

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Welcome to my independent, private practice at Bluestone Psychological Services, LLC (BPS). This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies at BPS. For detailed information about our privacy policies and patient rights with regard to the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) used for the purpose of treatment, payment, and health care operations as required under HIPAA, it is important for you to read and understand the information provided in the Notice of Privacy Practices Form, which can be found on our web site where you found this document. Please address with me any questions you may have.

BACKGROUND AND TRAINING FOR THERESA (TERRI) BUYSSE, Ph.D.

I am a licensed clinical psychologist (License # PSY00003706). This means I have completed accredited graduate and post-graduate training programs in psychology and that I have passed the state examinations intended to ensure competence. I received my Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California in 2000. I completed my post-doctoral internship at the Infant-Parent Program at UCSF/San Francisco General Hospital and have worked with children and families in a wide range of facilities. These facilities include Westcoast Children's Center and McKinley Elementary School (through UCSF/San Francisco General Hospital), both located in the San Francisco Bay Area. I worked with adults in my post-doctoral training at the Infant-Parent Program, as well as at the Wright Institute Clinic and Citywide Case Management in Berkeley and San Francisco, respectively. My most recent clinical experience is at Early Childhood Mental Health Clinic in Richmond, California. Even more recently, I have worked as a parent instructor in the Family Life Education Department (FLED) through Edmonds Community College (EdCC). I hold specialized training certificates in Bringing Baby Home, (2010) and Positive Discipline (2013). I have been working with adults and children in private practice since 2013.

CURRENT PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

I am a professional member of the American Psychological Association and Postpartum Support International (PSI). I am currently participating in a working group to standardize the training and organization of postpartum support groups across the state of Washington. Additionally, I attend ongoing professional training, workshops and seminars to further my psychological and therapeutic skills.

I am involved in regular consultation groups to enhance my work with my clients. If I consult with a professional who is not involved in your treatment, I will protect your identity. These professionals are legally bound to keep all information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together.

The other practitioners who provide services at BPS do so as independent contractors, meaning their clinical work and responsibilities are independent of mine. They make their own decisions regarding the treatment they provide, their scheduling and their fee setting at BPS as well as their professional services and activities outside of BPS. Likewise, BPS carries no responsibility for my services and has no influence or control over the clinical services I provide. BPS provides office space and business management services only to my private practice.

PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements as it varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and the patient/client, and the particular issues you are experiencing. Psychotherapy is a process of examining the feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and relationships that trouble you with the goal of helping you evaluate and perhaps change them. The specific goals of psychotherapy – what you want to change or achieve – are up to you. Reaching your goals calls for active effort on your part.

Psychotherapy 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, psychotherapy has also been shown to have many benefits. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. However, there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

My theoretical orientation integrates aspects from various therapeutic orientations. These include Narrative, Sensorimotor, Internal Family Systems, Cognitive-Behavioral and Motivational Interviewing traditions all framed within the latest neurobiological research. I consider our therapeutic relationship to be a collaborative one and so we will work together. Because I find the ultimate responsibility for making choices and taking action is yours, I will expect you to be very active in your own treatment, inside and outside of the therapy office. Though I may make observations and occasional suggestions, the emphasis of treatment will be on finding the answers within yourself. It is my responsibility to do all that I can to help you find those answers within yourself and to help you identify and eliminate any obstacles to change that become apparent.

To ensure the success of our work together, it is very important that we communicate openly with each other. It may take us a little while to create a sense of trust and comfort in our relationship but it should grow as we work together. In addition to open communication, the success of our work also hinges on your working on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home. We will take the last five minutes of our sessions to discuss how each session went to assess if our work together is productive. Every therapy has a beginning and an ending. It is my policy to contact you if you suddenly stop attending sessions. I strongly recommend an ending session to consolidate our work together whether the ending is mutual or one sided. It is likely that there will be times that you don't feel like coming to your session or are bored in session. It is possible that you may even be mad at me and feel like quitting therapy. In all these cases, it is especially important to attend a therapy session to talk about your thoughts and feelings. There might be times when you leave a session feeling more upset than when you arrived. This happens sometimes when difficult material is discussed. Though unlikely, if feelings of being upset or overwhelmed become unmanageable, please call me immediately. If I am unavailable, you may call a crisis line or head to the nearest emergency room. More typically, clients leave their session feeling quite functional. During the course of treatment, I will be assessing your mental state throughout the entire session including its ending.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, we will discuss these first impressions of your needs and begin to develop a treatment plan. 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 careful about the therapist you select. If you have any 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.

