



Information, Authorization, and Consent to Treatment

Gathering up the courage to start counseling is the first step towards becoming empowered and evolving into the person you truly want to become. It is for that reason we are pleased to have you here and we are sincerely looking forward to assisting you in any way we can. This document is designed to inform you about what you should expect from your counselor or group leader, policies regarding confidentiality and emergencies, and several other details regarding your treatment here at Three Stones Counseling. Although providing this document is part of an ethical obligation to our profession, most importantly, it is a part of our commitment to you. It is our commitment to keep you fully informed of every part of your therapeutic experience. Please know that your relationship with your counselor is a collaborative one, and we welcome any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding your course of counseling at any time.

Theoretical Views & Client Participation

It is our belief that as people become more aware and accepting of themselves, they are more capable of finding a sense of peace and contentment in their lives. However, self-awareness and self-acceptance are goals that may take a long time to achieve. Some clients need only a few sessions to achieve their goals, whereas others may require months or years of counseling. You and your counselor will assess your goals and continued commitment to the process of counseling periodically throughout your relationship.

In order for counseling to be most successful, it is important for you to take an active role. This means working on things you and your counselor talk about both during and between sessions. This also means avoiding any mind-altering substances like alcohol or illegal drugs for at least eight hours prior to your counseling sessions. Generally, the more of yourself you are willing to invest - the greater the return.

Furthermore, it is our intention to empower you in your growth process to the degree that you are capable of facing life's challenges in the future without the help of your counselor. We also do not believe in creating dependency or prolonging counseling if the therapeutic intervention does not seem to be helping. If this is the case, your counselor will direct you to other resources that may be of assistance to you.

Confidentiality

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) has created patient protections surrounding the use of Protected Health Information (PHI). HIPAA provides patient protection related to the electronic transmission of data, the keeping and use of patient records, and storage and access to health care records. HIPAA applies to all health care providers, including mental health care providers. Providers and health care agencies throughout the country are required to provide patients a notification of their privacy rights as it relates to their health care records. An explanation of those rights will be provided for you.

Your communications with your counselor will become part of a clinical record of treatment, which is referred to as your PHI. Your PHI will be kept in a file and stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. Your counselor will always protect your confidentiality to the fullest extent possible. Your counselor will keep everything you say completely confidential, with the following (5) exceptions:

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- _____ 1.) You and your counselor agree that information can be shared with a discussed party and a “Release of Information” form is signed.
- _____ 2.) Your counselor determines that you are in danger of harming yourself or others.
- _____ 3.) You report information about the abuse of a child, an elderly person, or a disabled individual who may require protection.
- _____ 4.) Your counselor is ordered by a judge to disclose information. In this case, your counselor’s license does provide him or her with the ability to uphold what is legally termed “privileged communication.” Privileged communication is your right as a client to have a confidential relationship with a counselor. If for some unusual reason a judge were to order the disclosure of your private information, the order can be appealed. We cannot guarantee that the appeal will be sustained, but we will do everything in our power to keep what you say confidential.
- _____ 5.) Your counselor may disclose your protected health information to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or other similar programs, established by law, that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness without regard to fault.

Please also note that in couple’s counseling, your counselor does not agree to keep secrets between parties. The information revealed in any context may be discussed with either partner accidentally or intentionally. If you have any questions about confidentiality, please do not hesitate to ask.

Counseling Rates

Three Stones Counseling rates are the same for individual, couples and family counseling sessions:

FREE	Introductory Phone Consultation
\$120.00	55 Minute Session

For persons unable to afford the full fee for counseling, a reduced fee may be negotiated. For those persons who desire counseling but have few available resources, we can provide you with low-cost counseling referrals.

Billing

Three Stones Counseling is an out-of-network provider. Counseling will be covered to the extent that your health insurance covers out-of-network counseling services. A payment will be made in full by check, cash, or major credit card at the end of each session. Your counselor will provide you with the necessary documentation needed to submit a claim to your insurance company for reimbursement. We suggest that you call the number listed on the back of your insurance card to inquire about your specific out-of-network counseling benefits.

As a general rule, whole balances will not be carried, and sessions will be provided only when at least partial arrangements are made in advance. (This includes charges for previous appointments canceled without 24-hour notice.)

