



**DR ELMARI MULDER CRAIG**

PhD ECPS

EUROPEAN CERTIFIED SEXOLOGIST | RELATIONSHIP THERAPIST

## **GENERAL INFORMED CONSENT & PROTECTION OF INFORMATION**

Welcome to the practice of Dr Elmari Mulder Craig.

First, I would like to commend you on the sometimes-difficult decision to seek therapy. Getting started can often be the most difficult part. Before we start the therapeutic process, we will explore information that will help you understand the possible risks and benefits associated with therapy.

We hope that you have a positive experience and that your expectations are exceeded. We always have your best interest at heart, and we are committed to delivering a professional service without any prejudice or discrimination. We welcome patients from all genders, orientations, ages, religions, cultures, backgrounds, and professions and aim to provide you with the highest level of care in a respectful manner.

The purpose of informed consent is to build safety and understanding within the therapeutic relationship to get the best possible results. We will continue to revisit informed consent throughout our therapeutic relationship, if we are trying a new therapeutic tool or if any of the circumstances in our therapy change. Informed consent is an ongoing, collaborative process.

### **What is Therapy? What are the Risks and Benefits?**

Therapy can be quite different than talking to a friend or a loved one. Therapy provides a space and opportunity for you to explore behaviour, relationships, feelings, or thoughts that trouble you and cause difficulty in your life and relationships. Therapy is also a legitimate source of support in a crisis or during a difficult time. The therapist will provide empathic support and will help you challenge old ways of thinking or behaving that are not serving you anymore. If you have tried therapy before, your therapist will probably ask you what was helpful and unhelpful about the therapy you have had. This is so we can tailor our services to your specific wants and needs.

If this is your first-time seeking therapy, you and your therapist will figure out what works best for you over time.

The benefits of empathic support, containment and changing unhelpful ways of thinking can be drastic. You may start to feel more self-compassion, understand unhealthy habits, and create new ways of thinking and behaving. The therapeutic process can also bring deeper personal insight and awareness, better ways of understanding and coping with problems, and improved relationships.



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You should know however, therapy sometimes requires that you be willing to examine difficult topics or times in your life, to experience stronger than usual emotions, and to try out new and different behaviours. These changes in behaviours may result in changes in personal relationships, some of which can be positive and others quite challenging. Finally, changes through therapy often require persistent effort in your life and typically take a bit of time.

### **What is an example of a risk and benefit?**

Let us say a woman comes to therapy because she has extremely low self-worth and is sick of hating herself. Through an empathic, supportive relationship with her therapist, she starts to love herself more. However, through therapy she also realises the reason she has low self-worth is because her family was never very supportive to her, and often cut her down verbally. She starts to distance herself from the hurtful family members, resulting in more tension. Although the woman feels drastically better overall, she is now trying to figure out how to set stronger boundaries with family and some hurtful friends too.

### **Consent in Therapy**

What you choose to discuss and explore in therapy is all up to you. You are the boss! The therapist's job is to truly understand your struggles and goals, so they can help you fully utilise your existing strengths and find your own solutions. At various times in the healing process your therapist might recommend various therapeutic activities or "homework", and you can always give or deny consent at any time in the process.

### **The Therapeutic Relationship**

Multiple studies over the years have shown that the most important predictor of success in therapy is the relationship you have with your therapist. At the beginning of therapy, you will just be getting to know your therapist and how they work. I recommend trying at least three sessions to determine if your therapist is a good fit for your needs. Ideally, you will feel honoured, respected, and cared for in your sessions.

The therapeutic relationship is different than other relationships in that it is relatively one sided. You will most likely be sharing quite a few details about yourself and your life, while the therapist will share few details about their personal life. This ensures the focus can be kept on you. This is your time to feel cared for and explore your struggles, so your therapist will maintain necessary boundaries to avoid overlapping or dual relationships.