I do not specialize in court or legal matters. If you anticipate being involved in any legal proceedings or are looking for advocacy or an assessment for legal purposes, I will be happy to provide you with names of other professionals who do specialize in those services. If I am deposed or involved in any other legal activities in relation to our work together, I will be able to speak to our treatment together only, which will automatically void the confidentiality of our sessions.

PSYCHOTHERAPY MEETINGS AND CANCELLATION POLICY

Most psychotherapy sessions last approximately 45-55 minutes and are held once a week, unless we agree upon a different schedule. **Once an appointment hour is scheduled it is reserved especially for you and you are responsible for the fee for that hour. Unless you provide 48 hours advance notice of cancellation you will be expected to pay for it. Please note, insurance companies do not provide reimbursement for cancelled sessions. You will, therefore, be held responsible for the full fee for that hour – not just your copay. If you need to cancel within 48 hours, you will need to call me since you will not be able to reschedule your appointment online. I charge my full late cancel fee for cancellations under 24 hours (\$110) and half my fee (\$55) for cancellations between 24 and 48 hours.** If it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment within my limited work week. If no alternative time is available during that week, you are responsible for the cancelled appointment.

CONTACTING ME

REGULAR WORK HOURS AND AVAILABILITY

Due to my work schedule, I am often not immediately available by telephone. I am usually seeing clients between 11am and 7pm on Mondays, 1pm to 8pm on Tuesdays, and 7am to 2pm Thursdays. I will not answer my phone if I am with a patient or in a meeting. When I am unavailable, my telephone may be answered by our office assistant, who has been trained in all manners of confidentiality as it relates to a therapy practice, or by a confidential answering system that I monitor frequently every day during the work week. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some good times to reach you and any alternative phone numbers where you will be available.

If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. **If you are trying to reach me directly, call the main line, 425-775-4059 and then press the “706#” once the Bluestone message begins. (Do not press the asterisk (*) button as this will take you to voicemail.)** If you have trouble accessing my mailbox for some reason, you can also contact me at **425-249-9618**. This is a confidential phone number. I do not communicate via text.

The second best way for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times is using the encrypted email associated with Therapy Appointment, the HIPAA compliant software that Bluestone uses. You can access this email by going to the Bluestone website www.bluestoneps.com and clicking on the portal button. You will need your login and password to access this email. **During the first session, you will be handed a consent form that describes exactly how you want electronic communication to be handled. You must give written permission if you want text reminders for your regularly scheduled appointments. You must also give written permission for Dr. Buysse to leave detailed messages on your private cell phone number. By signing your approval on these matters, you accept all the risks related to communicating in this way.** You have a right to refuse all forms of electronic communication because of the increased risk of confidentiality breach.

You can communicate with me via encrypted email, access my calendar or change insurance information on the BPS website by clicking on the patient portal on the home page and then choosing my name, “Terri Buysse”. **Before your first appointment, please be sure to print and complete the Client Information Form, First Appointment Details Form, and the Biographical and Life Stress Form on the Bluestone website. (Do not complete the online biography, only the one that you download.) Perinatal moms can also complete the Warrior Mom form.** These forms will take about 30 minutes to finish in total. (To access these forms, click on “Forms and Policies” found on the top bar of the main page of Bluestone’s website, then scroll down to the bottom of the page and choose “Terri Buysse”.) **If you do not have access to a printer, please arrive 30 minutes early and ask the front desk for a hard copy of these forms.**

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICIES

BPS has a web page that coordinates with a Facebook page and a Google+ page. You are welcome to access the information on both locations, as well as sign up for our e-newsletter, at any time. If you choose to interact on Facebook (FB) or Google+ and your name is easily identifiable, please be aware that the information you post there will be public, and could compromise your confidentiality. It may also create the possibility that these exchanges will become a part of your legal medical record and will need to be documented and archived in your chart. It will be up to you to decide how you feel about that. I have no expectation that you will follow any of these.

