

# Practice Policies

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## PRACTICE POLICIES

### APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Please remember to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance. You will be responsible for the entire fee if cancellation is less than 24 hours.

If you no show an appointment there will be a \$45 fee. If you no show/cancel more than 3 sessions your file will be closed.

The standard meeting time for psychotherapy is 50 minutes. It is up to you, however, to determine the length of time of your sessions. Requests to change the 50-minute session needs to be discussed with the therapist in order for time to be scheduled in advance.

If you are more than fifteen minutes late to a session, you will be charged for a no show/no call fee and will not be seen for session

A \$10.00 service charge will be charged for any checks returned for any reason for special handling.

### FEE FOR SERVICES/BILLING

At this time I do not accept insurance and will operate on a self pay basis for services.

Initial session/assessment: \$80

50 minute therapy session: \$65

30 minute therapy session: \$45

If you are working with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) with Contec, Inc., the first 6 sessions will be covered by Contec, Inc., all subsequent sessions you will be responsible for your copay at the time of service (\$32.50). Contec, Inc. will be billed for their copay coverage.

If you have an outstanding balance with 3 unpaid sessions you will not be able to book another session until your bill is paid in full.

Cancellations and re-scheduled session will be subject to a full charge if NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time.

### COURT APPEARANCES

Please note that I do NOT make court appearances or form opinions regarding custody or legal proceedings of any nature when doing outpatient therapy. I do not enter into the therapy process with this mindset, so a subpoena or court order can and will do irreparable damage to the therapeutic alliance, especially with children, and often does more harm than good to the client involved in the case. If I am required to do so, there is an hourly charge of \$100 an hour for time spent attending to these matters including phone calls and preparation. In the rare event that I am called to court as a fact witness, there is a one-time fee of \$1,500 IN ADDITION to any time spent attending to matters regarding the case. It is also in our code of ethics (AAMFT) that we cannot give our professional opinions on custody arrangements. Please see below.

\*Fact witness: cannot give their professional opinion on a matter they can only state facts. So a fact witness can not give professional opinions on custody agreements or arrangements.

#### TELEPHONE ACCESSIBILITY

If you need to contact me between sessions, please leave a message on my voice mail. I am often not immediately available; however, I will attempt to return your call within 24 hours. Please note that Face-to-face sessions are highly preferable to phone sessions. However, in the event that you are out of town, sick or need additional support, phone sessions are available. If a true emergency situation arises, please call 911 or any local emergency room.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATION

Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

#### ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

I cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages. If you prefer to communicate via email or text messaging for issues regarding scheduling or cancellations, I will do so. While I may try to return messages in a timely manner, I cannot guarantee immediate response and request that you do not use these methods of communication to discuss therapeutic content and/or request assistance for emergencies.

Services by electronic means, including but not limited to telephone communication, the Internet, facsimile machines, and e-mail is considered telemedicine by the State of California. Under the California Telemedicine Act of 1996, telemedicine is broadly defined as the use of information technology to deliver medical services and information from one location to another. If you and your therapist chose to use information technology for some or all of your treatment, you need to understand that:

- (1) You retain the option to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting the right to future care or treatment or risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.
- (2) All existing confidentiality protections are equally applicable.

(3) Your access to all medical information transmitted during a telemedicine consultation is guaranteed, and copies of this information are available for a reasonable fee.

(4) Dissemination of any of your identifiable images or information from the telemedicine interaction to researchers or other entities shall not occur without your consent.

(5) There are potential risks, consequences, and benefits of telemedicine. Potential benefits include, but are not limited to improved communication capabilities, providing convenient access to up-to-date information, consultations, support, reduced costs, improved quality, change in the conditions of practice, improved access to therapy, better continuity of care, and reduction of lost work time and travel

costs. Effective therapy is often facilitated when the therapist gathers within a session or a series of sessions, a multitude of observations, information, and experiences about the client. Therapists may make clinical assessments, diagnosis, and interventions based not only on direct verbal or auditory communications, written reports, and third person consultations, but also from direct visual and olfactory observations, information, and experiences. When using information technology in therapy services, potential risks include, but are not limited to the therapist's inability to make visual and olfactory observations of clinically or therapeutically potentially relevant issues such as: your physical condition including deformities, apparent height and weight, body type, attractiveness relative to social and cultural norms or standards, gait and motor coordination, posture, work speed, any noteworthy mannerism or gestures, physical or medical conditions including bruises or injuries, basic grooming and hygiene including appropriateness of dress, eye contact (including any changes in the previously listed issues), sex, chronological and apparent age, ethnicity, facial and body language, and congruence of language and facial or bodily expression. Potential consequences thus include the therapist not being aware of what he

or she would consider important information, that you may not recognize as significant to present verbally the therapist.

## MINORS

If you are a minor, your parents may be legally entitled to some information about your therapy. I will discuss with you and your parents what information is appropriate for them to receive and which issues are more appropriately kept confidential.

## TERMINATION

Ending relationships can be difficult. Therefore, it is important to have a termination process in order to achieve some closure. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the treatment. I may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you and a termination process if I determine that the psychotherapy is not being effectively used or if you are in default on payment. I will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the reasons and purpose of terminating. If therapy is terminated for any reason or you request another therapist, I will provide you with a list of qualified psychotherapists to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source.

Should you fail to schedule an appointment for three consecutive weeks, unless other arrangements have been made in advance, for legal and ethical reasons, I must consider the professional relationship discontinued and your file will move to inactive.

If you have any questions at any time about the information above please feel free to ask me for clarification.

BY SIGNING BELOW I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.