



OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT

Welcome to the MidAmerican Psychological Institute, P.C. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and note any questions you might have so we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and client, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods we may use to deal with the issues that you hope to address.

Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. Your participation will be the most important component of your therapy. In order for the things we talk about during our sessions to be most successful, you will also have to work on those things in between sessions.

Your therapy may involve some tough issues and hard work, but remember that psychotherapy has been shown to have benefits for people who commit to it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. However, since therapy often includes discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings, like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness, which we will continue to work on in your sessions. There is no real way to anticipate the outcome of your therapy because each client is different and will experience different benefits.

If you have questions about our procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, we will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

SESSIONS

Your first two to four sessions with your therapist will include an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, he or she will be able to offer you some first impressions of what your work may include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy.

You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether or not you feel comfortable working with that particular therapist. Since therapy involves a large commitment of time, energy and money, you should be careful about the therapist you select. MidAmerican Psychological Institute, P.C. is committed to providing you with quality care that will best work for you, and this requires your continued feedback.

If psychotherapy is begun, we will usually schedule one 45-minute session (one "appointment hour" of 45 minutes duration plus documentation time) per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Home based therapy sessions last 45 minutes.

PHONE APPOINTMENTS

You always have the option of having your appointment by phone if you cannot come in for some reason (e.g., due to illness or you are going to be out of town). Generally, people find it most satisfying to meet in person, yet they find phone contact preferable to the absence of having an appointment that week. Sometimes, if people are running late, they like to begin their appointment by phone so as not to lose any of their appointment time, and then continue in person once they arrive. Your therapist will always be available for the length of the session; once you have scheduled a time. The professional fees which are noted below apply to phone appointments and patients are responsible for the appropriate fee.

CANCELLING APPOINTMENTS

If you cannot come in for an appointment and cannot reschedule or have your appointment by phone, there is a 48 hour cancellation policy. Specifically, you will be responsible for the appointment fee if you do not provide 48 hours cancellation notice. Late cancellations frequently preclude making the appointment available to another client. You should be aware that most insurance companies will not reimburse patients for fees associated with cancelled appointments. By signing this Outpatient Service Agreement, you have agreed to this specific policy for any missed or late cancelled appointments.

LATE ARRIVALS

Your therapist will begin your therapy time usually within 5 minutes of the scheduled time. When the therapist is running a few minutes late, your therapy time will be extended the same amount of time to give you the entire 45 minutes. If you come in late to your appointment, we cannot, as a general rule, delay the start time of the session.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

The hourly rate you will be charged is for one 45-minute appointment and the attending documentation time. The fee for each psychotherapy session is \$____. The first session, the Diagnostic Interview, is billed at \$____ per session. Home-based or off site therapy is \$____ per session. See "Assessments" section for fees for psychological evaluations.

In addition to your regular appointments, your care may require additional professional services. The same hourly rate will apply to these services, although we will break down the hourly cost if we work for periods of less than one hour. These other services may 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 services you may request of your therapist.

If you become involved in legal proceedings that require the participation of any MidAmerican Psychological Institute, P.C. professionals, if the fees are not paid by the attorneys, you will be billed for their professional time, even if said professionals are called to testify by another party. Because of the complexity of legal involvement, the hourly rate will be \$350 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding. Court related services include talking with attorneys, preparing documents, depositions, travel time, preparation for testimony and court appearances. Charges for court related services are not covered by insurance.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

Full payment for each session, or in the case of insurance coverage, the required co-payment, is due at the time of service. MidAmerican Psychological Institute accepts personal checks and cash. There is an additional \$75.00 fee for checks returned due to insufficient funds. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed upon when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, we may be willing to negotiate a temporary fee adjustment or payment installment plan. An account that has not been paid for more than 60 days without payment arrangements being made will be eligible for collection proceedings. This may involve legal action, hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. There is a 1.5% monthly late charge assessed on all balances after 60 days past due. Also, the undersign agrees to pay a collection fee of 25% of the total owed when sent to collection, all attorney fees and court costs incurred by the creditor. If legal action or collection assistance is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information we release regarding a client's treatment is his or 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 help pay for your treatment.

If you have health insurance coverage, it will usually provide some benefits for mental health treatment. You should carefully read the section in your insurance booklet about these benefits. If you have any questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator to find out exactly what mental health services your insurance coverage provides.

