

## ***Client Informed Consent to Treatment*** ***Welcome, Client Rights, Confidentiality, Contacts & Fees***

Welcome!

I am grateful to walk this path with you and provide the therapeutic support needed to meet your goals. Below are my policies, which include Client Rights, Confidentiality, Contact and Emergencies, and the Fee Policy. We will review this document together to ensure that you feel well informed and comfortable with the process of establishing a safe and healthy therapeutic relationship.

*Who am I?*

With over 60 years of experience and education, I believe that our relationships define the quality of our lives. As adults, I believe we have a wealth of information available which may be significantly personal, meaningful and relational. And as our lives, at times, seem overwhelming, confusing or in transition, sifting for insight and answers can be difficult. Through therapy, my aim is to help adults and couples enhance the quality of their lives and their relationships amidst these difficulties. I am currently licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapy Associate (LMFT-Associate, License #202691 in Texas), which means that I hold a provisional license until I accrue the hours required to become a fully licensed therapist. As an LMFT-Associate, my clinical work is supervised by Brittany Neece, LMFT-S (512) 814-6027. It is required by the State of Texas Marriage and Family Regulations Board that I regularly meet with my supervisor to discuss client cases, treatment planning, and other issues for the sake of helping and protecting clients.

*Theoretical orientation*

My guiding theory of counseling that I follow is the Bowen Family Systems. The main goal of Bowenian therapy is to reduce anxiety and increase well-being in you or others in your family by obtaining insight into your family system. This can be done by facilitating awareness of how your emotional family system functions and focusing upon making changes for the self rather than on trying to change others. This is accomplished without the need for either blame or shame. The philosophy of this theory views your family, (all its members), as an emotional unit and seeks to describe the interactions within this unit. Techniques such as studying your own patterns of behavior, and how they relate to those of your family system, may reveal new and more effective options for solving problems and for changing your responses. Additionally, I am a certified Prepare/Enrich facilitator, and strongly believe in this therapeutic tool as a means to explore the many facets of marital relationships and to provide concrete direction for growth.

*What is a therapeutic relationship with you*

A therapeutic relationship is a unique alliance unlike any other you may have encountered. It is likely that we will explore and discuss issues that are quite personal in nature, and at times, it may feel very challenging and emotional to work through this process. Sometimes, issues brought to therapy may feel as though they worsen before they begin to improve. This is all a normal part of what you can expect in counseling as your awareness and intentionality increase. Despite the personal nature of the work that occurs while in counseling, it is important for you to understand that our relationship is strictly a professional one. In order for me to maintain my objectivity that is so crucial to our work together, our interactions will be limited to scheduled sessions.

*Number of sessions needed*

Some clients need only a few counseling sessions to achieve their goals, while others may require more. As a client, you have the right to end our counseling relationship at any time. Should you choose to end our relationship, I only ask that you return for one final termination session. You also have the right to refuse or negotiate modification(s) of any of my suggestions that you believe might be harmful. At any time, either you or I may initiate discussion of possible positive or negative effects of entering or not entering counseling, continuing or not counting counseling, and/or using or not using certain recommendations presented by me.

## *Equality*

Additionally, my practice is strongly committed to gender equality and values the experience of women, men and children. I am committed to creating a safe environment that respects diverse backgrounds, family forms, and experiences. I do not discriminate or refuse services to anyone on the basis of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

## *Client Rights (Your rights)*

As a client receiving therapy, you should know you have the following rights:

- To know the name, office address, and office phone number of your therapist.  
  
141 Lookout Circle, Hutto, TX 78634  
512. 693.7254
- You can receive information about my qualifications, including licensure and education, as well as methods used in therapy sessions, the duration of therapy (if known), and the therapy provided.
- You may seek a second opinion at any time.
- You may terminate therapy at any time.
- In a professional relationship, such as therapist and client, sexual intimacy is never appropriate and should be reported to the Grievance Board.
- The Department of Regulatory Agencies regulates the practice of licensed and unlicensed persons in the field of psychotherapy. Concerns or complaints regarding the practice of psychotherapy may be directed to the Complaints Management and Investigative Section at P.O. Box 141369, Austin, TX 78714 -1369, and at 1-800-942-5540.

## *Distance Counseling Limitations (if applicable)*

Distance counseling includes services provided via phone and online. This type of therapy is a different experience as compared to in-person sessions, among those differences being the lack of “personal” face-to-face interactions and the lack of visual and audio cues in the therapy process to which you may have previously come to expect. Effective communication and the ability to address any concerns will be important in the distance counseling relationship between client and counselor.

Online and phone therapy is not appropriate if you are experiencing a crisis or having suicidal or homicidal thoughts. In-person sessions may be recommended or required for more intensive interventions and diagnoses. Often, in-person sessions are also required for the initial intake assessment.

Technology issues may also arise, including but not limited to, poor phone connections and lost internet connections. Communication via phone and online is typically not considered HIPAA compliant and is therefore not considered private or confidential. Using a landline, secure email or chat, or a HIPAA compliant video is recommended and will be used when possible by the client and counselor. However, these services are not always available and the client must understand the privacy and confidentiality limitations of distance counseling.

