

NorthStar Therapy in Northbrook

PRACTICE POLICIES

APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Please remember to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance. You will be responsible for the entire fee if cancellation is less than 24 hours.

The standard meeting time for psychotherapy is 53 minutes. However, it is up to you to determine the length of time of your sessions. Requests to change the 53-minute session need to be discussed with the therapist for time to be scheduled in advance.

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

Cancellations and rescheduled sessions will be subject to a full charge if NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time.

TELEPHONE ACCESSIBILITY

Please leave a message on my voicemail if you need to contact me between sessions. I am often not immediately available; however, I will attempt to return your call within 24 hours. However, phone sessions are available if you are out of town, sick, or need additional support. Please call 911 or any local emergency room if an actual emergency arises.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATION

Due to 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.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

I cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages. If you prefer to communicate via email or text messaging for issues regarding scheduling or cancellations, I will do so. While I may try to return messages promptly, I cannot guarantee immediate response and request that you do not use these methods of communication to discuss therapeutic content and/or request assistance for emergencies.

Services by electronic means, including but not limited to telephone communication, the Internet, facsimile machines, and email, are considered telemedicine by the State of California. Under the California Telemedicine Act of 1996, telemedicine is broadly defined as using information technology to deliver medical services and information from one location to another. Suppose you and your therapist use information technology for some or all of your treatment. In that case, 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) Telemedicine has potential risks, consequences, and benefits. Potential benefits include, but are not limited to, improved communication capabilities, providing convenient access to up- to-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 a multitude of observations, information, and experiences about the client within a session or a series of sessions. Therapists may make clinical assessments, diagnoses, and interventions based not only on direct verbal or auditory communications, written reports, and third-person consultations but also on 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, 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 they would consider important information that you may not recognize as significant to present verbally to the therapist.

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.

TERMINATION

Ending relationships can be difficult. Therefore, it is important to have a termination process to achieve closure. The appropriate termination length depends on the treatment's

length and intensity. I may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you and a termination process if I determine that the psychotherapy is not being effectively used or if you are in default on payment. I will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the purpose of terminating. If therapy is terminated for any reason or you request another therapist, I will provide you with a list of qualified psychotherapists to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source.

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