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**INFORMED CONSENT FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION-PARENTING
CAPACITY EVALUATION FOR DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

This Psychological Evaluation is being conducted at the request of the Department of Social Services and is therefore somewhat different than other psychological services. Because this evaluation is included in the social services case record presented to the court and may be used in some type of legal proceeding, it is defined as a forensic psychological evaluation. It is important for you to understand how a forensic psychological evaluation differs from more traditional psychological evaluations.

While the results of this evaluation may or may not be helpful to you personally, the purpose of this evaluation is to provide information to assist the department of social services in understanding your individual circumstances and in recommending services that will assist you and your family in the current situation.

The report and any information pertaining to it will be admissible into legal proceedings, as determined by the department of social services. Psychological evaluations of parents are typically ordered when the Court wants more information about the parents to be able to make the best decisions possible for the children. This report will include information about your overall psychological functioning, personal and family history, substance abuse history, medical history and criminal history. Ultimately, it will address your ability to make good decisions.

It is important to understand the evaluation is not for the purpose of treatment or counseling. Although Dr. Minrath does have a psychotherapy as well as forensic psychology practice, when working as the neutral, objective evaluator appointed by the Court, she functions solely in the role of a forensic psychologist and does not provide clinical services before or after completing the psychological evaluation. A clear standard of practice is the psychologist must maintain a well-defined forensic model when conducting these evaluations. It is considered to be a dual relationship and a conflict of interest if there is an overlap of roles of any kind in her work with you.

While you will not be given a copy of this report, Dr. Minrath will review all of her findings and recommendations with you before she finalizes the report and submits it to referring social worker in the department of social services.

Your participation in this evaluation is voluntary. Dr. Minrath will not conduct the evaluation without your signature on this document. You have the right to stop the evaluation at any time. Dr. Minrath also have the right to recuse herself from the evaluation at any time, if she determines she is unable to complete an objective, unbiased evaluation.

She does not audiotape or videotape any of the interviews in the evaluation and does not allow you to audiotape the interviews. If, at any time, you have a question about any aspect of the evaluation or these procedures, please ask for clarification. In addition, if at any time during the interview you need a break, please let her know.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The psychological evaluation consists of clinical interviews, psychological testing and review of the records in the department of social services. Dr. Minrath may also ask to interview collateral sources of information such as family members, mental health professionals, guardian ad litem and others who may help her better understand the circumstances leading to the request for an evaluation as well as provide her with additional information. If collateral sources of information are interviewed, she will ask you for written authorization.

Typically, Dr. Minrath will conduct 2-3 clinical interviews. You can anticipate the initial interview will be approximately 2 hours. The psychological testing will also take approximately two hours. She will conduct a second interview to review the information obtained in the first interview to ensure accuracy as well as your full report of your circumstances. She will conclude the evaluation with a follow up summary interview with you and at that time will discuss the findings and recommendations for services. Usually the process of completing all of the data collection as described above and writing a comprehensive report will take approximately three to four weeks. This time frame may vary depending on the complexity of your overall situation and the questions posed by social services.

The format for the Psychological Evaluations is as follows:

1. All psychological evaluations are referred through the social worker assigned to your case. The Service Plan the social worker submits to the Court will list the psychological evaluation as a service provided to you and approved by the court. The social worker will provide background information and specific questions to address in the assessment process.
2. Records are requested for review. Typically, these records include Affidavits, Foster Care Service Plans and medical and mental health records as well as other relevant records.

3. Clinical interviews. These interviews include a report of the circumstances leading to the request for a psychological evaluation as well as an in-depth review of personal and family history, medical/psychiatric history, educational background, employment history and criminal history.

4. Description of Child/Children

You will also be asked to describe your child, your relationship with your child and the overall developmental needs of your child.

You will be asked about your child's preschool/school experience and/or childcare.

You will be asked about disciplinary measures and socialization.

5. Psychological testing, as indicated, is administered. Testing may include the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-III (MMPI-3), Parenting Assessment Inventory PAI), the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-IV(MCMI-IV) and the Parenting Stress Index (PSI).

5. Collateral sources of information are interviewed, usually by telephone. As stated, these collateral sources may include primary care physicians, mental health providers, family members, the guardian ad litem, school teachers and childcare providers.

6. A written report is submitted directly to the referring social worker.

PAYMENT AND FEES

You are not responsible for the payment of the fee for the psychological evaluation. The fee for this evaluation is paid by the Department of Social Services Child Services Act. Dr. Minrath is an independent service provider contracted by social services to provide psychological evaluations.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

Both the legal and clinical standards of practice require that appropriate records are kept in the process of compiling the forensic evaluation report. This psychological evaluation report is only for the use of mental health professionals, social workers and attorneys as indicated. This evaluator only distributes this report to Department of Social Services contracting my services. The Department of Social Services determines the professional parties to whom this report has relevant information. This report is never distributed to other parties through my office.

The report is never to be distributed to non-professional individuals. As stated, you will not receive a copy of the report. Should you wish to review the report after it is completed, Dr. Minrath will meet with you and your social worker at the department of social services to review the report directly with you. This policy is compliant with the guidelines of the American Psychological Association.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

I have read and agree to the above: _____ Date: _____