

## OFFICE POLICIES

### APPOINTMENTS:

Appointments are usually for 50 or 60 minutes, though you may schedule longer sessions if you wish. **If you are unable to keep an appointment for any reason, leave a message** with my office at 206-547-1704 **at least 24 hours in advance**, canceling the session, **otherwise you will be charged for the time which was reserved for you.**

Please arrive early for appointments, since they will begin promptly. If you happen to be late, my office door will be open - please come directly into my office, as I will be waiting for you there. Keys for the restrooms across the hall are on the ledge in the waiting room. If you are late to an appointment, I will open up my phone line so that you may communicate directly with me during our scheduled time, if necessary.

You are responsible for informing me promptly of any change in your address or phone number(s). This is for billing, and also in case I need to cancel a session on short notice.

### CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your identity as a client of a psychologist, and any communication between you and me as part of that relationship, is strictly confidential, protected by state law. Such information may be released only with written consent by you or your legal guardian, with the following exceptions: by state law I must release information to the appropriate authorities: 1) if your behavior or threats endanger your life or someone else's and we cannot make an agreement that protects that person's safety; 2) if I have reason to believe that a child or an elderly or disabled person is subject to abuse or neglect; and 3) if I receive a judge's subpoena. I will also release sufficient information to collect unpaid bills.

To maximize privacy, I do not email or text with clients. As further protection of your privacy, I comply with the guidelines of the Health Insurance Privacy and Portability Act (HIPAA). For further information on HIPAA, please ask me.

In couple or family therapy, the bounds of confidentiality are all of the members who are my clients, regardless of whether any particular member is present at any given session. It is my policy not to keep any secrets between any of these members. I also do not release any records of the conjoint therapy without written permission from all adult client members, and in the event of a legal dispute among the parties I do not testify for one party against another, either in person or in writing.

### FEES AND PAYMENT:

The fee is \$175 for a 50-minute session, or \$210 for 60 minutes. Longer sessions are prorated, as are phone calls, letters, reports, consultations, and other professional time spent on your behalf. Thus an 80-minute session costs \$280, and 100 minutes costs \$350.

Session charges start at the appointment time. I ask that you **pay the fee at the beginning of each session**, to avoid interrupting sessions to handle payment. Please pay by check or cash, as my practice is not set up to handle credit card payments.

Unpaid balances may be assessed service charges and require advance payment for future sessions. Past due accounts may be sent for collection and assessed collection costs and attorneys' fees. There is a \$35 fee for each check returned unpaid.

#### INSURANCE:

If you want to use insurance to help pay for my services, you should contact your insurance plan in advance, to check its “out of network” coverage for my services. I will give you itemized statements for you to submit to your insurance for its reimbursement to you. **I do not bill or receive money from any insurance company. You are responsible for handling all billing and payment-collection issues with your insurance plan.**

Since Medicare requires direct billing from service providers, I have "opted out" of the Medicare system, thus Medicare will not pay for any of my services.

**It is your responsibility to pay promptly for all services you receive, whether or not your insurance plan reimburses you.** Insurance plans do not pay for missed sessions or phone sessions – you are responsible to pay the full fee for these services at our next meeting.

If you submit my statements to your insurance company for reimbursement, it has the right to review my confidential records on you, and to question me about them and our work, in order to ascertain that its money is being appropriately spent. It may also use agents, such as auditors and copying companies, to examine and copy these records. (You authorized these releases of information when you signed up for the insurance.) I cannot be responsible for the privacy of any such information once it leaves my office.

#### MESSAGES:

My office receives voice mail messages 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays. Though I check messages often, I may not be able to return your message until one to two business days later. If you are having an emergency, you may call the Crisis Clinic's 24-hour hotline at any time, at 206-461-3222 or toll free at 866-4CRISIS (866-427-4747).

If you have any questions or concerns about any of these office policies, or about any aspect of our work, please let me know and I will be glad to discuss them with you.