

The Parent Therapist Agreement

-Parents do not make the child/adolescent feel like they expect the child/adolescent to talk about what is going on in therapy.

-Parents are careful in how they respond whenever their child/adolescent says something negative about therapy, and they do not take it at face value. Sometime youth say things just to see how the parent will respond. Please let therapist know if this happens.

-Parents take opportunities to remind their child/adolescent (when appropriate) that they can also talk about distressing things with the therapist. (That is, the parent legitimizes that the therapist is someone who can also help).

-Parents directly express any concerns they have about the therapist or therapy directly with the therapist. For example, if there are issues related to money, these are not brought up in front of the child/adolescent.

-Parents regularly (weekly) update me on how their child/adolescent is doing, before the session time. They can refer to the email I send them for direction.

-Parents understand that if I am working in an individual mode with their child/adolescent, that I will be spending almost all the scheduled time with their child/adolescent, and may not interact much with them. This is not because I have bad manners. Rather, this is to ensure the child/adolescent feels this is their time, their special time, and minimizes the chances they feel the therapist and parent(s) are in alliance against the child/adolescent.

-Parents agree to meet with the therapist as necessary, as recommended by the therapist. They recognize that the ability for their child/adolescent to get better may largely depend on their consistency with following clinical recommendations.

-Parents understand that often their child/adolescent's ability to change may be contingent on their ability to change the home environment and parenting approaches. That is, there often needs to be a change in the family system.

-Parents are willing to evaluate how their own behavior, or family dynamics may be contributing to the problem. They may even follow-up by working with another psychologist on parenting issues if the alliance between the primary therapist and child/adolescent would be undermined by collateral meetings with the therapist.

-Parents remember that this work may make them aware of their own issues, and may at times be hard for them. But they remember, the old saying, "There is no growth without change, and no change without pain".

-Parents should make sure to refer back to the table clarifying how different levels of commitment to this process will bring about different kinds of results.