



Experiencing Peace Through Change and Acceptance

Yorktown Commerce Center
228 North Lynnhaven Road, Suite 110
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
Main: 757-340-6100 Fax: 757-340-6300
www.beachtherapyandconsulting.com

Office Policies & Informed Consent for Psychotherapy

This form provides you, the client, with information that is additional to that detailed in the [Notice of Privacy Practices](#) and it is subject to HIPAA preemptive analysis.

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

SUPERVISION: Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P, is a “Resident in Counseling” working toward her license as a professional counselor (LPC). As a Resident, she is required to obtain 3,400 hours under supervision as required by the Virginia Board of Counseling. The Virginia Board of Counseling address is:

Virginia Board of Counseling
Perimeter Center
9960 Mayland Drive, Ste 300
Henrico, VA 23233-1463
Phone: (804) 367-4400
Fax: (804) 527-4475
Website: www.dhp.virginia.gov

Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P, is under the supervision of Dr. David Savinsky, PhD., LPC, LMFT, CSAC, ACS and Mary Roberts, PhD., LPC-ACS, ATR-BC, ATCS.

Dr. Savinsky can be contacted at:

David M. Savinsky, PhD, LPC, LMFT, CSAC, ACS
c/o Beach Therapy & Consulting, PLLC
Yorktown Commerce Center
228 N Lynnhaven Rd, Ste 110
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
Office: (757) 340-6100
Cell: (757) 802-1075
Email: drsavinsky@beachtherapyandconsulting.com

Dr. Roberts can be contacted at:

Mary Roberts, PhD, LPC-ACS, ATR-BC, ATCS
Eastern Virginia Medical School
651 Colley Ave, Lester Hall, Rm 304
Norfolk, VA 23507

Office: (757) 446-5895
Email: robertmr@evms.edu

WHEN DISCLOSURE IS REQUIRED OR MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW: Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required or may be required by 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 a client's family members communicate to Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P, that the client presents a danger to others. Disclosure may also 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 Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P. 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. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will use her clinical judgment when revealing such information. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will not release records to any outside party unless she is authorized to do so by all adult parties who were part of the family therapy, couple therapy or other treatment that involved more than one adult client.

EMERGENCY: If there is an emergency during therapy, or in the future after termination, where Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P becomes concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper psychiatric care, she will do whatever she 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, she may also contact the person whose name you have provided on the biographical sheet.

HEALTH INSURANCE & CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS: Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO/PPO/MCO/EAP in order to process the claims. If you so instruct Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P has no control over, or knowledge of, what insurance companies do with the information she submits 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 hacking and unauthorized access. It has also been reported that medical data has been legally accessed by law enforcement and other agencies, which also puts you in a vulnerable position.

CONSULTATION: Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P consults regularly with other professionals regarding her clients; however, each client's identity remains completely anonymous and confidentiality is fully maintained.

E-MAILS, CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS, AND FAXES: It is very important to be aware that computers and unencrypted e-mail, texts, and e-faxes communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. E-mails, texts, and e-faxes, in particular, are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers or communication companies may have unlimited and direct access to all e-mails, texts and e-faxes that go through them. While data on Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P laptop is encrypted, e-mails and e-fax are not. It is always a possibility that e-faxes, texts, and email can be sent erroneously to the wrong address and computers. Lisa C. Thomas's laptop is equipped with a firewall, a virus protection and a password, and she backs up all confidential information from her computer on a regular basis onto an encrypted hard-drive. Please notify Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P if you decide to avoid or limit, in any way, the use of e-mail, texts, cell phone calls, phone messages, or e-faxes. If you communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted e-mail, texts or e-fax or via phone messages, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P 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 she will honor your desire to communicate on such matters. Please do not use texts, e-mail, voice mail, or faxes for emergencies.

RECORDS AND YOUR RIGHT TO REVIEW THEM: Both the law and the standards of Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P profession require that she keep treatment records for at least 7 years. Unless otherwise agreed to be necessary, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P retains clinical records only as long as is mandated by the Commonwealth of Virginia law. If you have concerns regarding the treatment records, please discuss them with Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P. As a client, you have the right to review or receive a summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. In such a case, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will provide the records to an appropriate and legitimate mental health professional of your choice. Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, and upon your request, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will release information to any agency/person you specify unless Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. When more than one client is involved in treatment, such as in cases of couple and family therapy, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will release records only with signed authorizations from all the adults (or all those who legally can authorize such a release) involved in the treatment.

TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: If you need to contact Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P between sessions, please leave a message at main office number of **(757) 340-6100** or the emergency contact number: **(757) 912-6214** and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P checks her messages a few times during the daytime only, unless she is out of town. If an emergency situation arises, indicate it clearly in your message and if you need to talk to someone right away call Virginia Beach Emergency Services **(757) 385-0888**, 24-hour crisis line Virginia Beach: **(757) 627-5433** or the Police: **911**. Please do not use email or faxes for emergencies. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P does not always check her email or faxes daily.

PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT: Please see our financial and office policy. Please note that Lisa Thomas does not bill to insurance as she is a resident and is not on any insurance panels. Payment is expected at the time of service via cash, check, or charge. Please notify Lisa Thomas, MS, ATR-P if any problems arise during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. If your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no written agreement on a payment plan, Lisa Thomas, MS, ATR-P can use legal or other means (courts, collection agencies, etc.) to obtain payment.

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 attorney(s), nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested unless otherwise agreed upon. Fees for clinical interviews may or may not be reimbursable by insurance, especially if the evaluation is court ordered, depending on the terms of the particular policy. Standard insurance policies do not reimburse for any of the other charges. Thus, reimbursement will be “self-pay.” Payment in advance is required for testimony, the specifics of which will be discussed on an individual basis.

If Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P agrees to testify, she will appear at the appointed time, whether or not she has received a subpoena; however, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P does ask that the party requesting her appearance issue a subpoena. **The approximate anticipated fee or \$800.00, whichever is greater, is due at least ten days prior to testimony.** If the request for Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P appearance is cancelled with at least one calendar week’s notice, the entire advance payment will be returned (less any amount that would be applied to other charges that remain unpaid); if cancelled with only four business days notice, half the amount will be returned; if cancelled with less than 48 hours notice, the entire amount will be retained as compensation for her schedule and preparing to appear. If the subpoena is issued with less than a week’s notice, a verbal agreement may be made regarding needed notification and cancellation agreements.

MEDIATION & ARBITRATION: All disputes arising out of, or in relation to, this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediation, before, and as a pre-condition of, the initiation of arbitration. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P and the client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed upon. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in Virginia Beach, VA in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association which are in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P can use legal means (court, collection agency, etc.) to obtain payment. The prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceedings shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum as and for attorney's fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum.

THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE:

Participation in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improving interpersonal relationships and resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy. Working toward these benefits, however, requires effort on your part. Psychotherapy requires your very active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings, and/or behavior. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will ask for your feedback and views on your therapy, its progress, and other aspects of the therapy and will expect you to respond openly and honestly. Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful in dealing with a certain situation. During evaluation or therapy, remembering or talking about unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts can result in you experiencing considerable discomfort or strong feelings of anger, sadness, worry, fear, etc., or experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations, which can cause you to feel very upset, angry, depressed, challenged, or disappointed. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to therapy in the first place, such as personal or interpersonal relationships, may result in changes that were not originally intended. Psychotherapy may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing, or relationships. Sometimes a decision that is positive for one family member is viewed quite negatively by another family member. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and even frustrating. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results. During the course of therapy, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P is likely to draw on various psychological approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and her assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include, but are not limited to, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, cognitive, dialectical behavior therapy, psychodynamic, existential, system/family, developmental (adult, child, family), humanistic or psycho-educational. **Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P does NOT provide custody evaluation recommendation, medication or prescription recommendation, or legal advice, as these activities do not fall within her scope of practice.**

TREATMENT PLANS: Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will discuss with you her working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and her view of the possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your therapy, their possible risks, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P expertise in employing them, or about the treatment plan, please ask and you will be answered fully. You also have the right to ask about other treatments for your condition and their risks and benefits.

TERMINATION: As set forth above, after the first couple of meetings, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will assess if she can be of benefit to you. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P does not work with clients who, in her opinion, she cannot help. In such a case, if appropriate, she will give you referrals that you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P either assesses that she is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals or perceived you as non-compliant or non-responsive, and if you are available and/or it is possible and appropriate to do, she will discuss with you the termination of treatment and

conduct pre-termination counseling. In such a case, if appropriate and/or necessary, she will give you a couple of referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will talk to the psychotherapist of your choice in order to help with the transition. If at any time you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another therapist, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will give you a couple of referrals that you may want to contact, and if she has your written consent, she will provide the new therapist with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate therapy and communication at any time. If you choose to do so, upon your request and if appropriate and possible, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

MINORS IN THERAPY: If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may give your parents or guardians the right to obtain information about your treatment and/or examine your treatment records. It is the policy of Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P to request a written agreement from your parents or guardians indicating that they consent to give up access to such information and/or, to your records. If they agree, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will provide them only with general information about your treatment, subject to your approval, or if she feels it is important for them to know in order to make sure that you and people around you are safe. If Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P feels that there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or another/others, she will use her judgment to appropriately notify your parent/guardian(s) and involve them in your treatment. Before giving any verbal or written information, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will discuss the matter with you, if possible. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will do the best she can to resolve any differences that you and her may have about what she is prepared to discuss.

GROUP THERAPY: In group therapy, it is of utmost importance that all members maintain confidentiality and disclose neither the content of sessions nor the identity of fellow group members. It is highly recommended that any meaningful exchange outside the group also be discussed within the group. In group therapy, the other members of the group are not therapists. The same ethics and laws that bind your therapist do not regulate the group members. The limits of confidentiality and the reporting laws have been outlined earlier in this document. While the expectation is that all group members will maintain confidentiality regarding anything said in the group, it cannot be guaranteed that group members will adhere to this expectation. You are ultimately responsible for what you say and what you think, feel, or do with the feedback you receive in the group.

