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## Practice Policies

This memo describes my clinic policies. A clear understanding of these arrangements can make our work together far more rewarding. If anything seems confusing or unfair, feel free to discuss your concerns with me at the initial evaluation. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have and discuss your concerns.

Please place a checkmark in the column to the right of each item to indicate whether you understand and agree with it. If you feel uncertain or confused, please indicate "Needs discussion." Thank you!

		I agree	I do not agree	Needs discussion
The initial evaluation	The initial appointment is a 110-minute session. It is for consultation and not for treatment. During this session, we will review your history and identify the specific problems with which you'd like some help. If I believe that I have the tools to help you, I will share my treatment recommendations with you. These recommendations will almost always include a combination of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and homework assignments outside of session. I may or may not recommend a new medication or a change to your current medications. If you choose not to pursue the sort of treatment that I recommend, or if I believe that I don't have the tools to help you, you will not become my patient and will be free to pursue other treatment options. If you choose to see another provider, I would be happy to provide a copy of my evaluation to that provider, if you give me your written permission to do so.			
Follow-up appointments	Follow-up appointments are typically at least 55-minute sessions, to allow sufficient time for psychotherapy, but 80- or 110- minute sessions may sometimes be more appropriate. Longer sessions are more efficient than shorter sessions and can lead to more rapid recovery, so I encourage you to schedule them when possible. For booster sessions after an initial course of psychotherapy, 25 minutes may occasionally be sufficient.			
Telephone appointments	Telephone appointments will be billed at the same rates as in-person sessions. Please note that many insurance companies do not reimburse for telephone appointments.			
Duration of therapy	This varies greatly from person to person. Mild problems may require only a few sessions, whereas more severe problems may require months of hard, persistent work.			

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Late appointments, missed appointments, and cancellations	If you are late for an appointment, I will see you for the remainder of your scheduled time and charge you the full fee for that scheduled time. If you are unable to keep an appointment, please notify me at least one full business day prior to your scheduled appointment; otherwise, unless I am able to fill the slot that was reserved for you, I will charge you the full fee for that time.			
Billing	If you don't have Medicare, or if you have a Medicare copay, you will pay for each session at that session. You may pay by check, cash, or credit card; but please note that there is a \$10 fee for use of a credit card. I can provide you with a receipt after each session. If friends or family members are paying for your treatment, they can pay you directly, so that you can pay me at each session.			
Insurance policies	Unless you have Medicare, it will be your responsibility to submit forms to your insurance company for reimbursement. If your insurance company wants me to complete any forms about the treatment, I will be happy to do so. If you have Medicare, I will bill Medicare directly. Please bring a copy of your insurance card to the first appointment, along with a signed copy of the "Lifetime Signature on File Form." Please also let me know immediately if there is any change to your policy ID or coverage.			
Emergency phone calls	In certain cases, you may need to call me if a problem develops between sessions. For example, if you're experiencing a medication reaction or suddenly feel suicidal, I want you to call me right away. However, I hope you will limit phone calls to issues that cannot wait until our next appointment, because, as you can imagine, I also need time to unwind. This allows me to be at my very best when I see you. If you believe you are having a life-threatening emergency and are unable to contact me or the psychiatrist covering for me for any reason, you should go to the emergency room or call 911.			
E-mail and text correspondence	E-mail and texts are not secure, so if you choose to communicate with me by e-mail or texts, your information could potentially be accessed by others. In addition, I do not check my e-mail or texts regularly, so e-mail and texts should be used only as a means of communicating with me about non-urgent matters, such as for scheduling appointments. Please convey clinical information to me in person or by phone only.			

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Patient confidentiality	<p>I will not provide information about your treatment to others without your permission. Even if a family member calls to inquire about you, I cannot reveal that you are my patient, unless you give me permission to speak with them. Even then, my discussions with any third party would be limited to the specific topics you have given me permission to discuss. For this reason, if you would like me to speak with a relative, it is often preferable that we all meet together during a regular appointment.</p> <p>If anyone provides me with information about you, via phone call or letter, I will share that information with you. In other words, I will not keep any secrets from you or withhold any information from you. However, there are a few areas where I may be required by law to violate your confidentiality. These include imminent threats of suicide, violence, or homicide, as well as any pattern of child abuse or neglect. Please see below for more details.</p>			
Suicidal feelings	<p>Most depressed individuals struggle with suicidal thoughts and urges from time to time. I will monitor for suicidal thoughts at each therapy session. If they are present, we can discuss them in more detail. If at any time you become actively suicidal (meaning that you actually intend to commit suicide), I will likely recommend hospitalization.</p> <p>If you intend to commit suicide but are not willing to be hospitalized voluntarily, then I am required by law to contact family members or the police to arrange an immediate evaluation for involuntary hospitalization. I'd be happy to discuss this or any policy with you in person and answer any questions you may have about it.</p>			
Violent feelings	<p>Feelings of anger, including violent fantasies, are also common, and you can explore these feelings during therapy sessions. However, if you threaten to kill or do something violent to another person, and I feel that your threat is credible, I will be required by law to contact the authorities and to warn the potential victim.</p>			
Child abuse or neglect	<p>If I discover that you are abusing or neglecting a child or have been the victim of child abuse or neglect, I will be required by law to report the problem to the authorities.</p>			
Gifts	<p>I do not accept gifts from patients or family members of patients, as this is considered an ethics violation.</p>			
Business dealings	<p>I do not get involved in any business dealings with patients, as this is considered an ethics violation.</p>			

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Psychotherapy homework	I will ask you to do homework, including written assignments, between sessions. These assignments can greatly enhance your understanding and speed your recovery. Generally, 10 to 20 minutes per day will be sufficient. We will review your psychotherapy homework together during sessions. If you are not willing to do psychotherapy homework, or if you feel that you cannot do the homework for any reason, please let me know at the initial evaluation.			
Relapse prevention	<p>Therapy has two goals: feeling better and getting better. Feeling better means that you overcome the problems that brought you into therapy. If you're suffering from depression or panic attacks, feeling better means that the depression and panic attacks will disappear. Feeling better is tremendously important!</p> <p>Getting better means that you learn the tools to deal with any emotional or relationship problems that might emerge in the future. This is vitally important, because no one can be happy forever. We all run into bumps in the road from time to time; but if you know how to deal with painful mood swings or conflicts with other people, they won't be such a threat or a problem.</p> <p>Before we terminate, I'll need at least one final session so that I can teach you some relapse prevention techniques and review our work together. Then, if you ever need a tune-up in the future, you'd be welcome to return so that we can try to nip the problem in the bud right away. In most cases, only a few sessions will be required to overcome a relapse, especially if we've done good work together initially.</p>			
HIPAA	Please indicate whether you have received and reviewed my clinic's <i>Notice of Privacy Practices</i> .			

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_