

Groupworks West Inc.

“Come join the friendship journey”

Client Agreement for RDI Program Assessment and Treatment

Your family has applied for RDI Program services with Christopher Laurence Mulligan LCSW (hereafter CLM). Mr. Mulligan is President, founder, and clinical director of GroupWorks West Inc. (hereafter GWW). The services provided will be offered through GWW and delivered personally by CLM, as an employee of GWW. The services you are applying for will be funded by the *Westside Regional Center*.

Summary of RDI Program:

RDI Program is a family centered assessment and intervention program that is designed to remediate the core deficits of autistic spectrum disorders (hereafter ASD). These deficits include, but are not limited to: the inability to share and create enjoyment with others, social-emotional referencing and coordination, flexible and dynamic thinking, social coregulation, experience-sharing communication, personal episodic memory, and executive functioning skills.

It is important to note at the outset that many families find the initial phase of the RDI Program difficult to grasp. The guiding concepts of the RDI Program are complex and unfamiliar to most families, which makes understanding and integrating RDI into daily life a challenge. Furthermore, many of the fundamental ideas of RDI directly contradict time-honored beliefs about what causes autism and how autism should be treated. For example, RDI does not support the long-held belief that teaching social skills by rote is helpful to autistic children and teens (and may be harmful). Additionally, RDI does not condone the current treatment philosophy that intensive, multimodal, treatment is the best way to achieve progress for children challenged by ASD. In fact, the RDI Program encourages families to *decrease* the quantity of treatment, leaving families with more time for non-therapeutic activities and play.

CLM will offer your family ongoing and consistent support during this phase (referred to as the “education phase”). CLM will provide your family with reading materials, video tape clips, consultation sessions, and other learning tools intended to facilitate understanding of the RDI Program. With this said, most of the RDI Program work is completed at home, in your natural setting. This requires a significant devotion and organization of time, space, and energy.

Consistency of effort is crucial to the success of the RDI Program. As your family makes an investment in the RDI Program, with the ongoing assistance of CLM, difficulties will generally be overcome and truly meaningful progress will be made – progress that can be measured in terms of the remediation of the core deficits of autism (not by learning superficial compensatory strategies). For many families, the progress associated with the mastery of the RDI Program is remarkable and transformative.

Doing RDI Program therapy is an intense, mutual investment of effort, caring, and creativity by your family and CLM. It is important to devote the necessary efforts to the work and, when necessary, to put in extra effort to learn and relearn principles of the RDI Program, as well as to fine tune and individualize the implementation of the program.

For a variety of reasons, the RDI Program is not well suited to all families. Some families have too many commitments to make the RDI Program work in their daily lives e.g., occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, behavior intervention, education therapy, neurofeedback, and listening programs such as Somonas. RDI requires each family focus on mastering new ideas and approaches. If your family is focusing on multiple therapies, and is busy from morning until night, it is unlikely you will find RDI to be beneficial. Should it become clear that your family is not well suited to the RDI Program, it would be unethical and unwise for CLM to continue the treatment. ***CLM reserves the right to terminate treatment at any time should he conclude that RDI is not an appropriate treatment modality for your family.***

Termination will occur as follows: 1) CLM will call a meeting with your family to discuss termination. Following this meeting, CLM will write a letter to your family and the Westside Regional Center stating the reasons and terms of the termination. Upon receipt of this letter no further services will be offered.

It is important to recognize RDI may not be well suited to your family due to certain neurobehavioral and psychological types of obstacles facing your child/teen. These obstacles include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Speech and language
- 2) Sensory integration or processing
- 3) medical/health problems that compromise stamina
- 4) Executive functioning
- 5) Cognitive functioning
- 6) Emotional regulation
- 7) Family functioning

CLM will thoroughly explore these obstacles with your family during the course of our work together. These deficits may require further evaluation and treatment apart from RDI. CLM will determine whether these obstacles can be addressed during RDI Program therapy. In the event CLM determines that these obstacles or the treatment associated with these obstacles are hindering RDI progress, he reserves the right to either postpone or terminate treatment. It is solely the discretion of CLM to postpone and/or terminate treatment

CLM cannot guarantee the success of the RDI Program. There are multiple factors that affect the success or failure of the program. Your family has the right to terminate this agreement if your expectations are not being met or if you do not agree with the decisions or judgments of CLM. You may also seek a second opinion on any matter at any time. Please make your concerns known to CLM as you seek a second an opinion so that he may be able to resolve your concerns. If this is not possible, CLM will be able to offer you referrals and recommendations fro services you might be able to obtain elsewhere, if you request such referrals and recommendations.

