

Office Policies Disclosure
(Revised August 2016)

Washington State law requires licensed therapists to provide clients accurate information about office policies at the beginning of any program of treatment. This law (chapter 18.255 RCW) spells out responsibilities and rights of both clients and therapists who work together in treatment. It requires that clients be made aware of the following:

1. Clients have the right to refuse treatment.
2. It is the responsibility of clients to choose the provider and the treatment modality (type) which best suits their needs.
3. Clients shall be informed of the limits of confidentiality provided by law.
4. Clients shall be informed of the therapist's education, training and the therapeutic orientation (style) of the practice (Clinician's Disclosure).
5. Clients shall be informed of the proposed course of treatment where known.
6. Clients shall be informed of the financial cost of treatment.
7. Each client and the therapist shall acknowledge receipt of this information in writing.

Uses and Disclosures with Neither Consent nor Authorization. I may use or disclose protected health information (PHI) without your consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

- **Child Abuse** If I have reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, I am required by law to report it to the proper law enforcement agency or the Washington Department of Social and Health Services.
- **Adult and Domestic Abuse** If I have reasonable cause to believe that abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, or neglect of a vulnerable adult has occurred, I must report the abuse to the Washington Department of Social and Health Services. If I have reason to suspect that sexual or physical assault has occurred, I must report to the appropriate law enforcement agency and to the Department of Social and Health Services.
- **Health Oversight** If the Washington Examining Board of Licensed Counselors subpoenas me as part of its investigations, hearings, or proceedings relating to the discipline, issuance, or denial of licensure of state licensed mental health therapists, I must comply with its orders. This could include disclosing your relevant mental health information.
- **Judicial or Administrative Proceedings** If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about the professional services that I have provided to you and the records thereof, know that such information is privileged under state law. I will not release information without the written authorization of you or your legal

representative, or a subpoena of which you have been properly notified (and you have failed to inform me that you are opposing the subpoena), or a court order. The privilege does not apply when you are being evaluated for a third party or where the evaluation is court ordered. You will be informed in advance if this is the case.

- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety** I may disclose your confidential mental health information to any person without authorization if I reasonably believe that disclosure will avoid or minimize imminent danger to your health or safety, or the health or safety of any other individual.
- **Worker's Compensation** If you file a worker's compensation claim, with certain exceptions, I must make available, at any stage of the proceedings, all mental health information in my possession relevant to that particular injury in the opinion of the Washington Department of Labor and Industries, to your employer, your representative, and the Department of Labor and Industries upon request.
- **Failure to Pay Your Bill** Individuals who persistently fail to pay their bill may have their names, address, phone number, work place, work number, social security number, the dates for which therapy services were received, and the total amount owed revealed to a collection agency.
- **Regarding Minors:** Clinical information of children under the age of 13 is protected. For this age group, information that is clinically significant will be shared with parents or guardians. Children between the ages of 13 and 18 have legal rights to confidentiality. In general, therapists strive to protect the adolescent's confidentiality unless major issues of health, safety, or welfare are involved. New Growth therapists working with a client under the age of 18 will discuss in more detail how confidentiality issues are treated with child and adolescent clients.

Financial Issues. The cost of therapy services is outlined in New Growth's fee schedule. Payment for services is expected at the time of each office visit. In the event that you are using employee benefit program or insurance benefits to cover the cost of services, you are expected to pay the portion of the fee not covered by them (**including co-pays**) **AT THE TIME OF THE OFFICE VISIT. All insurance information, including secondary payors, must be submitted to New Growth by no later than the first visit.** New Growth Behavioral Health Services staff will assist you in your effort to determine the level of coverage your plan provides. However, the ultimate responsibility for knowing limitations on your coverage is your own. In the event your insurance company or employee benefit plan refuses to cover any portion of a service already provided, you are responsible for the entire fee.

When advance arrangements are made with your therapist to delay payment, you will be billed monthly. Payment is due within 30 days. Any balance not paid after 60 days will be subject to a service charge of 1.5% per month. Individuals who fail to pay their bill in a timely manner may expect to be referred to a collection agency.

Course and Length of Treatment

How long you and your clinician work together largely depends on you and your goals for therapy. You will work together to determine what the goals of therapy will be and from that you and your therapist will decide realistically how short-term or long-term the therapy will be.

Length of Sessions

Sessions are generally 50 minutes in length. Children sometimes have shorter sessions.

Failure to keep appointments. Your therapy hour is reserved specifically for you and we expect 24-hour notice if you need to change your appointment time for anything other than an emergency. When you cancel an appointment with less than 24 hours notice it will be treated as a missed appointment. We charge \$30.00 for the first missed appointment. The full hourly fee is charged for further missed appointments. These are not billable to your insurance company or employee benefit program. To avoid a no-show charge, please call 457-1610 anytime to cancel or request a reschedule of your appointment. If you are late for a session, the time of your session may be shortened, but you will be required to pay for a full session. In addition, your clinician will only wait 15 minutes and then assume you are not coming. If you have a standing appointment time and miss two appointments in a row, all future appointments will be removed from your therapist's schedule and you will need to call your therapist to set up another appointment.

Consultation. Your therapist may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about your case. New Growth therapists do meet regularly to provide professional consultation to each other. In addition, New Growth therapists may occasionally seek consultation with a number of mental health professionals in the Northwest, as needed. During a consultation, they will make every effort to avoid revealing your identity. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

Emergencies. New Growth Therapy staff is dedicated to providing the best care possible for our clients. Each client should work with their therapist to identify how to obtain support during an emergency. If an emergency develops, we encourage you to attempt to reach your therapist by calling our regular office number 457-1610 at any time, day or night. Be sure to identify your situation as 'urgent'. During off office hours, this number connects with a confidential voice mail system, which is monitored by the staff. If you do not hear back from your therapist or other New Growth staff in a timely fashion we urge you to take one of the following steps:

- Call your regular family physician.
- Call Peninsula Community Mental Health Center 457-0431, or the 24-hour crisis line 452-4500.

- Contact the emergency room of Olympic Memorial Hospital.
- Call 911.

Termination of Client - Therapist Relationship. When it comes time to end your therapy relationship, you are urged to discuss this termination with your therapist in a face-to-face meeting. Ethical guidelines for therapists recommend that therapists contact a client who suddenly discontinues therapy without any discussion. The purpose of this follow-up call is to clarify your intent to stop therapy and to provide information about additional community services.

You and your therapist will sign an acknowledgment of this disclosure.