

Informed Consent for Counseling and our Fee Policy Agreement

Welcome

The North Wind Behavioral Health welcomes you as a potential client. We believe it is important for you to be informed about the nature of counseling, psychotherapy, and medical management, the policies and procedures governing the help you will receive here, the fees charged for our services, and your rights as a client. After you have read this statement we ask that you sign the Acknowledgement form, signifying your general consent to therapy.

Therapy Process

Therapy begins with an *intake process* designed to evaluate your needs and difficulties and to help you and the therapist make a decision about engaging in therapy. This may take one interview or a series of interviews. If becoming a client here does not seem feasible, we can provide you with a suitable referral. The therapy process itself may take many forms, depending on the issues that need to be addressed and how far you wish to go in dealing with them. Treatment is guided by a treatment plan that you and your therapist both agree to pursue. North Wind Behavioral Health's methods of treatment are based on standard psychological models which are enhanced by the counselor's theological/spiritual perspective. These methods may be combined with the client's value and belief systems, including the client's religious perspective, if any. Treatment alternatives are available and you have the right to inquire about the duration of therapy and seek additional opinions concerning treatment.

Therapy Policies and Procedures

Confidentiality

What you tell your therapist will be kept strictly confidential and will not be revealed to other persons or agencies without your written permission, except when mandated by state and federal statutes. By law, there are circumstances when the therapist must report information to the appropriate persons or agencies. These are listed in the Notice of Privacy Practices.

We make a practice of notifying the professional person or organization that referred you to the North Wind Behavioral Health after you have come in for an initial interview. If you do not want the Clinic to contact the person or organization please mark No on the Acknowledgement Form.

Please be aware that your case records may be viewed by North Wind Behavioral Health staff, consultants, and accreditation reviewers for purposes of diagnosis, treatment and quality control. In all other instances, your written permission is required before your therapist or the Clinic can reveal information about your treatment.

Emergencies

Our Clinic is not an emergent care facility, nor do we provide after hours emergency care. If you have an urgent concern, your counselor will try to schedule an appointment with you as soon as possible. Should you need emergency services, you should call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room. You may also call the Crisis Line at 452-HELP or 453-4357.

Fees and payments

Fees for counseling are based on the standard therapeutic hour, which is a 45 to 50 minute session. Appointments with our Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner are based on a one hour, initial, psychiatric evaluation and follow-up appointments which are 20 to 30 minutes sessions for medication management and 45-50 minutes for therapy sessions.

I understand that in the event this account is more than 60 days overdue, a collection agency may be used to collect those fees. If this occurs, I understand that I waive the right to confidentiality regarding financial information given by the North Wind Behavioral Health to a collection agency.

Appointments and Cancellations

All appointments are made directly with your counselor or front office staff. If you are unable to keep a scheduled appointment, **please notify** your counselor, or front office. You may also leave a message on the North Wind Behavioral Health's telephone answering machine **at least 24 hours in advance.**

All clients will be charged the therapist's standard fee for cancellations made with less than 24 hours notice or for failure to show for an appointment. Note: **This charge is not covered by insurance.** Unforeseen emergency situations will be taken into account.

Weather Cancellations

When Fairbanks North Star Borough closes school due to inclement weather, or when temperatures at the Fairbanks International Airport reach -50 or colder, the Clinic will close.

Insurance and Other Third-Party Payments ***** Please Read This Section *****

You are responsible for determining if your health insurance covers psychotherapy. If your mental health benefit is accessed through a Managed Care Agency, North Wind Behavioral Health will file your claims. If you have regular indemnity insurance, you can file the claim or North Wind Behavioral Health can file the claim for you. North Wind Behavioral Health does not guarantee that your insurance company will pay your claim. You are responsible for your account balance. You need to give the Clinic your correct and complete insurance information. If you are covered by more than one policy we need that information. If given incomplete or incorrect information and the insurance company does not pay or asks for a refund, you will be responsible to pay for those services. The HCFA form completed at the first session will provide the Clinic with all the information needed to produce a claim each month. The HCFA also has a release that allows the Clinic to provide necessary information to the insurance company.

Ending Therapy

Therapy ends when the work is done, or at the point you decide to end it. We request that you have at least one face-to-face termination session with your counselor to discuss reasons for termination rather than you terminating by phone or mail. This final session allows time to finish the therapeutic process or provide you with a suitable referral if the connection between you and the therapist is unsatisfactory.

Medication Management

Medications prescribed by our clinician will generally be renewed, as clinically appropriate, during your appointment. If you miss an appointment and/or call the Clinic for a medication renewal that is needed within 5 days or less of your call, you will be charged \$35. This charge is not covered by insurance. Please make every effort to call at least a week in advance of needing a medication renewed in order to avoid this charge.