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Informed Consent

Welcome to my practice. This form provides information about the services offered and about your rights and responsibilities as a client. Please bring any questions or concerns you may have to the practicing psychologist, Dr. Melissa Butler. Your signature at the end of this document will indicate that you understand the information presented in this informed consent, that you freely consent to participate in this assessment or psychological service, and agree to the terms covered.

TESTING:

A variety of standard psychological tests will be used in an effort to address the concerns you have indicated. These concerns generally consist of academic difficulties, learning disabilities, personality functioning, coping styles, vocational direction, and **pre-surgical appropriateness**. Throughout the assessment process, you have the right to inquire about the nature and purpose of all procedures. You also have the right to know the test results, interpretations, and recommendations.

Assessment procedures involve a clinical interview followed by the administration of one or more educational and/or psychological tests. **Pre-surgical psychological evaluations last about 1.5 hours – an hour for the clinical intake and 30 minutes or less to complete measures about eating habits and mood.** Dr. Butler will explain any recommendations as well as the outcome of the meeting, before you leave. Once testing is completed, the scores will be calculated and a report will be generated. If you are filing insurance and your co-payment has been received by Dr. Butler or if you are paying for the evaluation directly and have done so before leaving the appointment, the generated report will be sent to Dr. Enochs' office within 1 week.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS:

While assessments are the primary focus of this practice, Dr. Butler also offers short-term psychological interventions for bariatric clients to prepare them for the surgical process as well as ADD/ADHD coaching, pain management, coping with medical diagnoses, and assistance with depression or anxiety. The purpose of these psychological interventions are to help you achieve your desired goals and to help you improve your overall well-being. These interventions may temporarily evoke uncomfortable feelings such as sadness, guilt, anger, and frustration. However, psychological interventions have also been shown to have benefits for the majority of those who commit to it, though no guarantees can be offered.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The information obtained in the evaluation or through psychological interventions is confidential and will not be released to any person or organization without your written permission. The only exceptions to this policy are situations in which Dr. Butler is required by law to release information with or without your permission. These are (1) if you are in danger of harming yourself or someone else; (2) if there is evidence of physical and/or sexual abuse to children, the disabled, or the elderly; and (3) if your records are subpoenaed by the court. In the rare event of any of these situations, Dr. Butler will attempt to discuss it with you before an action is taken, and disclosure of confidential information will be minimized.

It is also understood that Dr. Butler may regularly meet with a licensed psychologist for peer supervision and may find it beneficial to occasionally consult with other professionals. This is a common

professional activity that is permitted under the laws governing psychologist/client confidentiality. This consultation does not require specific consent from the patient, but Dr. Butler will try to omit and/or minimize the release of any identifying information about clients in the course of supervision or consultations. These individuals are also legally bound to keep such information confidential.

MEETINGS

Appointments will be scheduled for a time agreed upon. A clinical interview (60 minute intake) will always occur initially and subsequent assessment sessions will be scheduled at that time; the same is true for psychological interventions, such as ADD coaching or bariatric counseling. Completion of assessment batteries can occur in one sitting or over two separate meetings. Psychological interventions will be negotiated in terms of duration, frequency, and number of sessions. It is expected that you will be prompt for your appointment. If you are late, the appointment will end on time to ensure respect for the time of any following client(s). However, emergencies and other urgent situations can occur for clients and therapists. If Dr. Butler needs to cancel or change an appointment, she will do her best to give you at least 24 hours notice. Likewise, you are expected to give at least 24 hours notice if you must cancel an appointment. If for any reason you cannot notify Dr. Butler 24 hours in advance, you will be charged a flat rate of \$50.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

The charges for the Bariatric evaluation include the clinical interview, administration of psychological measures, scoring and interpretation of these measures, and writing the accompanying report. These prices may vary, depending on your insurance company. Dr. Butler also charges \$120 per hour for other professional services, with the cost being prorated for the time utilized. Other services include, but are not limited to: telephone conversations lasting more than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, IEP attendance, Parent/Teacher meetings, and time spent performing any other service you may request. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require Dr. Butler's participation, you will be expected to pay for her professional time even if she is called to testify by another party.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