DUAL RELATIONSHIPS: Despite a popular perception, not all dual or multiple relationships are unethical or avoidable. Therapy never involves sexual or any other dual relationship that impairs Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P's objectivity, clinical judgment or can be exploitative in nature. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will assess carefully before entering into non-sexual and non-exploitative dual relationships with clients. It is important to realize that in some communities, particularly small towns, military bases, university campus, etc., multiple relationships are either unavoidable or expected. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will never acknowledge working with anyone without his/her written permission. Many clients have chosen Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P as their therapist because they knew her before they entered

therapy with her, and/or are personally aware of her professional work and achievements. Nevertheless, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will discuss with you the often-existing complexities, potential benefits and difficulties that may be involved in dual or multiple relationships. Dual or multiple relationships can enhance trust and therapeutic effectiveness but can also detract from it and often it is impossible to know which ahead of time. It is your responsibility to advise Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P if the dual or multiple relationships become uncomfortable for you in any way. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will always listen carefully and respond to your feedback and will discontinue the dual relationship if she finds it interfering with the effectiveness of the therapy or your welfare and, of course, you can do the same at any time.

SOCIAL NETWORKING AND INTERNET SEARCHES: At times, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P may conduct a web search on her clients before the beginning of therapy or during therapy. If you have concerns or questions regarding this practice, please discuss them with her. By policy, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P does not accept friend requests from current or former clients on social networking sites, such as Facebook. She believes that adding clients as friends on these sites and/or communicating via such sites is likely to compromise privacy and confidentiality. For this same reason, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P requests that clients do not communicate with her through any interactive or social networking web sites.

CANCELLATION: Since the scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum notice of 24 business hours is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless a different agreement is reached, a \$40.00 fee will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions.

RISK OF USING EMAIL/TEXTING: The transmission of client information by email and/or texting has a number of risks that clients should consider prior to using email/texting in therapy. These include, but are not limited to, the following risks:

- a. Email/Text messages can be circulated, forwarded or stored in electronic files
- b. Email/Text messages can be immediately broadcast worldwide and received by many intended and unintended recipients
- c. Senders can easily misaddress email and text messages
- d. Email/Text messaging is easier to forge than handwritten or signed documents
- e. Backup copies may exist even after sender and/or recipient has deleted their copies
- f. Email/Text messages can be intercepted, altered, forwarded or used without detection or authorization
- g. Email/Text messages can be used as evidence in court
- h. Email/Text messages can be lost in transmission

CONDITIONS FOR THE USE OF EMAIL/TEXTING: Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P uses reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of emails and texts she sends and receives, however due to the above outlined risks, she cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of information sent through email/texting. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P is not liable for improper disclosure of confidential information that is not caused by intentional misconduct. Clients must acknowledge and consent to the following conditions:

- If clients choose to use email/texting for emergency situations, they must be aware that Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P cannot guarantee that emails/texts will be received and responded to within a particular period of time.
- When at all possible, complex or sensitive situations are encouraged to be reserved for discussion during session rather than using email/text.
- Any email or text sent or received is subject to being printed out and placed in the client's medical record.
- Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will not forward client's identifiable emails/texts to outside parties without the client's written consent, except as authorized by law and explained in the Office Policies & Informed Consent.
- Clients should use their best judgment when considering the use of email or texts for communication of sensitive medical information. Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P will not be responsible for the content of messages.
- Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P is not liable for breaches of confidentiality caused by the client or any third party when using email/texting.
- The Client is responsible to follow up and/or schedule an appointment if necessary.

I give my permission to communicate sensitive information, including financial information with Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P through using (check all that apply):

Emails **Text Messages** **Phone**

APPOINTMENT REMINDERS: Beach Therapy and Consulting has adopted an appointment reminder system that operates through either email or texting. This system is an optional and beneficial tool for clients to use to remember upcoming appointments with Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P. Information sent through appointment reminders is minimal and secure. Clients may choose to opt in or out of this appointment reminder system at any time by speaking with Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P or contacting the office by phone at (757) 340-6100 or by email at info@beachtherapyandconsulting.com.

I give permission for Beach Therapy & Consulting to send me appointment reminders through (check all that apply):

Email, If yes, my email is: _____

Text Messages, If yes, my cell number is: _____

CLIENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT: I have read the Office Policies and General Information & Informed Consent for Psychotherapy carefully (a total of 9 pages); I understand them and agree to comply with them:

Client's Name (print)

Signature Date: _____

Client's Name (print)

Signature Date: _____

Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P, Resident in Counseling Date: _____

David M. Savinsky, Ph.D., LPC, LMFT, CSAC, ACS
Licensed Professional Counselor
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist
Certified Substance Abuse Counselor
Approved Clinical Supervisor Date: _____

FEE AGREEMENT

The responsible party and the therapist, Lisa C. Thomas, MS, ATR-P, Resident in Counseling agree to the following fee agreement for treatment:

Initial Office/Telemedicine Visit: \$40.00

Individual/Family Office/Telemedicine Session: \$40.00 each

Missed appointment fee: \$40.00

The responsible party agrees to make payments in FULL at the time of each therapy session.

The signatures below indicate both understanding and agreement with the above financial agreement.

Responsible party (printed name)

Responsible party signature

Date

Therapist

Date