For example, your therapist will not:

- Engage in any other business with you other than therapy.
- Be your therapist if they are your friend or family member.



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- Engage in a friendship, romantic, or sexual relationship with current or former patient.
- Give medical, legal, or financial advice outside scope of practice.
- Be your teacher, supervisor or evaluator while engaged in counselling with you.
- Be connected on social media other than the professional social media pages of your therapist

If for some reason you don't feel like your therapist is the right fit for you, Dr Mulder Craig would be happy to refer you to another therapist. It is understood that finding the right "fit" is a very individual process, and I don't take offence when people decide to switch to another therapist. My only goal is that you find therapy helpful.

There is also a small chance that I may recommend you see a different therapist if I feel there is a conflict of interest or if I feel that I am not the best therapist for your needs. If this is the case, I will be as transparent as possible to let you know the reason for the recommendation.

To maintain the safety of your therapy, please don't attend sessions under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This will ensure that your participation in therapy is voluntary and deliberate. If you seem as though you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, I may recommend you end the session and return another day. If this is the case, the fee for the session would still apply.

### **Therapist's Qualifications and Registrations**

Dr Mulder Craig obtained a PhD in Sexology, is a European Certified Sexologist and holds a Master's degree in Social Work. Dr Mulder Craig is also part of the My Sexual Health Multi-disciplinary team. She also engaged in various post graduate trainings to provide effective, professional, and ethical therapeutic services. Dr Mulder Craig belongs to various professional organisations and boards that provide continuing education, code of ethics, as well as accountability in care. She is registered as a professional member with SACSSP, SAASWIP and SASHA.

You can read Dr Mulder Craig's full CV on [www.drelmarimuldercraig.com](http://www.drelmarimuldercraig.com)

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is a necessary condition of therapy, often because the things that people need to share are what they don't want other people to know about. Confidentiality continues after the end of the therapeutic relationship. This means your therapist will not speak to anyone but you about your story and situation.

To provide the best therapy possible and for the therapist's continued clinical development, your therapist might occasionally talk to colleagues or a multi-disciplinary team about some of the issues you are dealing with. Colleagues and team members will be bound by the same confidentiality as your therapist. As part of the supervision and or clinical development process, your therapist may ask for your consent to record one or more of your sessions. Of course, you can choose to deny consent to this with no penalty to you or your therapeutic relationship.



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If you would like Dr Mulder Craig to share information with anyone else outside of her practice, we will discuss the risks and benefits of this, and you can sign a release of information form stating what information you would like released, to whom, over what period of time. You have the right to revoke this permission at any time. An example of a benefit of getting a release to contact another person would be to coordinate care with a doctor or psychiatrist.

### **Limitations to Confidentiality**

There are three important limits to maintaining confidentiality all therapists must adhere too. These primarily concern risks of harm:

- There is risk of harm or neglect to a child or vulnerable/dependent adult.
- If a therapist believes you are at risk of harming yourself or another person.
- For the purposes of complying with a legal requirement.

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### **Communication**

We want communication to be as convenient and confidential as possible. If you need to contact Dr Mulder Craig, you can call 082 783 6633 and provide your first name and the number she can reach you at. Another easy, fast way of reaching Dr Mulder Craig is through her direct e-mail, [elmari@elmaricraig.co.za](mailto:elmari@elmaricraig.co.za)

All of Dr Mulder Craig's staff are bound by a confidentiality contract and will not release any of your information without your written consent at any time.

- Please do not e-mail or call if you are currently in crisis, as we cannot guarantee an immediate response. If you are in crisis, please call *The South Africa Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0800 21 22 23*, or *Lifeline: 0861 322 322* or go to the nearest *Emergency Room*.
- In general, feel free to e-mail or call if you have relatively simple inquiries. If you have more complex issues to discuss, those are best left for your therapy sessions.

