



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Welcome to our therapy practices. Beginning therapy can be a challenge and we realize that you may have many initial questions about what to expect. This document contains important information about our professional services, business policies, and state and federal laws that pertain to your rights. Please review the information in this document carefully. If you have any concerns, please feel free to bring them up during your session. In addition, please feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding the process of therapy. We believe that therapy is a collaborative process between the client and therapist and we encourage you to voice any questions, concerns, and hesitations you may have during the course of your therapy with your provider so that you can work together to ensure you receive the treatment that best fits your individual needs.

CLINICAL SERVICES:

Individual therapy sessions are 50 minutes (or one “therapy” hour) in length. Longer sessions (75 minutes) are sometimes necessary for couples/family therapy or for more involved cases. Details regarding group therapy offerings vary.

SESSION FEES & PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS:

Fees for therapy sessions are \$150.00 per 50-minute session or \$190 for 75-minute sessions and are due in full at the time of service. We accept cash, checks, and all major credit cards. A processing fee of \$25.00 will be charged for any returned checks. For your convenience, you may opt to have a credit card number kept on file. Upon your completion of the Pre-Authorization for Credit Cards Form, we will automatically charge your card for fees following your sessions.

COLLECTIONS PROCEDURES:

Fees are due in full at the time of service. If you are unable to pay for services at any time during your treatment, please discuss with your provider to find a solution or obtain an appropriate referral. In the event that an outstanding balance remains unpaid at the end of the calendar year, we will attempt to contact you in writing. If regular, monthly payments are not made on the account balance, we may use a collection agency or take legal action to secure payment, as authorized by state and federal law, and the collections action will become a part of your credit record.

INSURANCE:

We are not affiliated with any insurance panels, nor do we file claims, complete paperwork, submit forms, or communicate with insurance companies; however, we do encourage you to check with your insurance company to determine whether you are eligible for out-of-network reimbursement for services provided by a Licensed Professional Counselor or Licensed Clinical Social Worker registered by the Virginia Board of Counseling/Social Work. Upon request, we will provide you with session receipts for you to submit to your insurance company for reimbursement.

To determine your out-of-network benefits, call the customer service/mental health number on the back of your insurance card. Ask what the reimbursement rate is for an out-of-network, Licensed Professional Counselor or Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and for any information you need to know regarding how to submit statements for reimbursement. The insurance company may ask you for a National Provider Identification Number or Tax Payer ID (EIN), which can be found at the end of this document. We are happy to assist you by providing any information necessary for your insurance company to process your claim. Please note that benefits and policies vary greatly among insurance companies and individual plans, so please contact your carrier directly prior to beginning treatment.

Some alternatives that may be available to offset your out-of-pocket costs include Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) or Health Savings Accounts (HSA). Please review your specific program for eligibility. Depending on your tax status, fees paid for mental health services may be tax deductible as an itemized medical expense.

CANCELLATION POLICIES:

Regular attendance is a critical factor for successful therapy and your appointment is reserved exclusively for you. Please notify your provider as soon as possible if you are unable to attend an appointment. We request at least 24-hours notice of cancellation. Appointments cancelled prior to the 24-hour period will be rescheduled without penalty. Appointments cancelled within the 24-hour period will be subject to a \$50 cancellation fee. Appointments cancelled after the start-time of the session or missed without notice will be charged the full fee. If you arrive late for a scheduled appointment, only the remainder of the 50-minute session will be available. To cancel or reschedule an appointment, you may leave a voicemail for or send an email to your provider. (Contact information can be found at the end of this document.)

DISCONTINUING SERVICES:

Ending treatment is an important part of the therapeutic process. Some clients benefit most from a brief involvement in therapy, whereas others find an extended period of time more valuable. We are committed to working with you as long as the therapeutic process is productive and healthy. We encourage you to share any concerns and plans regarding ending therapy so that we can address them together as part of a termination session.

CONTACTING YOUR PROVIDER:

For routine calls, please leave a message on your provider's confidential voicemail. (Contact information can be found at the end of this document). You can also email your provider; however, please note that email is not considered a confidential method of

communication, therefore it should only be used for administrative exchanges. Similarly, should you and your provider agree to communicate via text messaging, please note that this is also not considered a confidential method of communication and should only be used in instances such as confirming appointments. We check voicemails and emails throughout the day during normal business hours. If your message requires a response, we will get back to you as soon as possible, generally within one to two business days.

