

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS, P.C. OFFICE POLICIES

Welcome to our practice! In order to save time and minimize confusion, we have prepared the following explanation of some of our policies. Please read the policies and sign below to indicate that you have read and do understand them. If you have any questions, discuss them with your psychologist.

Psychotherapy sessions are 45 to 50 minutes in length. Unlike many physicians and other professionals, we do not overbook. Your appointment time is reserved for you alone. Therefore, patients will ordinarily be charged for missed appointments and for appointments canceled less than 48 hours in advance. Since insurance companies will not pay for missed appointments, you will be billed directly.

Telephone consultation is not an effective substitute for a regular therapy session and should be limited to emergencies. If you are calling with an emergency, please indicate this in your message. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. Telephone consultation will be billed at the regular rate.

If you have an emergency outside office hours, the on-call psychologist can generally be reached through the answering service by dialing (334) 821-3350. If the psychologist is not available and you are concerned about your safety or that of the client, we would advise you to contact your physician, the local Crisis Line (334-821-8600), or the Emergency Department of the local hospital, whichever you deem appropriate.

Payment is due at the time services are provided. Billing for initial sessions is at the rate of \$140.00 per 45 to 50 minute interval. All subsequent sessions are charged at the rate of \$130.00 per session. Psychological testing, evaluation of test results and other accumulated data, and report preparation are billed at the rate of \$135.00 per hour. Written reports are prepared when specifically requested.

Whenever possible, we will, at your request, bill your insurance carrier directly. In this case, the patient's share of the fee, including deductible, is due at the time of service. **We cannot guarantee if or what your insurance company will pay.** The first session must be paid in full regardless of insurance coverage. Discuss this with your psychologist if it is a concern for you. Parents of college students will be billed only after they sign a fee agreement. We will not bill divorced or separated non-custodial parents for services rendered to their children. You are responsible for all fees in the event of nonpayment or reduced payment by your insurance company. There is a returned check fee of \$20.00. Should collection action become necessary, your name and other information relevant to collections may be released to a collection agency. You will be responsible for all collection expenses, attorney fees, and court costs expended in the resolution of the account.

Termination is a very important part of the therapy process. When you are considering ending your

therapy, you need to give adequate notice so that the therapy relationship can be ended responsibly and in a manner helpful to you. Adequate notice will depend on the length and frequency of the treatment period.

Confidentiality means that your records and other information regarding your treatment will be released only with your consent. Although the confidentiality of psychological treatment is recognized in Alabama law, there are limits to confidentiality, some of which are explained below.

- a. Should your psychologist believe that you pose a threat to yourself or another, he/she will take actions necessary to prevent harm.
- b. Psychologists, like other professionals, are required by law to report known or suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities.
- c. When the use and disclosure without your consent or authorization is allowed under other sections of Section 164.512 of the Privacy Rule and the state's confidentiality law. This includes certain narrowly-defined disclosures to law enforcement agencies, to a health oversight agency (such as HHS or a state department of health), to a coroner or medical examiner, for public health purposes relating to disease or FDA-regulated products, or for specialized government functions such as fitness for military duties, eligibility for VA-benefits, and national security and intelligence.
- d. Some Alabama courts have decided that the court's need for information regarding parents supersedes the need for confidentiality in psychological treatment when custody and parental rights are at issue. In a few such cases, information regarding treatment has been ordered released without the consent of the client.
- e. If you choose to use your health insurance to assist in payment for services, the insurance company has the right to review records of your assessment and treatment.
- f. In order to develop a therapeutic relationship, children under the age of 14 need a sense of privacy regarding their conversations with their therapist. Therefore, when the client is a child, the psychologist will share information with parents regarding the progress of therapy without necessarily revealing specific details of the content of therapy sessions. In Alabama, an individual is considered an adult at the age of 14 years for the purpose of seeking medical/psychological treatment. Information regarding an adolescent (14 years or older) may be released or discussed with parents only with permission of the adolescent, which will ordinarily be encouraged by the psychologist.
- g. If you initiate a lawsuit alleging emotional or mental distress, we may not be able to protect the confidentiality of your records.

Please ask any questions you might have. Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the policies described above and that you have received a copy of these policies.

Signature (Patient or responsible party)

Date