



Veronica Lichtenstein LMHC  
LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

## **POLICY AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR COUPLES THERAPY**

When working with couples, my client is both your relationship and each of you as individuals. In order to maintain allegiance to both of you and to your relationship, I ask for your consent on the following agreements.

### **1. Confidentiality**

All information disclosed within sessions is confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without written permission except where disclosure is permitted or required by law. Those situations include but are not limited to:

\*If you are not yet 18 years of age, your parents or legal guardians may have access to your records and may authorize release of information to other parties on your behalf.

\*If one of you pose an imminent danger to yourself, your partner, or a third person, I am allowed to disclose information to law enforcement personnel or hospital staff to keep you safe and coordinate care.

\*If you talk about events that lead me to believe that a child under the age of 18 or an elderly or disabled person is at risk of emotional, physical or sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation, I am required by law to make a report to Department of Children and Families.

\*If you disclose sexual misconduct by a previous therapist I am required to make a report to their licensing board.

\*If a judge in a court of law orders me to release information or if I need to respond to a lawfully issued subpoena.

\*If I need to cooperate with legal actions against a mental health professional by a licensing board.

### **2. Limitations to Couples Therapy**

Couple therapy will only be effective in cases where both partners put in a good faith effort to work on their problems and their relationship. Unwillingness to introspect and take responsibility for one's actions, lack of interest and motivation to engage in the couple's therapy process by one or both partners, or deliberate dishonesty or deceit, will undermine the therapy. The continued participation by each person is voluntary. Either participant may suspend or terminate the therapy at her or his individual request.



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### 3. No Secrets Policy

When a couple enters into counseling, it is considered to be one unit. This means that the unit's goals must be the same. This allows me to maintain fidelity to the couple "unit," and not to either partner. For example, if one partner's goal is to work on marital synergy and the other partner's goal is to work on an amicable split, a conflict of interest could arise. To deter this, I encourage a "No Secrets Policy." This means that I will not hold secrets for either partner. I find this is particularly important in creating a space where both partners can feel safe. On occasion, during an individual session, information may be disclosed that is relevant or even essential to the proper treatment of the couple. If an individual chooses to share such information with me, I will encourage the individual to disclose the relevant information and will provide guidance in this process. If the individual refuses to disclose this information within the couple's session, I may determine that it is necessary to discontinue the counseling relationship with the couple. If there is information that an individual desires to address within a context of individual confidentiality, I will be happy to provide referrals to therapists who can provide concurrent individual therapy. This policy is intended to maintain the integrity of the couples/marital counseling relationship.

### 4. Court Proceedings/Subpoena of Records

It is understood that the purpose of marital/couples therapy is for the amelioration of distress within a relationship. Therefore, if both partners request my services as a therapist, they are expected not to use information given to me during the therapy process against the other party in a judicial setting of any kind, be it civil, criminal, or family. Likewise, neither party shall for any reason attempt to subpoena my testimony or my records to be presented in a deposition or court hearing of any kind for any reason, such as a divorce case. Should I be served with a court order for records, I will make all efforts to protect the parties records, but should the Court demand these records, I may be obligated to comply.

### 5. Release of Records

Both partners must provide their consent to release marital/couples counseling records. If one partner does not provide consent, records will not be released.

### 6. Litigation and Fees

I will not voluntarily participate in any litigation, or custody dispute in which Client and another individual, or entity, are parties. I have a policy of not communicating with Client's attorney and will not write or sign letters, reports, declarations, or affidavits to be used in Client's legal matter. I will not provide records or testimony unless compelled to do so.



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I certify by my signature below that I have read, fully understand, and agree to abide by the stated policies.

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Client Signature/Date/Time

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Client Print Name/Date/Time

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Client Signature/Date/Time

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Client Print Name/Date/Time

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Therapist Signature/Date/Time

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Therapist Print Name/Date/Time