

# What You Need to Know About Counseling

## **Your Rights**

To help you get the most out of counseling, it is important to know your rights as a client, and to feel comfortable using these rights. The goal is to offer the best possible benefits with the fewest possible side effects.

*-You have the right to ask questions about the procedures or techniques being used, and to have the counselor explain those.*

*-You have the right to decide not to receive treatment from a particular counselor.*

Counselor/client fit is vitally important to the success of counseling. If you or I have concerns about fit, I can provide you with referrals to other qualified counselors.

*-You have the right to terminate counseling at any time with no additional moral, legal or financial responsibilities than those that have already accrued.*

## **Confidentiality, SC Limits of Confidentiality, HIPAA**

Information acquired during the course of treatment is to remain strictly confidential. There are, however, instances where counselors are required by law to break confidentiality, without your permission, and report information to appropriate authorities:

1. If I suspect abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or the elderly.
2. If you pose a clear and imminent danger to yourself. I always try to work with clients to help them obtain an appropriate level of care; if you are clinically depressed or suicidal, I will ask that you also see a physician who may be able to assess for the possibility of medication.
3. If you pose a clear and imminent danger to another person. I am required by law to inform the intended victim and appropriate law enforcement agencies.
4. If ordered by a court to do so, I may be required by law to provide specific information from your file to the court.
5. If you are in counseling by order of a court of law, the results of the treatment must be revealed to the court.
6. If you choose to sign a waiver of confidentiality (i.e. if you ask me to write a summary to your primary care physician). Please note that in the case of couple or family counseling, each family member who is legally competent to sign a waiver must agree to the waiver for the disclosure to occur.

## **Fees and Length of Counseling Sessions**

A standard 50-minute session of couple or family therapy is \$140 and individual therapy is \$120.

While I do not participate on any insurance panels, I am happy to provide you any documentation (including a receipt of services), which you can use to submit to your insurance or your health savings plan. Some insurance plans may cover part of the cost of out of network providers; you would need to call your insurance company to inquire about your plan. Please note that insurance companies required a mental health/illness diagnosis to pay for sessions, and if a diagnosis is given, that will be recorded into your permanent file. Payment of fees for services is required at the end of each session. I am able to accept personal check, cash or cards for payment at this time.

I will be able to discuss the probable number of sessions with you after I have gained some knowledge of your situation. In general, the number of visits you require may depend on the nature of problem(s) that exist, the goals and plans we develop, and the effort you willing to put into working on the problem(s). I will facilitate and guide you through the process of making choices that are right for you. I will not tell you what to do or how to live your life.

### **The Process of Counseling**

Our first few sessions will be spent exploring the problems that bring you to counseling. I will get to know you, how you view yourself and your important relationships, and how you and significant people in your life interact. It is important for you to talk openly and honestly, and I will help you find ways to communicate what you are thinking and feeling. Next, we will decide on goals to work on in counseling. Other individuals may need to be included in this process, such as a spouse, family member, or parent. Who is included in counseling may help accelerate the achievement of goals. We will then develop a plan on how to reach these goals, and work through that plan. We will regularly evaluate the progress we are making, and adjust goals or plans as needed. Counseling will end once your goals are reached.

### **Possible Side Effects and Benefits**

Seeking solutions and making choices to deal with life challenges may result in discomfort. Because counseling often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings. Making choices can also bring out the negative responses of others who may wish you would make different choices. As coping skills are challenged to pave the way for more stable patterns or choices, problems may get worse before they get better. However, should you choose to pursue the journey of counseling, you may benefit in many ways. Benefits could include improved relationships (with your spouse, family, child, etc), finding novel solutions to long-standing problems, significant reductions of distress, modifying unproductive patterns of behavior, and more freedom to live life intentionally. If for any reason you do not believe that counseling is helping, please talk with me about that.

### **Phone/Electronic Communication**

You may call (864) 978-6658 during regular business hours. If I am not available, leave a message and a call will be returned as soon as possible. Please note that this phone may not be checked on a regular basis, so **in the event of an emergency, please go to your nearest emergency room or call 911.**

Please note that emails or texts are sent over the internet, and there is no way to ensure privacy or confidentiality. It is important to also note that I am required to print copies of any emails you send me to be placed in your file; please do not send clinical or personal information by email or text.

### **Supervision and Consultation**

Good therapists must, at times, collaborate and share ideas about how best to help their clients. One way to do this is through supervision – a time that professionals meet to discuss cases. I work hard to speak generally about clients and avoid sharing identifying information. I do participate in such supervision, with trusted peers who are also held by the same strict confidentiality laws. If you do not object, I will not tell you about these supervisions or consultations unless I feel it is important to our work together. Please discuss any questions you have about this process with me.

**Please ask questions! You may have questions about your counselor, the process of counseling, or anything not addressed in this form. It is your right to have a complete explanation for any of your questions. Exercise this right.**