



Informed Consent to Treatment

Welcome to our practice. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at your next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and Weber Psychological.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES - THERAPY

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the treating clinician and patient, and the particular problems which led to therapy. There are many different methods we may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy 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, psychotherapy has also 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.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation period, your clinician will be able to offer you some first impressions of what your work will include, and a preliminary treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable continuing the therapeutic relationship. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about our procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, we will be happy to provide contact information for other mental health professionals

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES - DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS / EVALUATIONS

Diagnostic evaluations can include psychological testing, neuropsychological testing, neurodevelopmental assessments, and behavioral assessments. Individuals may voluntarily elect to complete an evaluation or these evaluations may be required or recommended by other treating practitioners. In most cases, these comprehensive evaluations require a time commitment from all parties involved. The evaluation process can vary from person to person and is contingent on several factors, including:

1. What is the referral concern?
2. Is this evaluation required for participation or consideration in another program?
3. What will the results of this evaluation be used for?

It is not uncommon for the assessing psychologist to request collateral information from other treating practitioners. In the event you do not wish for Weber Psychological to disclose certain information to your referring provider, please speak with your evaluator about these concerns prior to the start of the evaluation.

Evaluation appointments are offered Monday through Friday in the morning hours only (9:00am - 1:00pm). It is up to the client to ensure that they have adequate time for travel and testing. A letter of excusal from your evaluator can be provided to you at the end of your testing appointment(s), if requested, for work or school. Testing is typically conducted over the course of multiple sessions, to ensure the most accurate and reliable data. Please plan on having a minimum of (3) sessions as part of your evaluation. When additional testing appointments are required, your provider will notify you and schedule these, at your convenience. Most evaluations are conducted in-person at our Orefield location. If a virtual appointment is required, please speak with your evaluator to determine the best course of action.

The areas that the evaluation MAY cover (but not always, due to the main focus of testing) include:

1. Cognitive/Academic/Educational – How is the individual performing in school/work? Are there certain areas in which the person shows impairment? Are there potential processing disorders or learning disabilities that would benefit from accommodations within the current setting?
2. Socioemotional – How does the person relate to the social world around them... and how do they cope with this world. Do they respond to their environment in socially appropriate or normative ways?
3. Developmental/Adaptive – What are the person's daily living skills? What can they do independently? What do they struggle with, that perhaps a more independent person of similar age might be proficient with?
4. Behavioral – How does the person respond to typical situations? Do they get unreasonably angry, do they cry or laugh inappropriately?
5. Mood/Personality – Assesses for depression, anxiety, egocentrism, faulty perceptions, poor insight and judgment, etc.
6. Neuropsychological – Assesses for possible traumatic brain injury, impairments, comorbid conditions, and other neurological functions that may get overlooked during a routine psychological evaluation.

MEETINGS

For psychotherapy, we normally conduct an evaluation period that will last anywhere from 2 to 5 sessions. During this time, we can both decide if your therapist is the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is continued, appointments are typically scheduled for (1) 50-minute session, (one appointment slot of 50 minutes' duration) at a time we agree on, although we will discuss the frequency during the evaluation period, as some individuals may choose to have a greater frequency in the beginning of treatment. Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for this time unless you provide 24-hours advance notice of cancellation (unless it is agreed upon that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control).

PROFESSIONAL FEES

The hourly fee is \$200. In addition to therapy appointments, this standard hourly charge is also applied towards other professional services you may need. Other services can include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of us. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require our participation, you will be expected to pay for your clinician's professional time. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, Weber Psychological charges \$250 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless agreed upon otherwise, or unless you have insurance coverage which requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, Weber Psychological may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, Weber Psychological has the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or utilizing small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information released regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

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 a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. Weber Psychological will complete all claims and insurance reimbursement forms for policies that are in-network. We will furthermore provide you with assistance, when possible, in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of our fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Weber Psychological will provide you with whatever information we have, based on our experience, and we will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company.

Due to the rising costs of healthcare, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. “Managed Health Care” plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person’s usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. Some managed-care plans will not allow us to provide services to you once your benefits end. If this is the case, Weber Psychological will do our best to find alternate options for another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to **allow** Weber Psychological to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes your clinician will be asked to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files and is often stored electronically. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, Weber Psychological has no control once your information is collected by the insurance companies. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information database. Weber Psychological can provide you with a copy of any report that is submitted, if requested. ***We understand that by using your insurance, certain PHI may be provided to them. Weber Psychological will try to keep all shared personal information limited to the minimum necessary.***

Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end our sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for services yourself to avoid the problems described above [unless prohibited by contract].

CONTACTING US

Your clinician is not often immediately available by telephone. While they are usually in the office between 9 AM and 5 PM, it is unlikely that you will reach them when they are in session. The same privacy and attention is offered to you at your sessions. When unavailable, Weber Psychological utilizes an answering machine/voice mail. Our clinicians will make every effort to return your call on the same day it was received, with the exception of weekends and holidays. The best way of contacting your clinician is through email, as it is checked more frequently, and therapists can respond during

off hours. If you are difficult to reach, please inform us of optimal times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach your therapist and feel that you can't wait for a return call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of the mental health profession require that we keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or Weber Psychological can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, it is recommended that you review them with your clinician so that you may openly discuss the contents. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

MINORS

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parent(s) the right to examine your treatment records. It is our policy at Weber Psychological to request an agreement from parents revoking casual access to their minor children's records. If they agree, Weber Psychological will only provide them with general information about our work together, unless it is determined by your clinician that there is a high risk of harm (to self or others). In this case, your clinician will notify parents regarding any concerns. Before offering any information about our clients, therapists discuss the matter with the client first, when possible, and do their best to handle any objections offered.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist is protected by law, and we can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. There are a few exceptions to this rule:

- In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent your clinician from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order your clinician's testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.
- There are some situations in which your therapist is legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if this action involves revealing some information about a patient's treatment. For example, if the therapist believes that a child is being abused, they must file a report with the appropriate state agency.
- If a therapist believes that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another, they are required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If the patient threatens to harm himself/herself, the therapist may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. These situations have rarely occurred in our clinical practice. If a similar situation occurs, we make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.
- We may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, your clinician will make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of their patient. The consultant is also legally

bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, Weber Psychological will not inform you about these consultations unless they affect our clinical work together.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at your next meeting.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

Signature

Printed Name

Date



WEBER
PSYCHOLOGICAL