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on Facebook, LinkedIn, or Google+. Please note, that these networking pages are associated with the clinic and not with me personally. Again, please be mindful of your own privacy and confidentiality as you consider participating on this page. My concern is for your privacy as well as the maintenance of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it. If there are things from your online life (including emails) that you wish to share with me, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together, during the therapy hour.

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) or messaging on the social networking sites to contact me. These sites are not secure and I may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use Wall postings or other means of engaging with me in a public, online medium if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. I do not interact with my clients in this manner. I do not look up any of my clients on Facebook or other social media sites to

preserve their privacy. If there is something important that you need to communicate to me, it is my expectation that you will let me know during a therapy session.

EMERGENCIES

In emergencies, you can try me at the office. A message can also be left for me there if I am unavailable. Again, if I miss your call, I will make every effort to return your message at the earliest possible moment. **I do not provide crisis intervention on an on-call basis. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, contact the Care Crisis Line (425-258-4357) or go to the nearest emergency room** and ask for the mental health professional on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

PSYCHOTHERAPY AND PROFESSIONAL FEES

My hourly fee, subject to change, is \$190 for the initial, diagnostic session and \$150 for each session thereafter. In addition to scheduled appointments, I charge \$150 for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost into 15 minute increments if I work for periods of less than one 50-minute hour. Other services include report or letter writing, telephone conversations, consulting with other professionals with your permission, 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 all of my professional time, including preparation and transportation costs, even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge a higher per hour fee of \$250 for preparation and attendance at any legal proceedings. The cost for the gathering and copying of documents is \$1.17 per page plus \$26 for administrative fees.

BILLING AND PAYMENT POLICIES

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. You will be expected to pay for each psychotherapy session at the time it is held and at the beginning of each session, unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage that requires another arrangement. Payments can be made by cash, check, through your on-line bill pay services with your bank, or by credit/debit card through the link on our web site: www.bluestoneps.com. If you have an HSA type of account or work benefit we will be happy to provide you with a receipt with all the necessary information for you to gain reimbursement. Any psychological services provided by my practice are tax deductible as a medical expense. A receipt will be provided for such purposes, if requested.

BPS may, at its discretion, choose to have all its billing, accounting, and/or bookkeeping handled by a contracted provider. In this case the provider may have knowledge of some of your HIPAA Protected Health Information necessary for accounting/billing purposes but not your confidential clinical information.

PRIVATE PAY CLIENTS

For clients choosing not to use their health insurance benefits or who are without health insurance benefits that cover mental health services, treatment can still be provided. My regular fees apply and payment can be made by cash, check, on-line bill pay or with a credit/debit card through a link on our website: www.bluestoneps.com. If paying by check, please make it out to Bluestone Psychological Services or BPS.

Upon request we will be happy to provide you with a receipt to be used for tax purposes as our services can be deducted as a medical expense. We are also happy to provide you with a receipt, if necessary, for you to gain reimbursement from your health savings account or other resource you may have.

Private pay clients are not burdened with having to meet any sort of diagnostic criteria or level of severity to access services. You and your provider are free to design any treatment plan that would work best for your individual needs.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

If you have a health insurance policy that will cover some mental health treatment, I will submit insurance reimbursement forms and provide you with some assistance in receiving the benefits to which you are entitled. You will, however, be responsible for getting pre-approval for treatment sessions for those insurance companies that demand this. **You (not your insurance company) are ultimately responsible for full payment of your fees.** Your copay, co-insurance and/or

deductible will be expected to be paid at the time of service and can be made by cash, check, on-line bill pay, or with credit/debit card through a link on our website: www.bluestoneps.com. If paying by check, please make it out to Bluestone Psychological Services or BPS.

