

Becky Stroman, M.S., LPC Intern
(Andy Young, Ed.D., NCC, LPC – Supervisor)

Informed Consent

Overview of Counseling Services

In order for counseling to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home. Counseling can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, counseling has been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. However, there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

Payment

We will begin by meeting one hour per week. Based on the progress made in sessions, the occurrence of sessions will be adjusted to less frequent meetings as time goes on. There is a \$50 fee for each one hour session. However, if your income or situation prevents you from being able to pay the fee, we will discuss a sliding scale basis which will suit your situation. You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide one day's advance notice of cancellation, or unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. If it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. The charge will be \$50 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceedings.

Referrals

If at any time or for any reason you are dissatisfied with my services, please inform me. If I am not able to resolve your concerns, then I will give you the names of other therapists who you may want to contact for therapeutic services. If on the other hand, I cannot see you making progress over a reasonable period of time, we will discuss termination of services and depending on the reason for the lack of progress, I can refer you to another therapist.

Contacting Me

My primary mode of contact will be through my cell phone. While I usually have my cell phone with me if I am with another client or otherwise preoccupied I will not answer my phone. Please leave me a message and I will contact you when able. If you are unable to reach me and feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist (or psychiatrist) on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

Professional Records

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or I can prepare a summary for you. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. If you request to see your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents.

Minors

If you are under 18 years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is my policy to request an agreement from parents that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless I feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, I will notify them of my concern. Before giving them any information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections you may have with what I am prepared to discuss.

Release of Confidential Information by Law

A professional may disclose confidential information by law under the following circumstances:

I. Exception to the privilege in court proceedings:

- A. When court proceedings are brought by the client against the professional, including but not limited to malpractice proceedings, and in any criminal or license revocation proceedings in which the client is a complaining witness and disclosure is relevant to the defense of the professional.
- B. When the client waives his/her right in writing to the privilege of confidentiality of any information, or when other person's who are acting on the client's behalf submit a written waiver of confidentiality.
- C. When the purpose of court proceedings is to substantiate and collect on a claim for mental or emotional health services rendered to the client.
- D. When the judge finds that the client after having been previously informed that communications would not be privileged, has made communication to the professional in the course of a court-ordered examination relating to the client's mental or emotional condition or disorder, providing that such communication shall not be privileged only with respect to issues involving the client's mental or emotional health. On granting of the order, the court in determining the extent to which any disclosure of all or any part of any communication is necessary, shall impose appropriate safeguards against unauthorized disclosure.
- E. In any criminal prosecution where the client is a victim, witness, or defendant. Records are not discoverable until the court in which the prosecution is pending makes an in camera determination as to the relevancy of the records, communicates, or any portion thereof. Such determination shall not constitute a determination as to the admissibility of such records, communications, or any portion thereof.

II. Exemptions to the privilege of confidentiality under circumstances other than court proceedings:

- A. To a government agency, if the disclosure is required or authorized by law.
- B. To medical or law enforcement personnel, if the professional determines there is probability of immediate physical injury by the client to self or others or there is probability of immediate mental or emotional injury to the client.
- C. To qualified personnel for management audits, financial audits, program evaluations, or research.
- D. To a person who has the written consent of the client, or a parent if the client is a minor, or a guardian if the client has been adjudicated as incompetent to manage the client's personal affairs.
- E. To the client's personal representative if the client is deceased.
- F. To individuals, corporations, or governmental agencies involved in paying or collecting fees for mental and emotional services rendered by the professional.
- G. To other professionals and personnel, under the professional's directions, who participate in the diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of the client.
- H. In an official legislative inquiry relating to a state hospital or state school.
- I. In a civil action, criminal case, or criminal law manner as otherwise allowed by laws or rule.

III. Exceptions to the limits of confidentiality under the *Impaired Professional Peer Assistance Act*

- A. Any information, report, or record, an approved peer assistance program, or a licensing or disciplinary authority receives, gathers, or maintains under this Act is confidential. The information, report, or record may not be disclosed without the written approval of the impaired professional or other interested person unless:

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1. At a disciplinary hearing before a licensing or disciplinary authority in which the authority considers taking disciplinary action against an impaired professional whom it has referred to a peer assistance program.
2. At an appeal from a disciplinary action or order imposed by a licensing or disciplinary authority.
3. To qualified personal for bona fide research or educational purposes if the information that would identify a person is removed.
4. To health care professionals to whom an approved peer assistance program or licensing or disciplinary authority has referred an impaired professional.
5. To other health care personnel to the extent necessary to meet a health care emergency.

IV. Other exceptions to the limits of confidentiality

- A. In the case of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child, a report must be made to the Texas Department of Human Services, the agency designated by the court to be responsible for the protection of children, and/or the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies, or registers the facility in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred.
- B. In the case of sexual abuse by other mental health profession, a report must be made to the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors and to the Lubbock District Attorney’s Office.
- C. In the case of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and/or neglect of an elderly person, a report must be made to the Texas Department of Human Services, the agency designated by the court to be responsible for the protection of elderly persons, and/or the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies, or registers the facility in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred.

In signing, I am indicating that I have been informed of the *counseling services* as well as the *legal limits of confidentiality* and that I understand them to the best of my ability.

Signature of Counselor

Date

Signature of Parent\Guardian, if client is under 18 years of age

Date

Signature of Client

Date