

CHRIS GRAHAM PSYCHOLOGY

Group Therapy Agreement

GROUP THERAPY AGREEMENT

Some things to know
about group therapy
with me

This agreement complements my other forms (i.e., Consent, Technology, and FAQ forms). It provides additional information specific to group psychotherapy.

All patients (i.e., new and existing) interested in group therapy are required to have, at minimum, a 20-minute *Free Meet & Greet for New Group Therapy Patients* with me (Chris Graham, registered psychologist) to allow for discussion and questions, to learn more about group therapy, and to determine if this is an appropriate treatment for you.

Please initial beside each statement indicating your agreement and understanding, and acknowledging that you have had the opportunity to ask questions. Please feel free to ask any questions, at any time, that you might have about group therapy. An effective group takes a lot of work and trust to develop. The following are some important considerations that may prove important in forming a successful group.

What can I expect from process group therapy?

I am aware of the nature and purpose of the work we will be doing together in group:

This is a relational process group with **weekly, 90-minute sessions** and is intended to give you the opportunity to learn with and from other people and to understand your own and others' patterns of thoughts and behaviours. The group can become a safer place in which to share your past and present experiences, to obtain valuable feedback, and to experiment with new ways of being and relating to others. We will activate, illuminate, and process dynamics of our relationships together as they emerge in the moment while simultaneously reflecting on the experience of doing so. As with all types of psychotherapy, group therapy involves change, which may feel threatening not only to you but also to those people close to you.

Much of the value of group comes not from getting the "answer" to your problems, but from experiencing the group itself. A lot depends on what you put into the group experience.

I understand that there are potential benefits and risks to engaging in group therapy:

Groups can be very powerful and effective, and also carry some specific risks, including group pressure (which may not always be in a positive direction) and scapegoating. In any therapy, conflict and confrontation are inevitable aspects of effective work; these may also be stressful and

difficult to manage. Like any professional service, group therapy may not work, and for a relatively small number of people, problems may get worse. Regardless, many people find that group psychotherapy is a very effective means of finding connection and positive change, and well worth any discomfort they feel.

I agree to join sessions unmuted, on camera, and on time in a distraction-free environment.

Preparation

Prior to group gatherings, I ask that you minimise distractions in your environment so that you may be fully present. In the online context, prepare to connect your video and microphone and defer phone calls, emails, text interruptions, etc. until after the session. I ask that you remain on camera and unmuted to the best of your ability during sessions. Please aim to use a laptop or tablet that allows you to see all participants in larger format on zoom.

Please aim to join the zoom waiting room a few minutes before our designated start time to allow us to start promptly and make the most of our time together.

I agree to regularly attend group therapy sessions:

Attendance & Participation

Group success depends upon regular group attendance. I understand that it is important:

- To attend sessions regularly.
- To come on time and remain for the entire session.
- To notify the group - and facilitator - of any planned absences in advance (at least 48 hours).
- To make every effort to miss, at most, 1 group session per month.
- To commit to attending this group for at least 12 sessions
- To inform the group of my intention to discontinue attending, providing at least 2 sessions for us to process this decision.
- To contact the facilitators as soon as possible about any unplanned absences, lateness, or need to leave early.
 - Chris' Contact Information:
 - chris@chrisgrahampsychotherapy.com
 - 587.966.2273

I will engage in the group process through sharing my thoughts and feelings:

Group Process

Group thrives on honest, in the moment (*'here-and-now'*) interactions. To help in facilitating a more successful group

experience, I encourage you to lean-in, take risks, and experiment with behaviours. For example, you might name feelings, disclose discomfort, or tell others how they make you feel (e.g., when you feel closer or further away from someone, threatened, attracted, disgusted, loved, disturbed, confused, etc.). Group works best when you:

- Let others affect you
- Talk openly and honestly about your reactions as you become aware of them
- Use the group process to work on the problems that brought you into group (or ones that you identify in the process of participating in group)
- Put your thoughts and feelings into words rather than actions (e.g., naming that a part of you doesn't want to be present rather than not attending)
- Name if you are feeling offended (e.g., "ouch") or if you think you may have offended others (e.g., "oops").

I agree to not reveal the identity or any personal information about other group members:

I am aware that there are times when facilitators may talk to others about me:

I am aware of the fees associated with group and agree to be billed, regardless of my attendance:

Confidentiality

Please ensure that you are using a secure internet connection and that you are in a quiet, private space while participating in group meetings.

Facilitators will uphold their ethical duty to protect the privacy of all members. Should you choose to share your experiences in group with others outside of group, I ask that you protect the identities of your fellow members. Please know that I cannot guarantee that members will uphold this commitment.

There are exceptions to confidentiality, which include your facilitators' legal obligations to their professional colleges to report risk. This may include the risk of harm to self or others, or the safety of a child, elderly or dependant person or animal.

It is often beneficial to bring relevant material from any individual relationship (i.e., pre-group session and/or individual therapy) into group. Please know that I will use my discretion in what material I might bring into group from and will generally encourage you to do this on your own.

Fees

- Group sessions are charged at \$75 per session.
- Fees may be paid by credit card, PayPal (<https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/chrisgrahampsycho>), or Interac e-transfer (chris@chrisgrahampsycho.com) at the time of your appointment. This rate is consistent

with the Psychologists' Association of Alberta's recommended Fee Schedule as well as the British Columbia Psychological Association's suggested fees.

- You will receive an invoice/receipt following appointments which can be used for insurance or benefit reimbursement.
- All fees are tax deductible and are typically covered by insurance and benefits plans. I encourage you to review your insurance and benefits to determine reimbursement.
- You will be charged for all sessions you attend and all sessions cancelled with less than 48-hours notice.
- You are expected to pay for all sessions. One absence per month, with more than 48-hours notice, will be excused and will not be billed.

I understand I will be permitted one excused absence per month, for which I will not be billed:

I understand that group relationships are intended to remain within the group:

Member Relations & Outside Contact

The understanding of this group is that the space remains therapeutic and not social. Accordingly, member interaction is limited to group sessions, group discussions are to be kept within the group, and contact outside of group should generally be avoided. If interactions incidentally occur outside group, I ask that the nature and experience of the contact be brought back to group for reflection. Upon leaving group, and by mutual agreement and interest, I will share contact information among participants.

Leaving Group

This group is a longer-term, ongoing process group without a planned termination date. As members leave the group, new members will be invited to join.

If you choose to leave group, I ask that you allow for at least two sessions for group processing following this announcement. This is for the mutual benefit of members (to process your leaving) and you (to have the ability to say goodbye).

Acknowledgement and Agreement

Your initials throughout the previous sections, as well as your signature below, indicate that you are aware of the information in this group therapy agreement. By signing below, you acknowledge that you understand and agree to what you have read above, and that you have had the opportunity to discuss and clarify to your satisfaction any questions you may have had.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date