Preliminary Requirements (Requirements must be met at least two weeks in advance of the start date of treatment).

1) All required paperwork must be signed by the Regional Center and your family. Family paper work includes:

- a) *RDI Program Treatment contract*
- b) *Developmental/behavioral questionnaires*
- c) *Mediation and Arbitration Agreement*

d) Release of information

e) Exclusion from Legal Proceedings (child custody/family law matters)

f) Waiting room Waiver of Responsibility

2) All caregivers directly involved in your child's RDI Program therapy must attend a **two-day RDI parent workshop** by the Connections Center (6 months prior to the commencement of RDI Program therapy). In some cases CLM will waive this requirement provided the parents/caregivers have twice watched the DVD published by the Connections Center summarizing the two day workshop.

3) Your family must agree to six months of weekly sessions following your RDA.

4) All significant caregivers in your family must be in agreement to use the RDI Program model and/or agree they will not interact with the child in such a way as to compromise or impede the child's progress within the RDI Program. Please understand that if CLM believes your child's progress within the RDI Program is being jeopardized or compromised by a caregiver on an ongoing basis, he reserves the right to terminate treatment. It is the responsibility of your family to explain this provision to all caregivers who are working with your child. CLM will provide support to these caregivers to explain their role. This support is time limited and will not include ongoing monitoring of caregivers' behavior.

5) Your family agrees to decrease, postpone, or terminate ***any therapies or clinical services*** that interfere or impede the progress of RDI Program therapy. CLM will carefully review with your family, prior to the commencement of RDI Program beginning, all services your child currently receives. CLM will determine if there is a conflict – either in terms of time or in terms of treatment philosophy. CLM will make every effort to explain RDI services to other treatment providers and attempt to reach an agreement regarding the respective roles of the services provided to your child. For example, if your child is receiving 25 hours per week of behavior intervention, and if the focus of these hours directly contradicts the concepts, theories, and procedures, and intent of the RDI Program, your family may be asked to terminate the behavioral services, or postpone RDI services until such time that the behavior intervention is completed.

Ongoing RDI Program Consultation

Please note: RDI Program is a consultative model – this means your child will not meet with a RDI therapist on a one-to-one basis for the purpose of implementing the program. Rather, you (as the parents) are primarily responsible for the actual implementation of the treatment plan (with CLM acting as a consultant on an ongoing basis). It is crucial that this be understood before any work begins (including the RD) and that every one understands and fully agrees to the consultative model.

Consultation is generally accomplished through two main methods:

Office Visits: parent(s) and/or parent and child/teen will meet with CLM on a weekly basis at his office. Parent meetings will last 50 minutes and will generally be scheduled during the late morning or early afternoon. Parent/child meetings will generally last 75 minutes. Office sessions will involve a review of the previous week of intervention. Office sessions will also involve working with CLM on a specific activity (used as a means of assessing child development and expanding parental skills). CLM will provide feedback during these sessions and will assign “homework” for the upcoming week.

Video Review: Video review is usually done 2 times per month (sometimes in lieu of coming into the office). Parents are required to review and critique their own videos prior to sending the tape to CLM. Feedback on the video will either occur in the office (parents only) or via email.

Homework: It is important to note that the RDI Program involves the regular assignment and completion of homework. The RDI model of treatment can only be successfully implemented if homework is taken seriously and completed on a timely basis. ***Failure to complete homework result in the termination of RDI Program therapy.***

Extra Office, Phone, Email or video consultation:

You may request extra office, video, or email consultations at any time during the six month contract. ***These consultations will be billed at \$150.00 per hour.***

Fees associated with exceeding Regional Center approved hours:

Please note that if additional consultations are needed in excess of the time funded by the Regional Center, your family will be billed at \$150.00 per hour. You will be apprised of when you have exceeded the Regional Center approved hours and apprised of the fees that will be accrued as a result of exceeding the Regional Center funded hours.

Additional Fees:

You will be billed for any requested research or for administrative work required in relation to any insurance claim or thirds party funding you asked CLM to be involved in processing. CLM as the right to refuse such requests or any other services he feels are excessive, too collateral, outside the scope of his customary practice, unnecessary, bothersome,

Sincerely,

Chris Mulligan LCSW

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