



## **Provider-Client Service Agreement**

This document contains important information about \*New Beginnings Counseling Center's (NBCC) professional services and business policies. It also contains summary information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law that provides privacy protections and patient rights about the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is very important that you understand them. When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between you and NBCC. You may discuss these documents at any time with your provider.

### **Mental Health Services**

Psychotherapy involves a relationship between people that works, in part, because of clearly defined rights and responsibilities held by each person. As a client, you have rights and responsibilities that are important for you to understand. There are also legal limitations to those rights. Your therapist has corresponding responsibilities to you. These rights and responsibilities are described in the following sections.

Psychotherapy has both benefits and risks. Risks may include experiencing uncomfortable feelings and discussing unpleasant aspects of your life. However, psychotherapy has been shown to have benefits for individuals who undertake it. Therapy often leads to a significant reduction in feelings of distress, increased satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, greater personal awareness and insight, increased skills for managing stress and resolutions to specific problems. But there are no guarantees about what will happen. Psychotherapy requires a very active effort on your part, including work both in and outside of your scheduled appointment time.

Psychotherapy involves an evaluation of your needs, the development of treatment goals, and the creation of an initial treatment plan. You should evaluate this information and make your own assessment about whether you feel comfortable working with your therapist. You are encouraged to ask questions about treatment whenever they arise. Your therapist will be happy to assist you or make a referral to another provider.

### **Appointments**

Appointments are generally 38-52 minutes in duration. After the intake session, most appointments will be scheduled with your provider during the session. A 24-hour notice of cancellation is required. Failure to provide notice may result in a charge of \$35 or the amount of your insurance co-payment (whichever is greater) unless you and your provider agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. Insurance companies do not provide reimbursement for cancelled sessions so you will be responsible for this fee. Appointment information is protected under HIPAA. Your signature on the Consent to Receive Services form indicates your consent to receive appointment reminders in the manner you request on the Client Information page.

### **Professional Fees**

The standard fee for the initial intake is \$185 for doctoral-level providers, and each subsequent session is \$150 each. The standard fee for the initial intake is \$155 for Licensed Professional Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, Clinical Social Workers, and Senior Psychological Examiners, and subsequent sessions are \$125 each. Payment is expected at the beginning of each appointment unless prior arrangements have been made. Returned checks are subject to an additional fee of up to \$25. NBCC reserves the right to use an attorney or collection agency to pursue unpaid bills, and you will be held responsible for any resulting fees.

NBCC reserves the right to charge a prorated hourly amount (based on the standard hourly fee) for professional services outside your scheduled appointment. Services include writing letters or attending meetings or consultations you request, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, or the time required to perform any other additional services you request. You will also be expected to pay for professional time required regarding legal issues.

**Insurance**

NBCC's medical billing specialist will verify coverage before your first session. With your permission, NBCC will assist you to the extent possible in filing claims and ascertaining information about your coverage, but you are responsible for knowing your coverage and for notifying NBCC of coverage changes. Your rights regarding the release of information for the purpose of pursuing insurance reimbursement and conducting NBCC business operations is addressed in the NBCC Notice of Privacy Practices. Though NBCC verifies coverage, this does not guarantee payment by your insurance provider. You will be responsible for any additional charges not covered by insurance.

If the provider you see is not a participating provider for your insurance plan, you may request a receipt for you to submit to your insurance company for reimbursement. Please note that not all insurance companies reimburse for out-of-network providers. If you prefer to use a participating provider, NBCC will provide a referral.

**Professional Records**

Providers are required to maintain secure records of the psychological services you receive. Your rights regarding these records are discussed in the NBCC Notice of Privacy Practices.

**Confidentiality**

NBCC's policies regarding confidentiality, as well as other information about your privacy rights, are fully described in the NBCC Notice of Privacy Practices. Upon reviewing this document and the NBCC Notice of Privacy Practices, your signature will be requested stating that you understand the content therein.

**Parents and Minors**

While privacy in therapy is crucial, parental involvement can also be essential. NBCC's policy is not to provide treatment to a child under age 13 unless s/he agrees that the provider can share whatever information is considered necessary with a parent. For children 13 and older, NBCC requests an agreement between the client and the parents allowing the provider to share general information about treatment progress and attendance. Providers generally attempt to work with the child regarding the release of additional information to parents that the counselor considers necessary for treatment. Limits to confidentiality as it relates to safety concerns are addressed in NBCC's Notice of Privacy Practices.

**Contacting Your Provider**

*Phone:* To leave a confidential voicemail for your provider, please call the office of NBCC. Your call will be returned as soon as possible, but please allow up to 48 hours for non-urgent matters. A provider is always on call and may be reached after hours for mental health emergencies. However, if you are unable to reach the provider on call or you feel you are unable to keep yourself safe: 1) contact Parkridge Valley Hospital crisis line (423) 499-2300 or 800-542-9600, 2) go to the nearest emergency room, or 3) call 911 and ask to speak to the mental health worker on call. Your provider will make every attempt to inform you in advance of planned absences.

Electronic communication may put your privacy at risk and can be inconsistent with the law and ethical standards. Consequently, this policy exists to assure you of the security and confidentiality of your treatment.

*Email and Text:* NBCC will employ email and text communication only with your permission, and only for administrative purposes unless otherwise agreed upon. Please do not email or text your provider about clinical matters because these are not secure forms of communication. If you need to discuss a clinical matter with your therapist, please call or wait to discuss it during your scheduled appointment. Please refrain from texting your provider unless other arrangements have been made.

*Social Media:* Your provider will not communicate with clients via social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. In addition, if your provider discovers that s/he accidentally established an online relationship with you, s/he will cancel that relationship unless it appears that doing so could jeopardize the therapeutic relationship.

\*NBCC refers to New Beginnings Counseling center and its providers.