cases.
* Know your diagnosis, treatment, prognosis, and probable consequences of treatment. To know any other significant information that would enable you to give informed consent.
* Be involved in planning the services you are to receive, and to consent to or refuse treatment.
* Confidentiality in all personal matters, interpersonal relations, written records, and access to your medical records.
* Referral to other services and agencies that are necessary for continuity of care.
* Obtain, question, and discuss a full accounting of charges for our care regardless of the source of payment.
* Know what rules and regulations apply to your conduct as patients/clients, and to have representation in the formulation of rules and regulations that will govern you as patients/clients.
* Have all communications in a language that you can clearly understand.
* File a complaint about service-related issues or the treatment being provided. To request assistance in filing a complaint.

**Client Responsibilities:** As a client of Vanessa Underwood, PMHNP, you have the following responsibilities:

* Keep an open mind and be respectful of the limitations of the counseling process

* Remember that you have choice at all times, and your ultimate responsibility is to listen to your inner voice
* Arrive on time for appointments
* Provide at least 24 hours notice of appointment cancellation
* Participate in development of mutually agreed-upon treatment plans
* Follow agreed-upon treatment plans
* Comply with signed patient contracts
* Let us know if you are dissatisfied with services
* Let us know of any changes in address, phone number, or other requested information
* Take financial responsibility for payment of all charges at the time of each session
* If you are unable to reach Vanessa Underwood, PMHNP in an emergency, you will call the **24-hour crisis and information hotline at 503-581-5535 or dial 911.**

If you have any questions, please ask- I am here to be of help to you, and open communication is important.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

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Signature Today’s Date

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Parent signature Today’s Date