

Open-Minded Marriage & Family Therapy, PLLC

PRACTICE POLICIES

APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS The standard meeting time for all sessions is 45 minutes. It is up to you, however, to determine the length of time of your sessions. You have the right to end your session early, however, the fee per session remains a flat rate depending on the qualifications of your therapist per individual session and per couple/family session. All initial sessions are charged at a higher flat rate depending on the qualifications of your therapist as intake sessions run up to 50 minutes and require deep assessment. If we accept your insurance, you are responsible for your set co-pay. If your insurance is inactive, you will be responsible for the cost of the session out of pocket.

Cancellations and re-scheduled sessions (if not rescheduled in the same week) will be subject to a charge at the cost of a full out of pocket session if NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE. This charge is out of pocket and does not go through insurance if we accept your insurance. This charge 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 and the cost for session remains the same.

Telephone Accessibility: If you need to contact me between sessions, please send a text or leave a message on my voice mail. I am often not immediately available; however, I will attempt to return your call or text within 24 hours. In the event that the therapist has taken off for any reason and you need additional support, please contact our office and support will be provided to you by another therapist in the practice. If a true emergency arises, please call 911 or any local emergency room.

Social Media and Telecommunication: Due to the importance of 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, Instagram, 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 in a timely manner, 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 is considered telemedicine by the State of California. Under the California Telemedicine Act of 1996, telemedicine is broadly defined as the use of information technology to deliver medical services and information from one location to another. If you and your therapist chose to use information technology for some or all your treatment, 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 researcher or other entities shall not occur without your consent.
5. There are potential risks, consequences, and benefits of telemedicine. 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 within a session or a series of sessions, a multitude of observations, information, and experiences about the client. Therapists may make clinical assessments, diagnosis, and interventions based not only on direct verbal or auditory communications, written reports, and third person consultations, but also from 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 and weight, body type, attractiveness relative to social and cultural norms or standards, gait and motor condition 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 he or she would consider important information, that you may not recognize as significant to present verbally 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 in order to achieve some closure. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the treatment. 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 payment. I will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the reasons and 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. Should you cancel an appointment for three consecutive weeks, unless other arrangements have been made in advanced, for legal and ethical reasons, I must consider the professional relationship discontinued.

I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

Signature

Date