



## **Informed Consent**

Please read this important information about counseling services. Feel free to discuss any questions about this information with your counselor.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The counselor and the client working as a team often achieve positive results from counseling. Your counselor will work diligently to help to identify your concerns, clarify your unique goals, and facilitate the therapy process. Your contribution to your counseling will be to do the hard work of expressing thoughts and feelings and to make the effort necessary to overcome problems.

#### **Benefits and Risks of Counseling:**

Benefits of counseling include improved emotional health and well-being, a clearer understanding of yourself, improved relationships, and an improved ability to cope with stress. Additional benefits include a fuller awareness of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs and the ability to use those to make decisions. Possible risks of participating in counseling include temporary emotional discomfort, awareness of the need to make decisions that may be life-changing, changes in relationships with others, and little to no improvement in symptoms.

#### **Sessions:**

Counseling sessions are scheduled as 45-minute sessions. If you would like longer sessions, the price will be pro-rated according to the length of appointment agreed upon. If you arrive late for an appointment, the remaining time of our scheduled session is available if you have called to state you will be late. If you have not called, counselor may not be available after 10 minutes from the scheduled start time. It may be appropriate to meet more or less than once weekly if that is consistent with the agreed-upon treatment plan.

If you need to cancel a scheduled therapy session, you must do so at least 24 hours in advance. If you do not cancel a scheduled appointment with at least 24 hours notice or fail to attend a scheduled session, you agree to pay the full fee unless it is agreed upon that the absence was due to uncontrollable circumstances.

**Professional Fees:**

In addition to weekly appointments, counselor charges the same hourly rate for other professional services you may need, though counselor will pro-rate the hourly cost if counselor works for less than one hour. Other professional services include report writing, telephone conversations, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require counselor's participation, you will be expected to pay for any professional time counselor spends on your legal matter, even if the request comes from another party. Counselor charges \$200 per hour for professional services counselor is asked or required to perform in relation to your legal matter. You will also be charged this rate for travel and waiting time and agree to pay any additional necessary fees (for example, parking fees). Prepayment of expected fees will be required one week (7 days) in advance of legal proceedings. You understand you will be billed for any remaining amount.

**Billing and Payments:**

You will be expected to pay the full fee at the time of each session unless other arrangements have been made. Payments may be made by check, cash, or credit card. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed upon when/if requested. If payment by check does not clear due to insufficient funds or any other reason, you will be expected to reimburse in full for any related bank fees.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, counselor has the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, the claim will include its costs. In most collection situations, the only information counselor will release regarding a patient's treatment is their name, the dates, times, nature of services provided, and the amount due.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require that counselor provide them with your clinical diagnosis. Sometimes counselor has to provide additional clinical information, such as treatment plans, progress notes or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, counselor has no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. If you request, counselor will provide you with a copy of any records submitted. You understand that, by using your insurance, you authorize counselor to release such information to your insurance company. Counselor will try to keep that information limited to the minimum necessary.

**Contacting Counselor:**

Because counselor does not take calls during sessions, counselor may not be immediately available by telephone. A confidential voicemail may be left for Laura Hetrick at 940-613-6590 and Amanda Vickers at 940-235-2139. Every effort will be made to return calls within 48 business hours, more promptly if possible, except for weekends and holidays.

If you are in an emergency situation, you may either call your counselor and follow the instructions for emergencies or immediately call the suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988, your local emergency services at 911, or call or go to the nearest hospital emergency room, telling them of your emergency. You understand that you are NOT to wait for counselor to return your call in an emergency situation.

**Professional Records:**

The laws and standards of the therapy profession require that treatment records are retained and kept for seven years after the last point of contact. You are entitled to receive a copy of your record if requested in writing unless it is believed that seeing the information would be emotionally damaging. In this case, the records will be sent to a mental health professional of your choice. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted or upsetting to people who are not mental health professionals. Counselor charges a copying fee of \$1 per page for records requests and \$25.00 for administration costs.

**CONFIDENTIALITY****Exceptions to Confidentiality:**

- If there is evidence of a clear and imminent danger of harm to self or others, your counselor may report this information to authorities responsible for ensuring safety.
- If your counselor learns of or suspects physical or sexual abuse or neglect of any person under 18, the elderly, the disabled, or sexual exploitation by a mental health worker, your counselor must report this information to the appropriate agencies.
- A court order issued by a judge may require the release of information in records or require your counselor to testify in a court hearing.
- Your counselor may consult with other counselors to provide the best possible care. These consultations are for professional purposes.

**To File A Complaint:**

Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council  
George H.W. Bush State Office Building  
1801 Congress Ave., Ste. 7.300  
Austin, Texas 78701  
Main Line (512) 305-7700

I have read the above counseling information. This information has been reviewed with me by my counselor, and I was provided with an opportunity to ask questions. I have been provided with a written copy of this information. I am giving informed consent to receive counseling services.

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Client Signature

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Date

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Counselor Signature

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Date