



6. Collaboration Agreement

This document is meant to prepare us to collaborate in working together. The goal of this document is for us to come to common understandings about our relationships with each other while pursuing therapy. In particular it aims to address the specifics of situations that will arise when people in intimate relationships are in therapy together, be they romantic, kink, platonic, familial, or some other form of close relationship.

Collaboration. We will all participate in devising a treatment plan and the ongoing process of therapy. Therapy is not something that is done “for” someone, but is something we are all participating in together. In terms of having shared vs. separate sessions, there is no predetermined formula for how we will all be involved - we'll figure that out together. Collaboration is important because it gives us the opportunity to work together to address a problem and find solutions, rather than arguing about who is or is not contributing to the problem.

Transparency. While we are working together, I expect everyone involved to be transparent about their decision making processes that affect other involved people. Examples might include a decision to move or change jobs, sexual practices in other relationships, having friends stay the night, how you are feeling after a disagreement, etc. You do not need to reveal *everything* about your life, the focus here is on things that are or might become relevant in your relationship. We'll have conversations to discuss what exactly makes sense to share. Additionally, I do not expect you to share these things right away, but rather for us to build a relationship together where it feels safe and okay to have an accepting conversation about it.

Consent. Throughout our time together as well as in your relationship together, I expect you to listen to what the other is saying about what is and is not okay for them. This is how we build trust together - by listening to what the other is saying about what is and is not okay for them, and taking that information into account. Over time, we will find that we are more willing to be vulnerable together, because we have learned that it feels safe to be vulnerable around each other.

Accountability. Accountability means that, if we say we will do or commit to something, we mean it. And that if we are not able to follow through, there will be consequences. This simply means that we will take steps to do better next time. For instance, if I promise to set the table for our shared meal and then forget thus leaving us unable to eat when we are all very hungry, I might afterward take care of cleaning up, or alternatively next time I might set an alarm so that I do not forget to set the table.

Attendance. At the end of our sessions, we usually will have an idea of what we are going to do together next time. This includes which people are going to come to the appointment, and why it is important for them to come. If, for instance, we have plans for three people to come to therapy, and on that day one person cannot make it, it would not be proper for us to proceed with our plans without the person that we had said would be there. In some instances, we might be able to shift our plans and work on something else. But in other circumstances, it might be preferable to reschedule.

Commitment to Nonviolence. We will make a shared commitment not to hit, yell, or intentionally break each others' objects as a component of therapy. This is because, when we do these things, it is very difficult for us to collaborate together, listen to each other, and address the root causes of whatever is happening. If hitting, yelling, or intentionally breaking objects does happen, I expect for the person who did this to share about it in therapy so we can discuss and address it. Also, it is possible that there are other harmful acts not listed here that might come up

in your relationship. If you feel scared or like you are in danger I would invite you to share this with me (perhaps privately) so we can address it together. Or alternatively, to seek emergency services if you feel the issue warrants it.