

# **VALENCIA RELATIONSHIP INSTITUTE**

**28494 Westinghouse Place, #213 Valencia, CA 91355**

## **Informed Consent**

**INTRODUCTION:** Welcome! Thank you for choosing me as your therapist. My name is **Vernon Windell, LMFT**, (MFC #29760) and I am a licensed marriage and family therapist and an associate working with Valencia Relationship Institute. I have training in the general practice of psychotherapy with adults, children, adolescents, and families. My approach to treatment requires that we work together as a team to assist you in accomplishing your goals. Your treatment plan is personalized according to your unique needs.

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**PROCESS OF THERAPY:** Clients often enter therapy with some uncertainties or questions about what to expect. The process of therapy is similar to a book in that it has a beginning, middle, and end. In the beginning stage of therapy, I will gather information about your current life circumstances and relevant historical information. I may inquire about situations or behaviors that seem unimportant or irrelevant to the concerns that brought you into therapy, but please remember that a thorough initial evaluation is more likely to yield a successful treatment plan. After the first few sessions, I will discuss my understanding of the problem, propose a treatment plan, and share my view of the possible outcomes of therapy. During the middle stage of therapy, progress toward the agreed upon goals will be attempted and hopefully achieved. This can sometimes be the most challenging part of the therapeutic process. Ideally, the end stage is reached when the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy are resolved. However, sometimes therapy may end for other reasons, such as when one member of a couple refuses to continue or a non-custodial parent withdraws their consent for a minor child's treatment.

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**TERMINATION:** A good match between therapist and client is essential to a positive therapeutic outcome. As a result, we will assess during the first few sessions, whether continuing our work together will be of benefit to you. Participation in therapy is always voluntary and you have the right to terminate treatment at any time. If you are dissatisfied with the services you are receiving from me, please talk with me about your concerns. If you have unanswered questions about any of the procedures or interventions used in the course of your therapy, my expertise in employing them, or about your treatment plan, please ask. I am happy to explain my rationale. If at any time you would like to consult with another therapist, I can provide you with a list of qualified professionals.

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### **CONSENT FOR TREATMENT OF A MINOR: (IF APPLICABLE)**

I give consent for treatment of my child, \_\_\_\_\_. I assert that I have discussed the goals, objectives, methods, and time frame of my child's treatment with Valencia Relationship Institute. I understand the above may be modified as therapy progresses. I understand I have the right to refuse treatment or to terminate counseling should I choose. I understand fully the risks, alternatives, and the nature of treatment

performed. I am aware we will discuss these or any other issues should I request. At this time, I consent to work and to support the achievement of the objectives stated in my child's treatment plan. It is without any pressure or coercion that I sign this consent.

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**CONFIDENTIALITY:** All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone other than my supervisors without your written permission, except where disclosure is required by law.

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**When Disclosure Is Required By Law:** Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required by the law are: where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect; where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled or when client's family members communicate to **Vernon W. Windell, LMFT**, that the client presents a danger to others.

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**When Disclosure May Be Required:** Disclosure may be required pursuant to a legal proceeding by or against you. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by **Vernon W. Windell, LMFT**. In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, even over a period of time, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members, unless otherwise agreed upon. **Vernon W. Windell** will use his clinical judgment when revealing such information and he will not release records to any outside party unless he is authorized to do so by all adult family members who were part of the treatment.

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**Emergencies:** If there is an emergency during our work together, or in the future after termination where **Vernon W. Windell, LMFT**, becomes concerned about your personal safety, he will do whatever he can within the limits of the law, to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive the proper medical care. For this purpose, he may also contact the person whose name you have provided on the biographical sheet.

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**Health Insurance & confidentiality of records:** Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or PPO in order to process the claims. If you instruct **Vernon W. Windell, LMFT**, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. However, I have no control or knowledge over what insurance companies do with the information I submit or who has access to this information. You must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk to confidentiality, privacy or to future capacity to obtain health or life insurance or even a job. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is likely to be entered into big insurance companies' computers and is likely to be reported to the National Medical Data Bank. Accessibility to companies' computers or to the National Medical Data Bank database is always in question as computers are inherently vulnerable to break in's and unauthorized access.

Medical data has been also reported to be legally accessed by enforcement and other agencies, which also puts you in a vulnerable position.

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**Litigation Limitation:** Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters which may be of a confidential nature, it is agreed that should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you nor your attorneys, nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on **Vernon W. Windell, LMFT**, to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested unless otherwise agreed upon.

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**Consultation:** Sometimes consultations with other therapists can be helpful. While I consult regularly with other professionals regarding my clients, I do not disclose client's names or other identifying information. I maintain the confidentiality of my clients even when consulting with other professionals.

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**E - Mails, Cell phones, Computers and Faxes:** It is very important to be aware that computers and e-mail and cell phone communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. E-mails, in particular are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers have unlimited and direct access to all e-mails that go through them. Additionally, **Vernon W. Windell's** e-mails are not encrypted. Faxes can easily be sent erroneously to the wrong address. **Vernon W. Windell's** computers are equipped with a firewall, a virus protection and a password. I also back up all confidential information from my computers on to a hard-drive on a regular basis. The hard-drive is stored securely off-site. Please notify **Vernon W. Windell, LMFT**, if you decide to avoid or limit in any way the use of any or all communication devices, such as e-mail, cell-phone or Faxes. If you communicate confidential or highly private information via e-mail, **Vernon W. Windell, LMFT**, will assume that you have made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and I will honor your desire to communicate on such matters via e-mail. Please do not use e-mail or Faxes for emergencies.

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**TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** If you need to contact **Vernon W. Windell, LMFT**, between sessions, please leave a message on the answering service for Valencia Relationship Institute (661) 259-8200, ext. 2 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. I check my messages a few times during the daytime only, unless I am out of town. If an emergency situation arises, indicate it clearly in your message and if you need to talk to someone right away please call 911, contact the National Crisis and Suicide Prevention Hotline at (800) 784-2433 or go to your local emergency room. Please do not use e-mail or Faxes for emergencies.

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**PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT:** Clients are expected to pay the standard fee of \$150.00 per 50 minute sessions as services are rendered. In order to further maximize our time together, payment is expected at the beginning of each session.

