

Client Disclosure Statement—Information and Consent

You have taken your first step. You are here. For whatever reason, you have chosen to seek changes in your life. I am delighted that you have chosen me to walk this path with you. Please take a moment to thoroughly read and understand the following important information. It is vital that from the onset of our relationship, we have a mutual understanding and are in agreement with each other.

Professional Background

I graduated from Appalachian State University with a Master of Arts Degree in Human Development and Psychological Counseling in 1994. I am a Nationally Certified Counselor (Certificate # 37711) and a Licensed Professional Counselor (License # 4196). I previously was a school counselor in the North Carolina School System for 10 years. I am a member of the Licensed Professional Counselors Association of North Carolina, Chi Sigma Iota (a professional honor society), the American Counseling Association, and the International Association for Trauma Professionals. At any time, you are welcome to ask to see my qualifications.

I adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the American Counseling Association and the North Carolina Board for Licensed Professional Counselors. These principles are available for your review at any time.

Confidentiality

In general, everything in our counseling sessions I will hold in the strictest confidence. Our conversations and records of your treatment are your privilege, protected by both state law and my profession's ethical principles. But I cannot promise that everything you tell me will never be revealed to someone else. There are some times when the law requires me to tell things to others. There are also some other limits on our confidentiality. We need to discuss these, because I want you to understand clearly what I can and cannot keep confidential. You need to know about these rules now, so that you don't tell me something as a "secret" that I cannot keep secret. These are very important issues, so please read these pages carefully. I have a copy of this information should you like to keep it. You will be asked to sign a statement of your understanding of this information, so if you have questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Exceptions to confidentiality as per the General Statutes 122C-52 through 122C-56:

1. When you or other persons are in physical danger, the law requires me to tell others about it. Specifically:
 - a. If I come to believe that you are threatening serious harm to another person, I am required to try to protect that person. I may have to tell the person and the police, or perhaps try to have you put in a hospital.
 - b. If you seriously threaten or act in a way that is very likely to harm yourself, I may have to seek a hospital for you, or to call on your family members or others who can help protect you in an emergency.
 - c. In an emergency where your life or health is in danger, and I cannot get your consent, I may give another professional some information to protect your life. I will try to get your permission first, and I will discuss this with you as soon as possible afterwards.
 - d. If I believe or suspect that you are abusing a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person I must file a report with a state agency. To "abuse" means to neglect, hurt, or sexually molest another person. I do not have any legal power to investigate the situation to find out all the facts. The state agency will investigate. If this might be your situation, we should discuss the legal aspects in detail before you tell me anything about these topics. You may also want to talk to your lawyer.

In any of these situations, I would reveal only the minimum amount of information that is needed to protect you or the other person. I would not tell everything you have told me.

2. In general, if you become involved in a court case or proceeding, you can prevent me from testifying in court about what you have told me. This is called "privilege," and it is your choice to prevent me from testifying or to allow me to do so. However, there are some situations where a judge or court may require me to testify:
 - a. In child custody or adoption proceedings, where your fitness as a parent is questioned or in doubt.
 - b. In cases where your emotional or mental condition is important information for a court's decision.
 - c. During a malpractice case or an investigation of me or another therapist by a professional group.
 - d. In a civil commitment hearing to decide if you will be admitted to or continued in a psychiatric hospital.

