

## INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES** Psychological services consist of a collaborative effort between client and clinician with the goal of optimizing the client's health, psychological wellbeing, and daily functioning. As with any powerful treatment, psychological services may include risks as well as many benefits. For example, there is a risk that clients will experience some level of anxiety, frustration, sadness, or other feelings. EVALUATIONS: There are no guarantees that you will be pleased with the information learned from an evaluation or consultation. However, there can be multiple benefits from assessments and consultation. They often lead to clarification of current functioning, problems, and strengths. This information can then be used to find solutions to specific problems and may lead to positive life changes. THERAPY: Throughout our work together, I encourage to discuss any areas of concern, or questions you have about therapy. Some problems may seem to get worse before they get better. These are natural occurrences, but you need to be aware of them. There are no absolute guarantees regarding an individual's progress in treatment. Benefits of therapy have been shown through hundreds of well-designed research studies. Therapy often leads to solutions to problems and significant reductions in feelings of distress. Personal goals and values often become clearer, coping skills may improve greatly, and clients may get more satisfaction out of relationships.

**LICENSURE AND QUALIFICATIONS** OPAL Institute providers are licensed clinical psychologists. They have specific training and experience in working with aging issues, older adults, and associated families/support systems.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** Psychological service work is confidential. The things that you choose to discuss with me are private and protected by Oregon State Laws. Except under circumstances discussed below or in the Notice of Privacy Practices, I will not share anything that we talk about with others unless I have your written permission to do so. Sometimes it will be helpful for me to exchange information with other people, such as your other health care providers or significant people in your life. I will explain the need to do so and discuss specific information to be shared. If that is acceptable, I will ask you to complete a written Release of Information form. I also regularly engage in professional consultation in order to optimize my ability to provide you with the best evaluation or consultation results.

Some things, by law, cannot be kept private. There might be a need to break confidentiality if you were in medical jeopardy, suicidal, or dangerous to another person. There are laws concerning abuse of children and the elderly that require report to the proper officials. Although these exceptions may not arise during your treatment, it is important that you are aware of them. If it is necessary to break confidentiality because of one of these reasons, I will release only information that is relevant in order to provide for your safety, the safety of others, or as is required by law. Records can be subpoenaed in legal issues; each case is dealt with separately and confidentiality is protected whenever possible.

**RECORDS** The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep records. As part of an evaluation, I will provide you with a written copy of the results of my work. This document is often a summary of the information I collected, written in a readable manner to help you understand the results of our work together. If you wish to see specific test data, please let me know and we can discuss an appropriate plan. If you are in therapy and wish to see treatment records, please let me know and we can discuss an appropriate plan. Clients may be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to such requests.

**APPOINTMENTS** Psychological services are scheduled by appointment only. Assessment and consultation sessions vary in length depending on the specific issue you have. We will discuss the anticipated approximate length of services at the beginning of our work together. Therapy sessions are generally 50 minutes in length. I typically meet with clients on a weekly basis, but I am happy to discuss other options regarding session length or frequency as appropriate.

**CANCELLATIONS** Your session time is reserved for you. Please call at least 24 hours in advance if you need to change or cancel a scheduled appointment. Appointments that are not cancelled within this timeframe will be billed directly to you for \$75, as an insurance company will not cover a missed appointment.

**CONTACTING ME** I am often not immediately available by telephone. When I am unavailable, you may leave a message on my confidential voicemail, which I monitor frequently. I will return your call as soon as possible. In the case of an emergency, please refer to the appropriate information below.

**USE OF E-MAIL** I cannot legally or ethically conduct assessments, consultation, or therapy via e-mail. If you choose to use e-mail to communicate with me, I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality because e-mail is not necessarily secure. NEVER use e-mail for emergency or urgent communication, as I cannot guarantee when I will check it. I normally use e-mail to do a brief check-in or relay non-urgent information. DO NOT use e-mail to cancel or change appointments.

**EMERGENCIES** In the event of an emergency, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 for immediate attention. It is not appropriate to leave an emergent message on my voicemail, as I may not be able to immediately respond to your concerns. The Multnomah County Crisis Line (24-hour) can be reached at 503-988-4888. The Washington County Crisis Line (24-hour) can be reached at 503-291-9111.

**FEES AND BILLING** Payment is due at the time of service, unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage which requires another arrangement. If you are using your insurance, you are responsible for payments or insurance co-pay at the time of each appointment. Brief phone calls (around 5 minutes) are not billed, but longer calls are charged at the usual contracted rate. I use a billing service and will share limited information (typically identifying information, diagnosis, and what procedure we did together) with my billing agent so that you or your insurance company can be billed appropriately. If an account is significantly past due and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I may use legal means to secure payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. In most collection situations, the only information released regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due. You are ultimately responsible for meeting the financial obligation of your bill.

**INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT** In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have Medicare or a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. My billing agent will fill out forms, and we will provide you with whatever assistance we can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. Most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries. This information will become part of the insurance company files. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it.