Ultimately, you, not your insurance company, are responsible for full payment of our fees, therefore we will provide you with whatever assistance we can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled. We will help fill out the necessary forms and provide you with whatever information we can based on our experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, we will be willing to call the company on your behalf

In recent years, insurance benefits have become increasingly more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. Managed Health Care plans such as 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 their approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some clients feel that they need additional services after insurance benefits end. If this is the case, we can discuss an out-of-pocket fee arrangement.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize your mental health professional to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes it is necessary to provide the insurance company with additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries or, in rare cases, copies of the entire record. This information will become part of the insurance company's files and may be stored in a computer. Although all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, MidAmerican Psychological Institute, P.C. has no control over their practice once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national information databank. You have the right to contact your insurance company to find out more about their policies.

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 to you 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 our services yourself to avoid the problems described above.

CONTACTING US

Often, your therapist may not be immediately available by telephone. When unavailable, our telephone is answered by voice mail that is checked frequently for messages. If you are difficult to reach, please leave information about the best time or way to contact you. If your therapist will be unavailable for an extended time, he or she will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary. We will make every effort to return your call within 24 hours of the time it was placed, with the exception of weekends and holidays.

If you are unable to reach your therapist and feel that you are experiencing an emergency, you should contact the nearest emergency room and ask for the mental health specialist on call, or go to the nearest emergency room.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of our profession require that MidAmerican Psychological Institute, P.C. keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. Therefore, if you wish to see your records, we recommend that you review them in conjunction with your therapist so that you can discuss the contents together and so that he or she can answer any questions you may have. Clients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests. You will be charged \$1.00 per page for copying your clinical treatment record.

MINORS

Patients under 12 years of age and their parents (or legal guardians) should be aware that the law allows parents to examine their child's treatment records. When children between the ages of 12 and 18 are seen alone, the content of these sessions is kept confidential; between therapist and child. Parents of children between 12 and 18 years of age cannot examine their child's records unless their child consents or unless the therapist finds no compelling reason for denying them access to those records. Parents of children between 12 and 18 years of age are entitled to information concerning their child's current physical and mental condition, diagnosis, treatment needs, services provided and services needed. If the therapist believes that the child is in imminent risk of harming himself/herself, or others, the therapist will notify the parents (or legal guardian) of this concern. Before giving the parents any information, the therapist will (if possible) discuss the matter with the child, and the therapist will try and handle any objections the child may have with what the therapist is prepared to discuss with the parents. Our policy is that both parents be notified that their child is in therapy and both parents consent to therapy for the child.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general the privacy of all communications between a client and a therapist is protected by law. MidAmerican Psychological Institute, P.C. will only release information to others about you and our work together if we have your written permission. However, please note that there are occasional exceptions to this policy.

In most legal proceedings, a client may have the right to prevent us from providing any information about his or her treatment. In some proceedings especially those involving child custody, and/or, those in which a client's emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order our testimony and/or disclosure of your clinical treatment records if he or she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which we are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if it is necessary to reveal some information about a client's treatment. For instance, if we believe that a child, elderly person or disabled person is being abused, we are required to file a report with the appropriate state agency.

If we believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, we are required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm him or herself, we may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him or her or to contact family members or others who can provide protection.

These situations have rarely occurred in our practice. If a situation should arise, we will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

Our therapists may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, we make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of the client. The consulted professional is also legally bound to keep any information we share with them confidential.

This written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems. However, you may consider discussing these exceptions with separate legal counsel, as the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex and are subject to change. MidAmerican Psychological Institute, P.C. can not presume to provide accurate legal advice.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessment results and reports are considered confidential information. Full payment for the psychological report is due during the first assessment visit. The fee for the current assessment including the report and a summary meeting is billed on an hourly rate. The hourly rate is \$150 including report writing and summary meetings. Minimum fee for an intellectual and behavioral assessment is \$450. Advocacy services begin at \$125 per hour. Copies, paperwork, and additional time are also billable.

QUESTIONS

If during the course of therapy, you have questions about the nature of your therapy or about your billing statement, please ask.

A FINAL WORD

The counseling relationship is a very personal and individualized partnership. We want to know what you find helpful and what, if anything, may be getting in the way. We want you to feel free to share with us what we can do to help.

Please ask before signing below if you have any questions about psychotherapy or our office policies. Your signature indicates that you have read this Outpatient Service Contract, and agree to enter therapy under these conditions. Your signature below indicates that you are making an informed choice to consent to therapy and understand and accept the terms of this agreement.

Client's Name: _____
(Please print)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Co-client or guardian if under age 18)

Guardian's Name: _____
(Please print)