It is expected that Dr. Butler will either bill your insurance company for the services provided (if she is an in-network provider with your company – BCBS, Medicare, Medicaid) or you will pay for the professional services provided (if your insurance is out-of-network). If paying out of pocket, full payment is expected at the time of service; if your insurance is being billed, your full co-payment must be rendered at the time of service. Payment made in the office can be made with **cash or personal check** or you can pay before your visit by credit card by accessing Dr. Butler's website: www.melissabutlerphd.com and clicking on the "payments" tab. If an evaluation is performed, you will be required to submit sufficient payment before the final report will be released, if the evaluation is not required for emergency purposes. If this does not occur and no payment arrangement has been discussed, the generated report will not be sent until this payment is received.

A \$50 fee will be applied for any insufficient funds transactions via check.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, Dr. Butler has the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. You will be informed of this process if this action is necessary, and you will be given adequate time to resolve the issue prior to sending your information to any other party. Your clinical records will remain ethically and legally confidential, although your name, address, the nature of services provided, and the amount due may be released in order to start the fee collection process. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. Please feel free to discuss any financial concerns or matters with Dr. Butler.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Dr. Butler is often not immediately available by telephone; please leave a message on her voicemail, and she will make every effort to return your call within 24 hours. If you have limited availability, please inform Dr. Butler of times and days when she will be able to reach you. **If you are unable to reach Dr. Butler and feel you cannot wait for her to return your call, please call 911 or the Raleigh Hopeline at 919-231-4525.** It is important that Dr. Butler have your current contact information at all times. If your contact information changes, notify the office as soon as possible.

Although internet-based communication methods have become a major means of contacting others, they have significant limitations. Please note the following guidelines for use of internet-based communication methods as a form of communication with Dr. Butler:

- Dr. Butler cannot provide therapy through internet-based communication methods (e.g., email, etc.)
- Dr. Butler cannot guarantee that contents of internet-based communications will remain confidential. Despite best efforts to keep such communications private, system administrators and experienced computer users may be able to access them.
- Although internet-based communication methods may seem like a fast way to contact someone, Dr. Butler may not have the ability to check such messaging systems frequently or consistently. Absence from the office, a busy schedule, unexpected illness, difficulty accessing a computer, or technological difficulties may mean that several days go by before a message is received.

For these reasons, please consider carefully the method you choose to communicate with Dr. Butler.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of psychology require that treatment records be kept. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or a summary can be prepared for you instead. You may also request to review your records, for which an appointment will be scheduled. You will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests. Therapy records will be kept for seven years after your last contact at Integrative Counseling and Psychological Services.

THERAPIST QUALIFICATIONS

Dr. Butler is a licensed psychologist in North Carolina; she has a doctorate in counseling psychology, and is trained and experienced in performing various assessment procedures and in conducting individual therapy with adults aged 13 years or older. To learn more about her qualifications and credentials, or to file a formal complaint, you may contact the North Carolina Psychology Board at (828) 262-2258 or <http://www.ncpsychologyboard.org/>.

LIMITS OF THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

Assessments and psychological interventions are professional services that Dr. Butler can provide to you. Because of the nature of the services provided, the therapeutic relationship must be limited to therapist and patient *only*. If you and Dr. Butler interacted in any other way, it would then be a “dual relationship” which could be unethical and/or illegal. The different therapy professions have rules against such relationships to protect you and Dr. Butler. When the therapeutic relationship is completed, a friendship will not be pursued, or any other type of relationship. Dr. Butler’s duty is to care for you and the other clients, but only in a professional role. Please feel free to discuss your thoughts and feelings about dual relationships with Dr. Butler at any point

The signatures below indicate that you have read the information in this document and that you and Dr. Butler agree to abide by its terms during the professional relationship.

Signature of client or guardian (if under 18)

Date

Printed name of client or guardian (if under 18)

Signature of psychologist

Date

Printed name of psychologist