Scheduling

Counseling sessions are generally based on a 55-minute counseling hour. Weekly appointments are encouraged for the sake of consistency and the ease of building on the previous session. Depending on your individual goals bi-weekly sessions, bi-monthly or maintenance sessions can be scheduled. Counseling can be

discontinued at any time and your counselor encourages discussion around terminating services when you feel ready.

Cancellation Policy

Three Stones Counseling requires a 24 hour notice if you need to reschedule or cancel an appointment. If adequate notice is not received, you will be charged the full fee (\$120) for your session. If such advance notice is not received on more than (2) occasions, your counselor reserves the right to terminate services with you.

In Case of an Emergency

Three Stones Counseling is set up to accommodate individuals who are reasonably safe and resourceful. We return phone calls within 24hrs during normal business hours and on the next business day for messages left on weekends or evenings. If at any time this does not feel like sufficient support, please inform your counselor and he or she can discuss additional resources. If you are having a mental health emergency, we encourage you not to wait for a call back, but to do one or more of the following:

- Mental Health America of Greater Indianapolis' 24-hour Crisis, Suicide and Resource Hotline @ 317-251-7575
- Community Hospital North's 24-hour Crisis Referral Hotline @ 317-621-5700 or toll-free at 800-662-3445.
- Call 911
- Go to your nearest emergency room

Professional Relationship

Because of the nature of counseling, your relationship with your counselor has to be different from most relationships. It may differ in how long it lasts, the objectives, or the topics discussed. It must also be limited to only the relationship of counselor and client. If you and your counselor were to interact in any other way you would then have what is called a "dual relationship" which could prove to be harmful to you in the long run and is, therefore, unethical in the mental health profession. Dual relationships change the nature of the relationship in a way that may cause a conflict of interest. In order to offer all of our clients the best care, your counselor's judgment needs to be unselfish and purely focused on your needs. This is why your relationship with your counselor must remain professional in nature.

You should also know that counselors are required to keep the identity of their clients confidential. It is for that reason that, as much as your counselor would like to, he or she will not address you in public unless you speak to him or her first. Your counselor also must decline any invitation to attend gatherings with you, your family or friends outside of the office. Lastly, when your counseling is completed, your counselor will not be able to be a friend to you like your other friends. In summary, it is the duty of your counselor to always maintain a professional role. Please note that these guidelines are not meant to be discourteous in any way they are strictly for your long-term protection.

Statement Regarding Ethics, Clients Welfare & Safety

Three Stones Counseling assures you that our services will be rendered in a professional manner consistent with ethical standards of the American Counseling Association. If at any time you feel that your counselor is not performing in an ethical or professional manner, we ask that you please let him or her know immediately.

Due to the very nature of counseling, as much as we would like to guarantee specific results regarding your therapeutic goals, we are unable to do so. However, your counselor, with your participation, will work to achieve the best possible results for you. Please also be aware that changes made in counseling may affect other people in your life. For example, an increase in your assertiveness may be helpful for you, but may not always be welcomed by others. It is our intention to help you manage changes in your interpersonal relationships as they arise, but it is important for you to be aware of the possibility, nonetheless. Additionally, at times people find that they feel somewhat worse when they first start counseling before they begin to feel better. This may occur as you begin discussing certain sensitive areas of your life. However, a topic usually is not sensitive unless it needs attention. Therefore, discovering the discomfort is actually a success. Once you and your counselor are able to target your specific treatment needs and the particular modalities that work the best for you, help is generally on the way.

We are sincerely looking forward to facilitating you on your journey toward healing and growth. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask your counselor.

Please print, date, and sign your name below indicating that you have read and understand the contents of this form. By signing you are agreeing to the policies outlined in this document, and you are authorizing your counselor/ group leader to begin treatment with you.

Client Name (Please Print)

Date

Client Signature (Typed name serves as signature)

If Applicable:

Parent's or Legal Guardian's Name (Please Print)

Date

Parent's or Legal Guardian's Signature

The signature of the counselor below indicates that he or she has discussed this form with you and has answered any questions you have regarding this information.

Counselor's Signature

Date