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Office Policies and Procedures

Welcome to my practice. I appreciate the opportunity to work with you. The following information is provided to assist you in understanding the policies and procedures of my office. Please take time to review all the information on the following pages and feel free to ask questions of me at any time about the information contained in this document.

During our first meeting, I will ask that you review and sign a “Fee and Therapy Agreement” form. This form allows you to specify your payment, insurance, or EAP information. Your signature on this agreement indicates your understanding of, and consent to, treatment according to the following office policies and procedures.

Confidentiality and Privileged Communication

The information you share with me is kept private. It is your legal right protected by state law that I maintain your confidentiality unless given your expressed written consent to do otherwise. This applies equally to adults and minor children. I may ask you to sign a consent form giving me permission to release information to and consult with people who are relevant to your treatment, such as teachers, physicians, probation officers, judges or other healthcare professionals in order to provide you with high quality care. You control the release of your healthcare information and you may notify me in writing at any time should you wish to revoke any prior consent given. There are a few situations in which your confidentiality is not protected. I am required by Tennessee law to report the following:

1. If you are in imminent danger of harming yourself or others (this includes potential transmission of a terminal communicable disease.)
2. If I suspect that a child or adult (who cannot take care of themselves – elderly or mentally/physically challenged) is being abused or neglected.
3. If you are involved in legal proceedings and I am court-ordered to release your records.

Additional information about confidentiality and release of information is provided in the “HIPAA” document.

Telephone Calls and Emergencies

If I am unable to take your call, you may leave a message on my confidential voice mailbox (615-788-9831). I will also respond to text or email messages. Please note that text and email communication is usually reserved for cancellation/scheduling issues. I will return your call, email, or text as soon as possible during regular business hours.

I define an emergency as: A serious, unexpected situation that involves imminent danger to you or someone else. If you feel you are experiencing an emergency and need immediate assistance, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. The following emergency resources can also be used:

Crisis Intervention

Crisis Intervention Center: 244-7444
Mobile Crisis: 726-0125 (can come to home in certain situations)

Domestic Violence

FAST Unit: 880-3000 or 862-8600
YWCA: 297-8833
-in counties outside of Davidson call local police

Local Hospitals with emergency response programs

Parthenon Pavilion’s Community Assistance Program: 342-1400
Tennessee Christian Medical Center: 800-0426
St. Thomas: 222-1289
Vanderbilt Respond Program: 327-7000

I do carry my work cell phone with me during weekdays, and will do my best to respond to emergency calls outside of business hours. You may leave me a message stating the nature of your emergency, and I will call you back as soon as possible. I do ask that you use all of your resources (including those listed above) if an emergency does occur, and ask that you do not wait for my return call before using available resources to ensure your safety or the safety of someone else. If you do not indicate the nature of your call I will return your call within regular business hours. I am not available to discuss non-emergency issues after hours.

Appointments

I schedule my own appointments. Since clients are seen by appointment only, the appointment time given is reserved for you – I do not double-book. Please give at least Twenty-four (24) hours notice if you must cancel your reserved time. Sometimes emergencies happen, which prevent you from keeping your reserved time. I do not charge a fee for these infrequent occurrences.

Missed Appointments

- Cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance of your scheduled appointment to avoid being charged.
- Missed appointments or cancellations made less than 24 hours in advance of your scheduled session will incur a charge equal to your private pay fee or my contracted rate with your insurance carrier.
- No charges will be applied in the event of an emergency or if stipulated by your insurance/EAP plan.

Fees and Payments

The following are my full-fee rates. If you are using insurance or EAP benefits, your fee/co-pays are based on my contracted rate with your insurance/EAP company. I will verify your responsibility with your insurance or EAP company and notify you prior to our first session. If you are paying out of pocket, my full-fee rates may be adjusted based on income and other factors.

Initial interview/General Sessions	<u>50 min/1 hr</u>	<u>\$140.00</u>
	<u>Addition 30 min/ ½ hr</u>	<u>\$80.00</u>
Unscheduled telephone calls/consults – over 15 minutes	<u>each additional 15 min.</u>	<u>\$25.00</u>
Court appearances, depositions	<u>each hour including travel</u>	<u>\$140.00</u>
Copy of chart		<u>\$25.00</u>
Letters requiring research		<u>\$25.00</u>

*Accepted forms of payment: Cash, check, and credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover). Please note that for private pay clients, there is a 2.75 percent convenience fee added when paying with credit card. I ask that co-pay/co-insurance fees be paid by check or cash.

Other Fee Policies

- Clients in arrears for more than 1 session will not be able to reschedule until their balance is paid.
- \$20 will be charged for any check returned by the bank. Multiple return checks will require a change made to payment arrangements.

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Regarding the use of Insurance/Managed Care benefits: The client is responsible for any co-pay or co-insurance amounts, as set forth by your insurance plan. The co-pay is expected at each visit. If insurance benefits have not been specifically verified prior to the first visit, the client is responsible for and agrees to pay the full or negotiated fee for that visit. At the first visit, please have your insurance card available so a copy can be made and kept on file.

Regarding the use of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefits: If the client is utilizing EAP benefits, the EAP has approved and is financially responsible for a set number of sessions. Approval of additional sessions is not guaranteed. If the client wishes to continue sessions beyond the EAP limit a new authorization must be obtained from the EAP or the insurance company that provides behavioral health benefits; **or** a self-pay fee can be set.

Regarding self-payment that does NOT include insurance or other benefits: The client is responsible for all charges incurred and payment is expected at each visit. Self-pay fees may be adjusted based on income, hardship, or other factors. Please inform me of any concerns in this area.

Regarding the use of Health Savings Accounts or their equivalent: Please notify me at or before the first session if you have an HSA. I will provide an invoice for you on a monthly basis (or more frequently if you desire) to submit to your HSA. If for any reason your HSA does not provide payment, you are responsible for any outstanding co-pays.

BENEFITS & RISKS OF THERAPY

You should think about both the benefits and risks when making any treatment decisions. The benefits or outcomes of psychotherapy vary according to therapist and client personalities and presenting concerns of the client. Clients may make significant changes in their relationships with partners, parents, friends, relatives, co-workers and others. Clients may change their personal goals, begin to feel different about themselves, or may otherwise alter significant aspects of their lives. These changes may be experienced as very positive but can also feel disruptive and uncomfortable, especially at the beginning of therapy. While the benefits of psychotherapy have been shown in numerous well-designed research studies, no specific outcome can be promised or guaranteed. Please feel free to talk with me if you have any questions or concerns.

Children and the Waiting Room

It is the responsibility of parents and guardians of children to arrange for childcare when children accompany them to a session. Children should not be left unsupervised in the waiting room, and it may not be in the child's best interest to accompany an adult into their session. Please discuss options with me if these requirements present concerns for you.

Client records

Client records are kept as documentation for third party payment (if applicable) and as a tool for the therapist. The record is not intended for adjudication and efforts to use it for this purpose are highly discouraged.