Practice Policies

# Appointments and Cancellations

Appointments are scheduled in advance, at a frequency we agree on, based on your goals, treatment needs, and our mutual availability. Payments for each appointment will be made through SimplePractice, Grow, or Headway by debit or credit card or ACH transfer.

Regular attendance and engagement in your sessions is crucial to your progress in therapy. As such, please do your best to minimize missed appointments. That being said, life happens. You may cancel appointments in advance without charge, as long as I receive notice far enough in advance (at least 24 hours). For appointment no-shows or last-minute cancellations, you will be charged the full rate of your session. This will be waived for your first late cancel/no-show and begin on your second late cancel/no-show. If the frequency of missed sessions impacts your treatment, I will discuss this with you and support you in coming up with solutions.

The standard meeting time for psychotherapy is 50 minutes. It is up to you, however, to determine the length of time of your sessions. Requests to change the 50-minute session needs to be discussed with the therapist in order for time to be scheduled in advance. If you are more than 15 minutes late to a session, your session may be cancelled.

A $10.00 service charge will be charged for any checks returned for any reason for special handling.

# Availability and After-Hours Emergencies

I check for voicemail messages during normal business hours. Messages left outside of normal hours of operation will be addressed within two business days. If you are experiencing suicidal or homicidal thoughts, are in crisis, or need immediate help, please call 911 or 988 or go to the nearest emergency department.

Additional crisis resources:

*For El Dorado County Residents*

https://www.edcgov.us/Government/MentalHealth

(530) 622-3345

*For LGBTQIA+ Folx*

https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/

(866) 488-7386

# Contacting Me

I am often not immediately available by telephone. I do not answer my phone when I am with clients, supervisees or otherwise unavailable. At these times, you may leave an email, text or voicemail and I will return your message as quickly as I am able, but it may take a day or two for non-urgent matters. If you choose to text, please restrict the information within texts to scheduling issues (e.g., rescheduling) or simply request I reach out at my earliest availability. I cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages.

There may be times where we will be in contact by phone in between sessions or that I may need to consult with another provider of yours. If this contact is 15 minutes or less, you will not be charged. If the contact exceeds 15 minutes, you may be charged (through insurance or prorated based on private pay fee).

# Telemedicine

Services by electronic means, including but not limited to telephone communication, the Internet, facsimile machines, and e-mail is considered telemedicine by the State of California. Under the California Telemedicine Act of 1996, telemedicine is broadly defined as the use of information technology to deliver medical services and information from one location to another. If you and your therapist chose to use information technology for some or all of your treatment, you need to understand that: (1) You retain the option to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting the right to future care or treatment or risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. (2) All existing confidentiality protections are equally applicable. (3) Your access to all medical information transmitted during a telemedicine consultation is guaranteed, and copies of this information are available for a reasonable fee. (4) Dissemination of any of your identifiable images or information from the telemedicine interaction to researchers or other entities shall not occur without your consent. (5) There are potential risks, consequences, and benefits of telemedicine. Potential benefits include, but are not limited to improved communication capabilities, providing convenient access to upto-date information, consultations, support, reduced costs, improved quality, change in the conditions of practice, improved access to therapy, better continuity of care, and reduction of lost work time and travel costs. Effective therapy is often facilitated when the therapist gathers within a session or a series of sessions, a multitude of observations, information, and experiences about the client. Therapists may make clinical assessments, diagnosis, and interventions based not only on direct verbal or auditory communications, written reports, and third person consultations, but also from direct visual and olfactory observations, information, and experiences. When using information technology in therapy services, potential risks include, but are not limited to the therapist's inability to make visual and olfactory observations of clinically or therapeutically potentially relevant issues such as: your physical condition including deformities, apparent height and weight, body type, attractiveness relative to social and cultural norms or standards, gait and motor coordination, posture, work speed, any noteworthy mannerism or gestures, physical or medical conditions including bruises or injuries, basic grooming and hygiene including appropriateness of dress, eye contact (including any changes in the previously listed issues), sex, chronological and apparent age, ethnicity, facial and body language, and congruence of language and facial or bodily expression. Potential consequences thus include the therapist not being aware of what he or she would consider important information, that you may not recognize as significant to present verbally the therapist.

# Provider Absence

Consistency is a core tenet of the therapeutic relationship. As such, I will make every attempt to limit my absences. I will inform you in advance of planned absences, and provide you with the name and phone number of the mental health professional covering my practice. If I need to cancel an appointment at the last-minute, I will reach out as soon as possible and reschedule.

# Social Media and Telecommunication

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.

# Treatment of Minors

If you are a minor, your parents may be legally entitled to some information about your therapy. I will discuss with you and your parents what information is appropriate for them to receive and which issues are more appropriately kept confidential.

# Discharge/Transition Process

There are several reasons why we may eventually end our professional relationship. You may decide you would prefer to work with a different provider. I may reach the conclusion you would be better served working with someone else. Regardless of the case, I will first discuss with you the reasons for discharging, and if you request, provide you with a list of other qualified providers. I will also extend the discharge process length if necessary based on your treatment needs, including continuing to provide emergency support for a time-limited period after you have been notified of the end of our treatment relationship.

Please note that ongoing failure to pay for treatment, attend sessions, or communicate with me in a respectful and timely manner can also result in discharge from my practice. In these instances, to ensure you have continued access to care, I will still make every reasonable effort to get in touch with you and provide referrals to a new provider before I consider our relationship ended.

Should you fail to schedule an appointment for three consecutive weeks, unless other arrangements have been made in advance, for legal and ethical reasons, I must consider the professional relationship discontinued.