It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers and whether they will cover services with me or not. Because plans are consistently changing, it is impossible for BPS to know the details of your individual plan. If it is necessary to clear confusion, please call your plan administrator.

To qualify for coverage by your health insurance plan you must receive a mental health diagnosis. This diagnosis indicates that your symptoms meet certain criteria and indicate a mental disorder. This information will become a permanent part of your medical record. While there are a great variety of mental health diagnoses indicating a wide range of impairment, insurance companies will only pay for certain ones. Treatment is also often limited to short-term approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. It is not guaranteed that additional services will be authorized simply because we ask for them. The decision to reauthorize or not is entirely in the hands of your insurance company. Although much can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. In such cases, patients can continue treatment on a private pay basis.

Your contract with your health insurance company requires that I provide it with information relevant to the services that I provide to you. I am required to provide a clinical diagnosis, dates of services, types of services provided, and any copayments already received. Sometimes I am required to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of your entire Clinical Record. In such situations, I will make every effort to release only the minimum information about you that is necessary for the purposes requested. This information will become part of the insurance company files, will be part of your medical record, and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. I will provide you with a copy of any report I submit, if you request it. ***By signing this Agreement, you agree that I can provide requested information to your carrier.*** It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above.

If you change your medical insurance coverage, phone number or home address at any time, it is essential that you let BPS know. You will be held responsible for any fees caused by lapses in insurance where you failed to notify BPS. Most Kaiser clients need to contact their insurance company to get an authorization number before the first session, if they want Kaiser to cover that session.

UNPAID BALANCES AND RETURNED CHECKS

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 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 collections agency or going through small claims court, which will require me to disclose otherwise confidential information. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name and contact information, the nature of services provided, the dates those services were rendered, and the amount due. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim.

A \$20 fee will be assessed for returned checks. Payment for the fee and unpaid balance must be made in cash, money order or by credit card before an additional session can be scheduled.

LIMITS ON CONFIDENTIALITY

The law attempts to protect the privacy of communications between a patient and a therapist. The Notice Form (found in the same place where you retrieved this form on our website: www.bluestoneps.com) sets out how I use and disclosure your protected health information. I want to highlight that in most situations, I can only release information about your treatment to others if you sign a written Authorization form that meets certain legal requirements imposed by state law and/or HIPAA. With your signature on a proper Authorization form, I may disclose information in the following situations:

- Disclosures required by health insurers or to collect overdue fees as discussed elsewhere in this Agreement.
- If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information concerning the professional services I provided you, such information may be protected. I will seek your written authorization prior to disclosing any information. To prevent the disclosure of information, you must work with your attorney to secure a protective order against my compliance with a subpoena that has been properly served to me and of which you have been notified in a timely manner. However, I must comply with a court order requiring disclosure. If you are involved in or contemplating litigation, you should consult with your attorney about likely required court disclosures.

There are some situations where I am permitted or required to disclose information without either your consent or Authorization:

- If a government agency is requesting the information for health oversight activities, I may be required to provide it for them.
- If a patient files a complaint or lawsuit against me, I may disclose relevant information regarding that patient in order to defend myself.
- If a patient files a worker's compensation claim, and the services I am providing are relevant to the injury for which the claim was made, I must, upon appropriate request, provide a copy of the patient's record to the patient's employer and the Department of Labor and Industries.

There are certain situations where I am legally obligated to break confidentiality about a patient's treatment.

These are situations occur when I believe I am protecting vulnerable individuals or populations from harm. Though unusual in my practice, these situations may involve one or more of the following reasons:

- If I have reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, the law requires that I file a report with the appropriate government agency, usually the Department of Social and Health Services. Once such a report is filed, I may be required to provide additional information.
- If I have reasonable cause to believe that abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation or neglect of a vulnerable adult has occurred, the law requires that I file a report with the appropriate government agency, usually the Department of Social and Health Services. Once a report is filed, I may be required to provide additional information.
- If I reasonably believe that there is an imminent danger to the health or safety of the patient or any other individual, I may be required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, seeking hospitalization for the patient, or contacting family members or others who can help provide protection.

