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GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY AGREEMENTS

The following provides important information for all group members:

Purpose of the Group: To provide an interpersonal experience through which to better understand your relationship to yourself and others. Because the group is a social microcosm, a member's struggles in the outside world, including in one's family of origin, often emerge in interactions with other group members and the therapist. When this happens, it means that the group is working, and it provides an invaluable opportunity for learning, healing and growth.

Task of Member: Members gain the most from the group when they: 1) pay attention to feelings and thoughts about themselves or toward others that arise in the "here and now" of the group – in other words, in interaction with other members and the therapist, 2) get curious about those reactions and put them into words rather than actions, 3) are willing to share the "emotionally significant story" of their lives, 4) are open to giving and receiving feedback and 5) take a share of the talking time.

Confidentiality: It is a legal and ethical requirement and essential to the safety of the group. Without it, it becomes difficult for members to develop trust and to utilize the group as a vehicle for change. Therefore, members agree not to repeat outside the group any conversations that take place during sessions. In addition, if/when members discuss their group experience with others in their lives, they agree to keep the identity of members private by never using names or specific identifying information.

Email and Texting: Communication via email or text is not confidential. Therefore, the therapist and members agree to limit email or texting to scheduling issues.

Boundary between Individual and Group Therapy: Attending both individual and group therapy at the same time is often a very powerful combination. If we are working together in both individual and group treatment, I agree not to disclose specific information to the group that has only come up in our individual sessions BUT I may strongly encourage you to do so when it may further your growth and help others in the group.

Outside-group Socializing: The group provides a unique forum for self-investigation and growth; it is not designed for making friends. Socializing with other members outside of group can dilute the group's effectiveness and is strongly discouraged. If members interact outside the group, they agree to discuss the encounter at the next group session.

Time Commitment: Generally, it takes several months for members to begin feeling like a group. All members commit to being in the group for at least four months (and ideally longer).

Group Size and Adding New Members: A maximum of 8 members may participate in the group at any one time. When the group is not at full capacity, a new member or members may be invited to join at the therapist's discretion. The therapist agrees to inform the group well in advance of a new member's arrival to give the group time to explore any related thoughts and feelings.

Ambivalence and Leaving Group: At times, members may feel ambivalent about being in the group and

consider ending their membership. This is often the result of the group stirring uncomfortable feelings such as anxiety, sadness, anger, fear, embarrassment, boredom or frustration. **Instead of deciding on one's own to leave, members agree to bring their ambivalence to the group and get input BEFORE making a decision.** After deciding to leave, the member agrees to stay for as long as needed to say a meaningful goodbye.

Payment: Invoices for group sessions are distributed at the beginning of each month and members agree to pay the balance in full by the next group session. I accept payment by check (payable to Jonathan Stillerman), cash, Venmo (@Jonathan-Stillerman-1) or Zelle (202-699-2779). If a member demonstrates a pattern of late payment, I reserve the right to raise this issue in group for exploration.

Cancellations/Missed Sessions: A member may miss up to 4 group sessions per calendar year for any reason without being charged. A member will be charged for all sessions missed beyond the 4 allowed. **Please note:** Charges for missed or cancelled sessions may not be insurance reimbursable.

Group Attendance: Members agree to arrive on time, stay for the entire session and attend sessions consistently. Members also agree to inform the group in advance of upcoming absences. If a member needs to cancel on short notice, the member agrees to notify the therapist. A group session will only take place if at least two members are present.

Time and Place: Group meets weekly for 75 minutes in person at 2000 P Street NW, Suite 503, Washington, DC. If circumstances make it unsafe to meet in person, the group will meet via Zoom.

Inclement Weather Policy: Even when the federal government closes due to bad weather, group will take place unless otherwise notified.

Your signature below indicates that you have reviewed, understand and will abide by these Group Agreements. It also serves as an acknowledgement that you have received the HIPAA notice form "Notice of Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information."

Print Member Name: _____

Member Signature: _____

Date: _____

Therapist Signature: _____

Date: _____