

## ***Professional Letter of Support for Retroactive Withdrawal***

This guide will benefit any mental health professional who has been asked by a client to write a letter of support for a retroactive withdrawal application for college.



### **KNOWLEDGE OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

It's helpful to understand what colleges and universities are willing to consider as appropriate reasons to apply for a retroactive withdrawal. Some institutions will be a lot more rigid while others are more open to learning about the student's struggles. A school's website will include the following as extenuating circumstances: death of an immediate family member, traumatic and unforeseen circumstances that are considered beyond a student's control, serious emotional instability, physical injury or illness that has resulted in the student's inability to complete academic responsibilities.



### **WRITING A LETTER OF SUPPORT**

You will need to be able to write about your client's struggles. This letter needs to be on letterhead and include a signature, otherwise the Committee will question its authenticity. The letter needs to share how they knew you, in what capacity, for what length of time, and any clinical information regarding your work together. If you are uncomfortable with this, you can keep the information limited. Take this seriously, for your client. There are some professionals who's letter of support actually hurt the application.



### **IT'S OKAY TO SAY NO**

If you only ever met with the client once, you aren't a good reference point for them. If, in knowing what appropriate extenuating circumstances are, you believe your client is not appropriate and/or just didn't do the work, you can kindly decline the request to write a letter of support. Either they will find someone else, or they just won't end up applying.



### **KEEP A COPY FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**

Once you have written one letter of support, make sure you keep a copy in your client notes. Then use the template to write future letters of support for other students. If you are a professional who is working with college students, this will definitely be helpful to keep on hand.