The distance counselor will follow the laws and professional regulations of the State of Texas, dependent upon where the service is being performed. The counselor must be licensed in the state of the client’s permanent address.

Generally, insurance companies will not reimburse for services provided online or on the phone. Therefore clients will be responsible for any and all fees related to online and phone sessions. Session fees, including late cancellations and no shows, are equivalent to those of in-person sessions as outlined below in this Client Informed Consent to Treatment.

## *Confidentiality Policy*

The content of your therapy and records are protected and cannot be disclosed to anyone without your written consent. Although all information gathered during therapy sessions is legally confidential to persons or agencies outside of therapy, there are certain situations in which I am legally bound to reveal information obtained during therapy to other persons or agencies without your permission. These include:

- If I believe you are in imminent danger to yourself.
- If you threaten grave bodily harm or death to another person or directly endanger the life of another.
- If I suspect neglect or abuse of any child(ren), the elderly or the disabled.
- By signing a specific authorization for a “Release of Information” allowing me to contact a third party.
- If I am ordered to disclose by a state or federal court of law.
- Discussion of cases with my Supervisor.

## *Contact & Emergencies*

You may leave a message for me on my private, confidential voicemail (512. 693.7254) at any time. I check my messages daily, and I will return your call as soon as I can, and most certainly by the end of the following business day. However, it’s important for you to know that this number is not an emergency phone number. In case of an emergency, or if you need immediate assistance for any reason, please call 911 or the 24-hour crisis hotline at 512-472-HELP (4357). For additional resources, contacting 2-1-1 may be helpful.

## *Social Media*

I do use text messaging for scheduling purposes and brief communications. I ask that you limit text communications with me to the same purposes to avoid possible breaches of confidentiality. You may contact me via my business phone number (512-693-7254) and you are welcome to leave messages. I will make every effort to respond to you within 24 hours.

While email and text are an efficient way to communicate, they are not 100% secure and thus not HIPPA compliant.

I will not accept Friend or contact requests on social media accounts such as Facebook or LinkedIn. This is to protect you and me from disclosing confidential information. Please be aware that “commenting” on posts can be a self-violation of your confidentiality. If you have questions about this policy feel free to discuss them with me.

Please ignore any requests sent by Facebook or any other medium (Yelp, etc) to rate my practice, as these do not come from me. You are encouraged to \*NOT \*rate any mental health or medical practice, and if you do so you do so understanding that the practitioner is unable to mediate the risks of violating your confidentiality in such a way.

## *Therapy Sessions & Fees*

Individual sessions are for 60 while couple sessions are 90 minutes. Please remember that it is difficult to predict how many sessions you may want at the onset of therapy, however; the number of sessions and the frequency will depend on you, the nature of your goals, and the weight of your concerns.

I support a SLIDING Scale fee-based schedule in addition to my regular fee schedule. My sliding scale is a needs-based offering. The sessions appointment slots are limited. However, please contact me to be considered for this offering.

Fees are agreed upon for each session at the beginning of counseling and maintained throughout each session.

Regular fee schedule

	Individual Adult	Adult Couple
60 Minutes	\$100	\$125
90 Minutes	\$125	\$150

Payment is expected at the time of each session. You may pay by cash, check or charge (Discover, Visa, MasterCard).

*Fees for Consultations which may be necessary for a legal case*

Consultations with any other person or professionals regarding your legal case requires compensation at a fixed rate of \$60 for 30-minutes (or \$30 for every 15-minutes of consultation). Participation in legal issues in any capacity, including preparation of documents, travel time, and attendance at any legal proceedings will be billed at the rate of \$250 per day regardless of which Attorney issues a subpoena.

Due to the complex and unpredictable nature of legal involvement, I require a retainer in advance of any work related to legal proceedings. As I will be unable to see other clients in need of treatment on my schedule or the days I could potentially be called, the retainer must cover 8 hours per day I am on call. The retainer may be paid in advance via cash, check, or credit card. Any amount funded to the retainer account not used will be refunded. Please note however, under most circumstances and even with client consent, it is usually inappropriate for a therapist to become involved in a client's legal case. This is because engaging in dual roles, as a therapist/witness, may potentially be harmful to the therapeutic process.

*Insurance*

I do not currently accept insurance. One of the reasons why is that most insurance companies limit sessions, session times, and require a mental health diagnosis in order to reimburse expenses. However, I would be happy to provide you with an invoice for you to independently file an out-of-network claim if your insurance allows it. It is possible, through this claim, that you could receive partial reimbursement.

*Cancellations and Missed Appointments*

24 hours' notice is required to cancel or change an appointment. Otherwise, except in cases of personal emergencies, you will be charged for the reserved time according to our agreed upon fee. In cases when you arrive late for a session, your session will end at the scheduled time and you will be charged for the full session.

I have read the mandatory Disclosure Statement, Policies and Agreement form provided by Paul J. Iarussi, MA., LMFT-Associate (License #202691), concerning the policies of his practice. Paul Iarussi has addressed all of my questions pertaining to this document. My signature below indicates my acceptance of these policies, procedures, and financial obligations.

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_