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Vienna Counseling and its providers do not maintain an emergency answering service. Therefore, if you believe you are having an emergency where there is imminent risk of harm to yourself or someone else you should immediately dial 911, go to the nearest emergency room, or contact the 24-hour emergency services available in your community. List below are a few for your reference; however this is not meant as a comprehensive list:

Northern Virginia Mental Health Centers:

The Fairfax County Woodburn Mental Health Center: (703) 573-5679

The Arlington Mental Health Center: (703) 358-4256

The Alexandria Mental Health Center: (703) 838-6400

The Loudoun Mental Health Center: (703) 777-0320

Crisis Link: (703) 527-4077; 1-800-273-TALK

CONFIDENTIALITY:

You have the right to confidentiality regarding any records, communications, or other information pertaining to your treatment or evaluation. Information may only be shared if you sign an authorization for release of information form that specifies who is to receive the information and the nature of the information to be shared. We do reserve the right to consult with professional colleagues and supervisors regarding treatment and evaluation, as per the Virginia Board of Counseling and Virginia Board of Social Workers. Such discussions do not include the use of names or identifying information. Exceptions to confidentiality do exist in order to protect you and others. A full list of such exceptions is provided in the "Notice of Privacy Practices" document. However, a brief summary of such exceptions follows:

Danger to Self or Other: The law requires that mental health professionals report information that indicates that an individual in treatment is in clear and imminent danger of hurting him/herself or another person. If we believe that a client is a serious threat to him/herself, we are obligated to take protective action. This action may include seeking hospitalization or contacting family members or others who can help to provide protection for the client. If we believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, we must also take protective action. This action may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. In cases such as these, we will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

Abuse of Children and/or Adults: The law requires that all mental health providers report information believed or reasonably suspected to constitute abuse or neglect of children. The law also requires the report of suspected abuse of persons 65 or older or of other adults who may be in need of protective services due to disability.

Orders of the Court: Certain records (which differ by jurisdiction) can be subpoenaed by

legal process. This also applies to reports and testimony. In addition, you may give up your confidentiality if you choose to make your mental status an issue as part of a court proceeding.

Social Service Referrals: If you are referred for evaluation or treatment by a Social Service Agency as part of an evaluation or intervention, there may be a requirement to share information regarding attendance, findings, recommendations and/or progress in treatment.

Delinquent Accounts: Collection agencies or attorneys may be given identifying information only in order to pursue delinquent accounts.

RECORDS DISCLOSURE:

We keep and store records in record-keeping systems via both paper files stored in locked filing cabinets as well as electronic files on personal laptop computers. We are aware of the inherent limits to confidentiality when using technology and maintain various physical security measures to maintain the protection of files from physical access by unauthorized persons, including locked offices and drawers, secure networks, firewalls, and passwords.

Records and personal information are not released to any party without your prior, written consent, with the exceptions outlined in the Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPAA) document. (These exceptions include subpoenas for records for use in court proceedings, measures to obtain payment or reimbursement for services, and mandated duty to report serious threats to health or safety.)

Other instances where access to client records may be requested include situations where a client applies for social security disability or workers compensation, or in the event that a security background check is required by certain employers. In the event that a third party requests access to or copies of your personal information or records, we will make every attempt to notify you and to obtain your consent prior to complying with the request.

POLICY FOR LEGAL TESTIMONY:

We do not routinely participate in court proceedings, as confidentiality regarding the content of your therapy sessions becomes compromised and our involvement may not prove helpful to your case. Should we be subpoenaed to participate in legal proceedings, we will follow HIPAA guidelines and will charge a rate of \$2,000.00 for any part of any day, in addition to any charges for report writing, travel and accommodations, photocopies, and postage. Requests/subpoenas must offer a minimum of two weeks notice and daily fees paid in advance.

SOCIAL NETWORKING:

We do not accept friend requests from current or former clients on online social networking sites. This holds true on Facebook and LinkedIn, and all other social networking venues. Our reason for this stance is that we believe that adding clients as friends or connections can compromise confidentiality and blur the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship. If you have any questions about this policy, please feel free to bring it up in-session with your provider and we are happy to talk more about it.

ABOUT & CONTACT INFO:

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