GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY CONTRACT

The following rules are important and necessary, in our experience, for you to derive maximum benefit from group therapy.

ATTENDANCE

1. You are expected to attend every group session, be on time, and to remain throughout the session. If you cannot be present, call the office so your absence will be known from the beginning. If you know you will not be present at the following week's session, please announce that fact in the current meeting.

2. All members agree to work actively on the problems that brought them to group by putting feelings into words, not actions. Most individuals stay in group for at least one year. This is not a requirement and you shouldn't remain in group if you are not benefiting from it. However, if you do experience a lack of progress, it is important to discuss it with the group at least one month before leaving. The exploration of one's lack of progress is often very beneficial.

3. All sessions will be charged for, regardless of the reason for absence. Group membership continues whether you are present or not, and no one can substitute for you in your absence. If you expect a prolonged absence of a month or more because of work commitments, illness, etc., you may request for an exception to this rule, and this will be handled in a group session.

PROCEDURE IN THE GROUP

4. Central to group therapy is expressing your feelings openly and honestly. You are expected to take responsibility for sharing your feelings, your fantasies as well as your dreams. All feelings about group members, including the therapists, are important to express. No subject is out of bounds. Feelings of anger, sex, spirituality and those associated with money are so rarely dealt with that they deserve special attention in the therapeutic group.

5. **Any interaction** between two or more group members outside the group is important to group process, and will be considered group business to be discussed in group sessions. Sub-group secrets tend to impede an individual's progress. The relationships made in group are to be used therapeutically, not socially. For example, more is usually gained therapeutically by talking in the group about your wish to go to dinner with someone in the group than by secretly doing it.

6. The use of alcohol or other mind-affecting drugs, prior to a group session, interferes with therapy.

7. Material revealed within the group is privileged and confidential. Discussion of the group with spouses and other intimates should be restricted to discussion of your own reactions and experiences. If others are mentioned, care should be taken to avoid revelations of a personal nature and you should be sure identification of persons is not possible. **It is each person's responsibility to protect the names and identities of fellow group members.**
TERMINATION FROM THE GROUP

8. **Termination should be planned.** On joining the group, members agree to remain until the problems that brought them to group have been resolved. The group is open-ended, i.e. individual members will come and go, but the group will continue. Leaving the group is an important process and will provoke feelings and fantasies in you and others which need to be shared and explored.

No sudden terminations, such as telephone terminations, or any termination without discussion with the entire group can be accepted as reasonable or therapeutic. If you are thinking about leaving the group, mention of this fact must be made in the first half of a group session, and then at least one month is needed for the group to deal with this important development. Group members have often found it helpful to allow one month to terminate for each year they have been in group. Leaving and being left are events with such an impact upon people’s lives that as much time as possible should be allowed for reactions to be examined.

PAYMENT OF FEES

9. The group costs $200 per month. You will be billed for group at the beginning of the month. Payment should be made at this time for the entire month unless some other arrangement has been made. If some financial hardship develops, or if you have some monetary problem regarding group fees, these matters are to be brought up within the group session.

Unlike the taboo of speaking about one’s feelings concerning money that exists outside the group, you will be encouraged to address any feelings connected to money. Feelings about the fee, unpaid balances, and reduced fees are often especially useful to explore.

Prepared by Dale C. Godby, Ph.D., with acknowledgments to colleague, co-therapist, and friend, Gladys Guy Brown, Ph.D., and authors and teachers Scott Runan, Ph.D., and Walter Stone, M.D.