### **Your Personal Information relating to the Protection of Personal Information Act No. 4 of 2013**

Your personal information is only collected to be utilised by your therapist in the delivery of therapeutic services to you. Your personal information will not be disclosed to any third party without expressed, written consent by you or in the case of the above limits to confidentiality. Dr Elmar Mulder Craig is the Personal Information officer registered.

As a part of therapy, records are kept of your therapy sessions. These clinical records will be kept indefinitely to ensure professional service rendering as many patients return periodically over their life span to deal with different issues. These records include minimal information that is important for your therapist to remember when providing ethical and effective care.



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We aim to include the most minimal information possible in your notes, to decrease possible harm that may occur on the very low chance your file is legally requested by outside parties.

If therapy is terminated, you are welcome to request your information to be destroyed. This will be done by the Information Officer and by means of shredding. Should your therapist pass away unexpectedly, another therapist will take responsibility for your clinical records. Any records older than five years will be destroyed. All current clients will be asked if they wish their records to be transferred to a new therapist. All remaining records will be destroyed once the five-year mark is reached.

### **Length, Frequency, and Termination of Sessions**

While appointments are typically scheduled in one-hour blocks, you will actually receive 50 minutes of clinical time each session. This allows for 50 minutes of clinical expertise, then approximately five minutes to deal with payment and setting another appointment, as well as five minutes to record notes from your session. The same applies for 90-minute sessions where there will be 80 minutes clinical time.

The frequency of sessions will be determined and negotiated during our time together, based on your struggles and goals.

You are free to terminate therapy at any time and there is no pressure to continue to attend. If you decided to end your counselling, we hope you can find a way to discuss your contemplation regarding completing counselling with your therapist.

### **Feedback Process**

During each session (most likely close to the end of the session), your counsellor will ask for your feedback regarding how you felt the session went. This is a great time for you to reflect on the session and express what stood out to you, what you found helpful and what was not as helpful.

### **Fees Structure**

Dr Mulder Craig runs a private and cash practice, which means patients pay her for each session. Session fees are set at R1200.00 per 50 minutes for individuals and couples and are due before the start of each session. For extended sessions, the fees will increase proportionally to the time allotted. An 80-minute session will be R 1800.00. We truly believe the quality of the services provided and the experience and quality training of Dr Mulder Craig, commensurate with the fee structure.

E-mailed receipts will be issued for each paid session and will include your therapists name and professional association practice number for medical aid insurance claims. Receipts can only be provided for services that have been rendered and can only be issued to the individual receiving the services (we cannot provide receipts in advance or with anyone else's name). We can provide



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invoices (that show the outstanding balance) for future sessions at the patients request. This can be helpful if another party is covering the payment.

Receipts may be submitted by yourself to your Medical Aid after each session.

Please confirm with your Medical Aid to ensure that Dr Mulder Craig services are covered in your plan.

Patients will be charged their full appointment fee for all missed sessions or sessions cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice. Patients arriving late for appointments are entitled to receive the remainder of the scheduled appointment for the full appointment fee. If you are unable to pay the fee for your session, we will be unable to provide counselling services until the balance is paid.

We charge the full fee for missed and late appointment times because we have various overhead costs. In addition, your missed appointment or late cancellation means we were not able to schedule someone else in that time spot. We hope you understand this policy and invite you to discuss it further with Dr Mulder Craig if you have any questions or concerns.

Session fees may be paid by Cash, Card or EFT payment.

We understand accessing private practice counselling services is a financial investment. We invite you to repeatedly reassess your investment in therapy with Dr Mulder Craig directly. My goal is that you feel the return on your investment has been satisfactory at the least, but hopefully exceptional.

### **Acknowledgement of Informed Consent**

My signature below indicates I understand and accept the preceding statements. I have had an opportunity to discuss the contents of this informed consent with Dr Mulder Craig and had my questions answered to my satisfaction and am fully prepared to enter into a therapeutic agreement with Dr Mulder Craig.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_