

Office Policies Disclosure

(Revised March 2018)

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 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 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 insurance benefits to cover the cost of services, you are expected to pay the portion of the fee not covered by them **AT THE TIME OF THE OFFICE VISIT (including co-pays)**. **All insurance information, including secondary payers, 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. 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.

Limits of Services. Your therapist does not make assessments of fitness for duty/work, workers compensation, disability claims/benefits, legal/courts, forensic, substance use, or predictive assessments of any type. They do not serve as an advocate on issues, act as an expert witness, or go to court as your advocate. Your therapist does not access fitness for custody or make recommendations regarding parenting, guardianship, or fitness of a parent or person to live independently.

Legal Proceedings. Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters of a personal and confidential nature, it is agreed that, should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to, divorce, custody disputes, injuries, or lawsuits), neither you (client(s)), nor your attorney(s), nor anyone acting on your behalf will call on your therapist to testify in court or at any other proceedings, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy or counseling records be requested. Considering the above exclusions, upon your request, your therapist will release a summary of your sessions to any agency/person you specify, unless releasing the information might be harmful in any way or violates the privacy of another person. If subpoenaed or ordered by an authorized court of law, health care professionals may be required to release confidential information. Time for preparation and/or attendance in court will be charged as permitted by law.

Length of Sessions. Sessions may last 45 to 60 minutes in length. Length varies based on individual needs.

Failure to keep appointments. Your therapy hour is reserved specifically for you and we expect a minimum 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 360-457-1610 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. Being late often does not allow adequate time for therapeutic engagement. In addition, your clinician will only wait 15 minutes and then assume you are not coming.

Attending appointments is important for therapy to be beneficial. If two no-shows/late cancellations are documented in a 30 day period, your services will be terminated. If you have a standing appointment time and miss two consecutive appointments, you will be billed for those appointments, and all future appointments will be removed from your therapist's schedule.

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 a mental health emergency develops, we encourage you to attempt to take one of the following steps:

- Call your regular family physician.
- Call Peninsula Behavioral Health 360-457-0431, or the 24-hour crisis line 360-452-4500.
- Contact the emergency room of Olympic Memorial Hospital.
- Call 911.
- Text Lifeline: Text HOME to 741741, usually takes less than 5 minutes for a Crisis Counselor to respond (www.crisistextline.org).

You may reach your therapist by calling our regular office number 360-457-1610 at any time, day or night. Be sure to identify your situation as 'urgent'. During non-office hours, this number connects with a confidential voice mail system, which is monitored by the staff once in the morning and once in the evening. Please leave your message on the mainline at extension 301.

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. If you suddenly discontinue therapy, and do not respond to your therapist's follow-up, your services will be considered terminated and your chart closed 60 days from your last appointment.

You will sign an acknowledgment of this disclosure.