If such a situation arises, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action and I will limit my disclosure to what is necessary.

Although 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 now or in the future. The laws governing confidentiality can be quite complex, and I am not an attorney. In situations where specific advice is required, formal legal advice may be needed.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

I keep Protected Health Information about you in two sets of professional records. One set constitutes your Clinical Record. It includes information about your reasons for seeking therapy, a description of the ways in which your problems impact your life, your diagnosis, the goals that we set for treatment, your progress towards those goals, your medical and social history, your treatment history, any past treatment records that I receive from other providers, reports of any professional consultations, your billing records, and any reports that have been sent to anyone, including reports to your insurance carrier.

Except in the unusual circumstance that I conclude disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause danger to the life or safety of the patient or any other individual or the person who provided information to me in confidence under

circumstances where confidentiality is appropriate, you may examine and/or receive a copy of your Clinical Record, if you request it in writing. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. For this reason, I recommend that you initially review them in my presence, or have them forwarded to another mental health professional so you can discuss the contents. In most situations, I charge the per page amount authorized by the Department of Health. I may withhold your Record until the fees are paid.

In addition, there are also times when I keep a set of Psychotherapy Notes. These Notes are for my own use and are designed to assist me in providing you with the best treatment. Although the contents of Psychotherapy Notes vary from client to client, they can include the contents of our conversations, my analysis of those conversations, and how they affect your therapy. They also contain particularly sensitive information that you may reveal to me that is not required to be included in your Clinical Record. These Psychotherapy Notes are kept separate from your Clinical Record. Although insurance companies can request and receive a copy of your Clinical Record, they cannot receive a copy of your Psychotherapy Notes without your signed, written Authorization. Insurance companies cannot require your Authorization as a condition of coverage nor penalize you in any way for your refusal. You may examine and/or receive a copy of your Psychotherapy Notes unless I determine that knowledge of the health care information would be injurious to your health or the health of another person, or could reasonably be expected to lead to your identification of an individual who provided the information in confidence and under circumstances in which confidentiality was appropriate, or contain information that was compiled and is used solely for litigation, quality assurance, peer review, or administrative purposes, or is otherwise prohibited by law.

MINORS AND PARENTS

For licensed psychologists in private practice, parents with children under the age of 13 have the right to examine the treatment records. Since privacy in psychotherapy is often crucial to successful progress, however, it is usually request an agreement from the parents that they consent to give up access to their child's records. If they agree to this, I will provide them only with general information about the progress of the child's treatment and his/her attendance at scheduled sessions. I will also provide parents with a summary of their child's treatment when it is complete. Any other communication will require the child's authorization, unless I feel that the child is in danger or is a danger to someone else, in which case, I will immediately notify the parents of my concern. Before giving parents other pertinent information, I will discuss the matter with the child, and do my best to handle any objections s/he may have. Children 13 through 17 hold their own privilege or confidentiality in the state of Washington, meaning that I am not allowed to disclose information about the treatment without the express consent of the teenager.

ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

I abide by the ethical, professional, and legal standards established by the American Psychological Association and the State of Washington. **At any time, you may ask me to discuss my treatment approach. Please be aware that you have the right to request a change in treatment, referral to another therapist, or other resources, and/or to refuse treatment or discontinue our work together.** I will make appropriate referrals if I become aware of a problem that is outside of my area of expertise. Finally, it is important that you know that you have recourse available if you feel that I have acted unprofessionally or have caused you harm. If you believe that I have acted unethically in our work together, please contact:

Department of Health
Examining Board of Psychology
P.O. Box 47868
Olympia, WA 98504-7868
Telephone 360-753-2147

(Please turn to the next two pages for signatures. One page is for you and one is for me. Please sign both copies.)

YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT, AGREE TO ITS TERMS AND CONSENT TO TREATMENT. IT ALSO SERVES AS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE HIPAA NOTICE FORM DESCRIBED ABOVE.

Patient/ Signature

Date

Other Signature (for parent/guardian)

Date

Signature (for second parent/guardian)

Date

Terri Buysse, Ph.D.

Date

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