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PRACTICE POLICIES

Appointments & Scheduling

The standard meeting time for psychotherapy or consultation sessions is 50-55 minutes. Sometimes shorter or longer sessions are helpful or clinically indicated, and can be discussed on a case by case basis. Appointments can be self-scheduled on the client portal, by me during your appointment for recurring appointments, or via email or text or phone. Some clients prefer recurring sessions at the same time on a set interval, while some schedule from session to session as needed. If you miss a weekly or biweekly recurring session, the time spot will not be held for you for the following session unless you notify me within 48 hours of the missed session. If you repeatedly miss or cancel, services may be ended.

Cancellations

Please remember to cancel or reschedule **24 hours in advance**. You will be responsible for the entire fee if cancellation is less than 24 hours. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time.

Client Portal

I offer the use of a secure client portal through SimplePractice which is HIPAA compliant. This portal allows us to send secure messages and upload and share documents or files. If you wish to share pertinent clinical information, sensitive news, or medical records with me, this is a secure way for you to communicate such information outside of sessions. You can also request appointments and check statements on the portal.

Insurance

I am not contracted with insurance companies. Psychotherapy may be partially reimbursed by your health insurance company if you have a PPO policy with an out of network benefit for mental health. However, insurance companies do not reimburse for all conditions and may limit services. I am happy to provide you a "superbill" that you may submit to your insurance company that indicates you have paid my fee in full. Any reimbursement from insurance is sent to you. You should be aware that insurance companies require a clinical diagnosis and sometimes require additional clinical information, such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information becomes part of the insurance company files and part of your health care record.

Medicare

If you are eligible for Medicare or a Medicare beneficiary, it is important that you understand that I am "opted out" of Medicare. This means that I will not bill Medicare for your services. Please discuss this with me before we begin so we can complete a private contract in compliance with Medicare policies.

Likewise, if you become Medicare eligible or a beneficiary during our work together, it is very important that you let me know right away.

Electronic Communication

The State of California considers services by electronic means, including but not limited to telephone communication, email, texting, the Internet, videoconferencing and facsimile machines to be telehealth (aka telemedicine or telepsychology). I cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages, so be very cautious before sharing information. I use HIPAA compliant G suite Gmail and G suite Voice, with additional gmail end to end encryption by Paubox. However, keep in mind that email initiated by you from your own email service may not be encrypted. Video sessions are done via either SimplePractice telehealth service, Doxy.me, or Google Meet, all of which are HIPAA compliant.

If you need to contact me between sessions, it is best to send me a secure message through the client portal or leave a message on my voicemail. While I try to return messages in a timely manner, I cannot guarantee immediate response and request that you do not use these methods of communication for emergencies. If a true emergency arises, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

Social Media

Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

Professional Records

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep records. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless I believe that seeing them would be emotionally damaging, in which case I will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice or send you a summary of the records. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. I recommend that you review records in my presence so we can discuss the contents. Clients will be charged my professional fee prorated for any time spent preparing for and reviewing information requests.

Professional Fees

Appointment fees vary according to length and type of service. The standard fee for Psychotherapy or Clinical Consultation is \$175 (50-55 minutes). Limited reduced fee slots are available. Shorter or extended sessions are possible on a case by case basis. Other services such as between-session telephone calls lasting 15 minutes or longer; report writing; attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized; or preparation of records, treatment summaries or letters on your behalf, will be prorated per 15 minute increments. If you have legal matters that require my participation, the professional fee is \$400 per hour for preparation of records and attendance at any

legal proceeding (with a 4 hour minimum). You will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. I will give you a minimum of 30 days notice of changes in my fees.

Billing and Payments

You are expected to pay for each appointment at the time of service. Payment may be made using credit card, checks, or cash. Please have payment ready at the beginning of each session. Bounced checks may incur services fees up to \$35. If your account is unpaid for more than 60 days, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court.

Minors

If a client is under eighteen years of age, the law may provide parents/legal guardians the right to examine treatment records. However, it is my policy to request an agreement from parents/legal guardians that I will use my clinical discretion regarding disclosure, based on the age of minor, clinical issues, and treatment goals.

Termination

Ending relationships can be difficult. Therefore, it is important to have a termination process in order to achieve some closure. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the treatment. You have the right to terminate services with me at any time. I may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you and a termination process if I determine that the psychotherapy is not being effectively used or if you are in default on payment. I will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the reasons and purpose of terminating. If therapy is terminated for any reason or you request another therapist, I will provide you with a list of qualified psychotherapists to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source.

Should you miss two consecutive appointments, or fail to schedule an appointment for six consecutive weeks (unless other arrangements have been made in advance), I will consider the professional relationship discontinued. To reinstate, please contact me to schedule an appointment.