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## **FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY FEE AND RETAINER AGREEMENT**

**Introduction:** A forensic psychologist utilizes psychological expertise to apply to the criminal justice system or court system. A psycholegal evaluation may include clinical interviews, a mental status exam, psychodiagnostic testing (e.g., standardized questionnaires, personality, cognitive, neuropsychological, or projective tests), a review of relevant records, research, interviews with collateral sources, and conferences with an attorney.

**Services:** I provide forensic psychological evaluations to the court and attorneys or individuals who retain me for legal purposes. A judge may order a psychological evaluation with a specific legal question, citing relevant penal codes to be addressed/answered for the evaluation. Evaluations include findings, impressions, conclusions, and recommendations regarding the legal issue(s). Once the evaluation is complete, a written report is submitted to the court.

**Forensic Evaluations:** Forensic evaluations are psychological evaluations ordered by the criminal, civil, or family law court. Forensic services are billed at a rate of \$400 per hour. Charges are calculated in 15-minute increments. Additional expenses may include telephone calls, overnight delivery, and courier services. Telephone or in-person conferences are considered billable times.

**Criminal Evaluations:** Individuals accused of a penal code violation whose mental state is in question may be ordered by the criminal court for a psychological evaluation. Criminal evaluations include Competency to Stand Trial (CST) (PC 1370), Guilty But Mentally Ill (GBMI), Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI) (PC 1026), Registered Sex Offender (RSO) (PC 290), or Mentally Disordered Offender (MDO) evaluations (PC 2926). Evaluations may include mitigating or aggravating factors, recommendations for sentencing or community placement, and evidence of malingering and/or deception in cases of secondary gain. Criminal evaluations often include serious allegations, such as murder, attempted murder, great bodily harm, assault, sexual assault, arson, or manslaughter. The length of time it takes for a thorough investigation and administration of multiple psychological instruments may require 20-40 hours of billable time (\$8,000 - \$16,000). For example, a homicide trial, where testimony is expected, is \$8,000. A minimum criminal evaluation is \$4,000.

**Fees:** Forensic evaluations typically require a minimum of \$4,000 for 10 hours of work unless otherwise agreed upon. There are no refunds for work already performed or fees paid; transactions are final. The cost of the assessment varies on a case-by-case basis. Fees are an estimate and, therefore, may exceed minimum hours. Services will not be rendered or continued if payment is incomplete.

**Civil Evaluations:** Forensic clinical and neuropsychological evaluations in civil litigation assess self-report and performance after an injury. The assessment may include matters of deception: malingering, feigning, somatic disorders, and culpability in civil allegations. Evaluations may be ordered from insurance companies, employers, or workers' compensation. In matters of capacity to make decisions or Competency, family members may request and evaluate mental functioning. Civil lawsuits may assess for evaluation of damages and nature and extent of stress or evaluation for criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

**Individual Diagnostic Evaluations:** All evaluations include psychopathology testing to determine mood, personality, and levels of psychological functioning or impairment. Evaluations include a differential diagnosis and plan for treatment. A diagnostic assessment can assist with understanding your diagnosis and how it affects you interpersonally to improve interpersonal relationships and overall well-being and functioning.

**Limits of Confidentiality:** Information obtained during a forensic evaluation will be shared with the individual's attorney. Be advised there are certain instances where the law requires me to breach confidentiality, for example, abuse (i.e., suspected child or elder abuse, potential harm to self or others).

**Trial Testimony:** Trial testimony in criminal, civil, and family law proceedings is \$500 per hour and requires a half-day minimum (4 hours) of \$2,000.00. The \$2,000.00 fee must be paid seven days before testimony. The retainer applies to dates scheduled by the court. On-call standby fee is \$1,000.00 per day. Trial Testimony is \$2,000.00 per half-day and \$5,000.00 for a full (8-hour) day.

**Expert Testimony:** My effectiveness in being an expert witness in a case will depend on my ability to have access to relevant records. The agency, court, or attorney requesting services will assist in providing forms and access to collateral sources. Attempting to place restrictions on mental examinations, time limits, or prohibit topics of inquiry or documents will impede my effectiveness, ability to testify, and complete my evaluation.

**Deposition and Arbitration Hearings:** There is a one-half day minimum charge of \$2,000, prepaid as a non-refundable retainer seven days before deposition. A full day (8 hours) is \$4,000.

**Accelerated Report Generation:** Up to \$1,000 for accelerated work requested overnight or over the weekend. If you have an imminent matter and are seeking a last-minute evaluation, contact me immediately to see whether or not I can accommodate to fast-track your request.

**Travel:** Travel time is billed at \$150 per hour, plus per diem, airfare, and overnight accommodations.

**Cancellation Policy:** Please provide as much time in advance to schedule or reschedule appointments. Late cancellations are highly disruptive to my schedule and patients. If a same-day cancellation or deposition is completed in less time than was reserved, fees will be retained.

**Payments:** Insurance is not accepted, as forensic services do not qualify for reimbursement. Payments are required before services are rendered.

**Refunds:** Forensic services and expert testimony do not guarantee a specific outcome. As a forensic expert, my work output is based on objective data, interpretation of the data, and my expert opinion. Litigants may disagree with the findings of an evaluation. Thus, all fees paid are non-refundable.

**Limitations of Services/Estimates:** Be advised that many unforeseen issues arise in forensic evaluations. Estimates are just that, estimates; they may vary according to the number and complexity of issues evaluated. Forensic psychological assessments are complex, and costs for additional testing and assessments may be more than initially estimated.

**Liability Insurance & Business Licensure:** I maintain professional liability insurance (Policy #5013-4859) under American Professional Agency and have a City of Redding professional business license (#37613).

**Agreement:** For you to retain my services you must provide an order from the court, or referral from an attorney and a signed agreement. Communicate regarding forensic cases, can be efaxed to: (619) 272-2277 or emailed to ceo@psychologydr.com

**Acknowledging Signatures:** I understand and consent to the information above and agree to the fee agreement.

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Client:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney of records: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Next Court Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** 6450 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90028