



Informed Consent

Welcome:

Welcome! I want to applaud you for taking the first step to better your situation, and for taking care of yourself. Did you know that, even though approximately 40 million people have been diagnosed with anxiety disorders in the USA, only a third of them actually seek out and receive treatment? Also, although 1 in every 10 people are diagnosed with depression, it is estimated that less than 20% of those suffering are receiving treatment. What does that mean? It means that you are not alone in your pain and suffering, and that help is available to you. It also means that you are a proactive, determined person, who is taking charge of your life. For that, I say bravo!

Goals of Counseling:

Counseling can have one or many goals. We will work together in defining your goal(s) and in time we can add new ones, change already existing ones, and celebrate every one that you complete! Goals can be differentiated between long term and short term goals. For example, long term goals could include improving the quality of your life, while short terms goals may focus on lowering the frequency and duration of panic attacks.

Risks/Benefits:

Yes, there are risks and benefits that can be associated with counseling. As counseling is an intense and personal process, it can bring about old memories, feelings, and at times thoughts that are unpleasant and difficult. Please know that at times, in order to make progress and move forward, we will have to revisit your past. Also, be aware that counseling might not work for you. Counseling requires very active effort on your part. In order to reach the maximum benefits of counseling, you will have to work on things we discuss outside of session. Know that counseling brings many benefits. Counseling can help

you reduce, minimize, or perhaps even eliminate symptoms of a diagnosis. Counseling can help you improve the quality of your life and relationships, as well as it can help you gain new, more effective coping skills.

Appointments:

Sessions are 50 minutes long and occur once per week upon our agreed upon time. However, if you need additional session time and require more frequency, we can arrange that. Again, if you don't require weekly sessions, we can arrange to meet bi-weekly or monthly. In summary, the frequency and duration of individual therapy sessions depends upon your needs. I do ask you to be timely, and to cancel in a timely manner (24 hours in advance). If you miss a session without cancelling, you might be required to pay for the session (unless we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control). Please know that insurance companies do not pay for cancelled sessions, thus you will be responsible to pay for the cancellation fee. Finally, you are responsible for coming to a scheduled session on time; if you are late, your appointment will still end on time.

Confidentiality:

I will make every effort to keep your personal information private. Though I promise to keep your personal information confidential, there are laws that require me, your counselor, to breach that confidentiality. Counselors are required by law to breach confidentiality when a client poses a risk to themselves or others, in case of child abuse, and in case of elder abuse. Also, if I, your counselor, receive a subpoena, I might be required to release some information. If this is to occur, I, your counselor, will consult with other professionals and limit the release to only what is necessary by law. On the other hand, if you wish to have your information released, you will be required to sign consent form before I will do so.

You may choose to use technology for the counseling sessions (Skype, e-mail, Facetime, telephone, text). Due to the nature of on-line counseling, there is always a possibility that an unauthorized person might attempt to discover your personal information. I, your counselor, will take every precaution to safeguard your information, but cannot guarantee that an unauthorized access to electronic communication could not occur.

Record Keeping:

I, your counselor, will keep records of your counseling sessions, psycho-social assessment, and treatment plan. These records are kept to ensure direction to your sessions and continuity of services. They will not be shared with the respect to limits of confidentiality, discussed previously. If you wish to have your record released, you are required to sign a release of information which specifies what information will be released and to whom.

Fee:

The fee for counseling sessions is \$95 per session. The fee for online counseling (through breakthrough.com) is \$90 per session. You are responsible for paying at the time of the session. Payments must be made by cash or check. If you refuse to pay your debt, I reserve the right to use an attorney or collection agency to secure the payment. Please know that fees are non-negotiable.

If you have health insurance, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. You are responsible for knowing your coverage and for letting me know if/when your coverage changes. You should also know that most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes, I have to provide additional clinical information which will then become a part of the insurance company files. By signing this agreement, you agree that I can provide requested information to your carrier if you elect/plan to pay with insurance.

Contacting me:

I am often not immediately available by telephone. I do not answer my phone when I am in session or otherwise unavailable. At these times, you may leave a message on my confidential voice mail and your call will be returned as soon as possible. If you have a crisis, an emergency, or cannot wait for return call, please go to your local hospital or call 911.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and this Agreement and agree to its terms.

Client signature

Date