- e. When you are seeing me for court-ordered evaluations or treatment. In this case we need to discuss confidentiality fully, because you don't have to tell me what you don't want the court to find out through my report.
3. There are a few other things you must know about confidentiality and your treatment:
 - a. I may sometimes consult (talk) with another professional about your treatment. This other person is also required by professional ethics to keep your information confidential. Likewise, when I am out of town or unavailable, another therapist will be available to help my clients. I must give him or her some information about my clients, like you.
 - b. I am required to keep records of your treatment, such as the notes I take when we meet. You have a right to review these records with me unless I believe that there is information in your record that would be detrimental to your care. Records of treatment are routinely audited and examined for quality of care and may be released to a funding source without a consent signed if necessary.
 4. Here is what you need to know about confidentiality in regard to insurance and money matters:
 - a. If you use your health insurance to pay a part of my fees, insurance companies require some information about our therapy. Insurers such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield or managed care organizations ask for much information about you and your symptoms, as well as a detailed treatment plan.
 - b. It is against the law for insurers to release information about our office visits to anyone without your written permission. Although I believe the insurance company will act morally and legally, I cannot control who sees this information at the insurer's office. You cannot be required to release more information just to get payments.
 - c. If you have been sent to me by your employer's Employee Assistance Program, the program's staffers may require some information. Again, I believe that they will act morally and legally, but I cannot control who sees this information at their offices. If this is your situation, let us fully discuss my agreement with your employer or the program before we talk further.
 - d. If your account with me is unpaid and we have not arranged a payment plan, I can use legal means to get paid. The only information I will give to the court, a collection agency, or a lawyer will be your name and address, the dates we met for professional services, and the amount due to me.

5. Children and families create some special confidentiality questions.
 - a. When I treat children under the age of 10, I must tell their parents or guardians whatever they ask me. As children grow and are more able to understand and choose, they assume legal rights. For those between the ages of 10 and 18, most of the details in things they tell me will be treated as confidential. However, parents or guardians do have the right to general information, including how therapy is going. They need to be able to make well-informed decisions about therapy. I may also have to tell parents or guardians some information about other family members that I am told. This is especially true if these others' actions put them or others in any danger.
 - b. In cases where I treat several members of a family (parents and children or other relatives), the confidentiality situation can become very complicated. I may have different duties toward different family members. At the start of our treatment, we must all have a clear understanding of our purposes and my role. Then we can be clear about any limits on confidentiality that may exist.
 - c. If you tell me something your spouse does not know, and not knowing this could harm him or her, I cannot promise to keep it confidential. I will work with you to decide on the best long-term way to handle situations like this.
 - d. If you and your spouse have a custody dispute, or a court custody hearing is coming up, I will need to know about it. My professional ethics prevent me from doing both therapy and custody evaluations.
 - e. If you are seeing me for marriage counseling, you must agree at the start of treatment that if you eventually decide to divorce, you will not request my testimony for either side. The court, however, may order me to testify.
 - f. At the start of family treatment, we must also specify which members of the family must sign a release form for the common record I create in the therapy or therapies.

6. Confidentiality in group therapy is also a special situation.

In group therapy, the other members of the group are not therapists. They do not have the same ethics and laws that I have to work under. You cannot be certain that they will always keep what you say in the group confidential.

7. Finally, here are a few other points:
 - a. I will not record our therapy sessions on audiotape or videotape without your written permission.
 - b. If you want me to send information about our therapy to someone else, you must sign a "release-of-records" form. I have copies you can see, so you will know what is involved.
 - c. Any information that you also share outside of therapy, willingly and publicly, will not be considered protected or confidential by a court.

Philosophy & Approach

You are unique. No other client will have the same needs as you do, and therefore I will treat you based upon the therapeutic goals that you and I establish in our initial session(s). I use a variety of treatment modalities such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and Mindfulness Based Therapies. I do not take on clients whom I cannot help using the techniques I have available. It is my belief that a successful counseling experience will involve a lot of work on your part, both in the therapy session and outside. Of course you are never required to complete any "homework" that might be assigned to you, but I do believe that these exercises will only enhance your progress. Specific examples of "homework" may include, but are not limited to: journaling, reading a certain book or passage recommended, workbook entries, listening to tapes, attending meetings, etc.

Counseling, as with any other powerful intervention, has both benefits and risks. For example, therapy may temporarily result in an increase in both pleasant and unpleasant emotions. Such unpleasant emotions might include experiencing uncomfortable levels of feelings such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, and anger, among others, or might lead to increased personal conflict (for example therapy may not keep a troubled relationship intact). Often therapy leads to a significant reduction in stress, the resolution of old conflicts and healing of old wounds, or to personal growth and self-knowledge.

Once we have agreed to begin our sessions, at no time will I acknowledge the existence of our relationship outside of the counseling session (unless initiated by you). Ours will be a professional, therapeutic relationship and it is my belief that any other relationship would be counterproductive to the purposes of counseling.

Length of Sessions

An initial consultation of 25-30 minutes is available for you to take advantage of without financial obligation. I want you to feel free to explore your options with me with no added pressure or responsibility. During this time, I invite you to ask questions, check my credentials, and discuss all terms of the counseling relationship. If after that point you are not comfortable entering into a therapeutic relationship with me, I can refer you to another therapist or suggest alternative means of getting help.

The first counseling session is approximately 90-120 minutes. This allows us sufficient time to explore your history, discuss our treatment options, develop our initial plan, and complete the appropriate paperwork. At this point we will determine an approximate number of sessions that will be needed before reviewing and evaluating our progress, however you may terminate your therapy at any time you so desire. Successive sessions are typically 50 minutes. In some instances, there may be a need for a longer session and this will be based upon availability, need for closure, or involvement of an outside party. Those lengthier sessions will be subjected to the extended time fee, and mutually agreed upon before taking place.

Fees for services rendered/Methods of Payment

Fees are based on a sliding scale dependent upon gross family income. According to the Office of the Inspector General, total gross family income MUST be documented: a tax return or a copy of each contributing family members' W2 form are acceptable forms of documentation. The same fee applies whether it is an individual, family, or couple. Appointments are scheduled based on your treatment needs and availability. The appointment time you schedule is reserved exclusively for you. If you cannot make your scheduled time, please give at least 24 hours notice, more if possible. Please remember that my income is based upon scheduled sessions so with the exception of extreme emergencies (up to my discretion), missed appointments or cancelled appointments without 24 hour notice may be subjected to the regular session fees and must be paid prior to rescheduling.

Fees are structured as follows:

Gross Family Income: Length of Session/Amount

\$20,000 and up	Initial 90 minute: \$135.00; Successive 50 minutes: \$75.00 Extended Time per 10 minutes: \$15.00;
\$18,000 to \$19,999	Initial 90 minute: \$125.00; Successive 50 minutes: \$65.00; Extended Time per 10 minutes: \$13.00
\$16,000 to \$17,999	Initial 90 minute: \$115.00; Successive 50 minutes: \$55.00 Extended Time per 10 minutes: \$11.00
\$14,000 to \$15,999	Initial 90 minute: \$105.00; Successive 50 minutes: \$45.00 Extended Time per 10 minutes: \$9.00
\$12,000 to \$13,999	Initial 90 minute: \$95.00; Successive 50 minutes: \$35.00; Extended Time per 10 minutes: \$7.00
Below \$12,000	Initial 90 minute: \$85.00; Successive 50 minutes: \$25.00; Extended Time per 10 minutes: \$5.00

** Fees for topic-specific group counseling will be based on the particular group and number of sessions. Fee scale will be provided with Group information.

Payments and co-payments are expected at the time that services are rendered. For those wishing to seek health insurance reimbursement, I will gladly file insurance, but you are responsible and not your insurance company for the fees agreed upon. Please present your insurance card at EACH session. Please remember that some insurance companies will not cover counseling services without a psychiatric DSM 5 diagnosis denoting "mental illness" which will become a permanent part your medical/insurance records. Prior to submitting any information to an insurance company, you and I will discuss at length the pros and cons, any diagnosis I plan to submit, and I will obtain your written permission to release your information.

Complaint Procedures

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our work together, please inform me immediately. If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or unethically, by me or any other professional in my field, and are not comfortable resolving the conflict with me you can contact the North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors to file a grievance.

NCBLPC

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Greensboro, NC 27417

Ph: 844-622-3572

F: 336-217-9450

www.ncblpc.org

You may also contact Disability Rights North Carolina, the statewide agency designated under Federal and State law to protect and advocate the rights of persons with disabilities.

DisabilityRightsNC.org

Toll-Free: 877-235-4210

Phone: 919-856-2195

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