

## Practice Policies

Calming Communities, PLLC

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### PRACTICE POLICIES

#### APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Please remember to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance. You will be responsible for the entire fee if cancellation is less than 24 hours.

The standard meeting time for psychotherapy is 45-minutes. It is up to you, however, to determine the length of time of your sessions. Requests to change the 45-minute session needs to be discussed with the therapist in order for time to be scheduled in advance.

A \$35.00 service charge will be charged for any checks returned or credit card charges that are challenged for any reason.

Cancellations and re-scheduled session will be subject to a full charge if NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time.

#### TELEPHONE ACCESSIBILITY

If you need to contact me between sessions, please leave a message on my voice mail or send me an e-mail to schedule a time for a phone call. Therapists are often not immediately available; however, your therapist will attempt to return your call within 48 hours. Please note that face- to-face sessions are highly preferable to phone sessions. However, in the event that you are out of town, sick or need additional support, phone sessions are available. If a true emergency situation arises, please call 911 or any local emergency room.

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATION** Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, your therapist does not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). We believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

#### ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Your therapist and the agency cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages. If you prefer to communicate via email or text messaging for issues regarding scheduling or cancellations, your therapist will do so. While your therapist may try to return messages in a timely manner, your therapist cannot guarantee immediate response and request that you do not use these methods of communication to discuss therapeutic content and/or request assistance for emergencies.

#### MINORS

If you are a minor, your parents may be legally entitled to some information about your therapy. Your therapist will discuss with you and your parents what information is appropriate for them to receive and which issues are more appropriately kept confidential.

## **TERMINATION**

Ending relationships can be difficult. Therefore, it is important to have a termination process in order to achieve some closure. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the treatment. Your therapist may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you and a termination process if your therapist determine that the psychotherapy is not being effectively used or if you are in default on payment. Your therapist will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the reasons and purpose of terminating. If therapy is terminated for any reason or you request another therapist, your therapist will provide you with a list of qualified psychotherapists to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source.

Should you fail to schedule an appointment for three consecutive weeks, unless other arrangements have been made in advance, for legal and ethical reasons, your therapist must consider the professional relationship discontinued.

## **PAYMENT**

Payment is required at the time of service. Calming Communities, PLLC requires a credit card on file for payment and for missed appointments. Please notify your therapist if you would like to use another form of payment or update your card on file. You are also able to make these changes on the billing platform (Headway or Mentaya).

Minors must also have a guardian's card on file that will be charged at the time of service. We are unable to accommodate alternating or splitting payments. If multiple guardians will be covering the cost of services, arrangements must be made amongst yourselves for reimbursement of the appropriate amount.

If a parent session is conducted with the client's guardians this will be charged and documented under the client's medical file. Therefore, any statements or actions taken by any guardian are accessible to the other guardians as part of the medical file and privacy or confidentiality from other guardians is not available. In addition, services requested or provided for parents with regard to the minor's therapy will be billed as services for the minor's therapy and therefore charged to the card on file.

If a payment declines or is challenged. The balance accrued must be paid before your therapist can see you for another session. If you have a recurring appointment, but are unable to pay the balance, please remember to cancel the recurrence so that a balance does not continue to accrue through late cancellations or no shows.

## **INSURANCE**

Calming Communities, PLLC does have clinicians who accept insurance plans. Not all plans are accepted and not all clinicians take insurance. Co-payments must be made at the time of service.

Calming Communities, PLLC will do their best to check your benefits before your first appointment. Please be aware we are not responsible for inaccuracies reported by your insurance either to you or to us at the time we check coverage. The service fee will be negotiated between your insurance and your therapist, but co-pays and co-insurance are determined by your plan and have no input from Calming Communities or your therapist. Your insurance coverage is an agreement between you and your insurance, and any balance not paid by the insurance will be your responsibility.

Typically, insurance takes anywhere from two weeks to 6 months to pay provider claims. If at the time insurance pays, there is an addition co-pay or co-insurance balance you are responsible for paying that balance. You will be notified of the balance as soon as we are aware and will have 30 days to either pay the balance or establish a payment plan.

Periodically, insurance plans change. It is your responsibility to notify your therapist if your insurance has changed. Please be aware that delays in notifying your provider could result in high balances due to insurance denials. You will be responsible for paying these balances, so it is important to notify your therapy as soon as possible of any changes.

## **CAMERA & RECORDING POLICIES**

There is no audio or video recording of any kind allowed in the Calming Communities, PLLC suite or on the Calming Communities, PLLC electronic platforms. The only exceptions to this prohibition are recordings obtained through the Calming Communities, PLLC installed cameras.

Calming Communities, PLLC has two types of cameras installed three Security Cameras and two Therapeutic Cameras.

Security Cameras store recordings only when motion is in the area, through a secure encrypted wifi, onto a HIPAA compliant drive and are automatically erased after 14 days. These videos are not part of any medical record and will not be released without a court order. These recordings are not viewed unless a criminal or safety incident has occurred and exist for the sole purpose of keeping staff and clients safe.

Therapeutic Cameras are installed in the shared playroom and in one private office. Neither is recording at any time unless you have given specific consent for a single session of therapy to be recorded for a specific therapeutic or supervisory purpose. If this were to occur your therapist would discuss the purpose of recording, all who may view the recording, storage and deletion of the recording, and obtain a written informed consent for recording from you at that time.

Anyone who records anything on-site or on the electronic platforms without explicit, written permission of all individuals on the recording and the owner of Calming Communities, PLLC will be immediately discharged from services and may be pursued with civil action.

## **COMPLAINTS**

**CONSUMER COMPLAINTS:** The Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council investigates and prosecutes professional misconduct committed by marriage and family therapists, professional counselors, psychologists, psychological associates, social workers, and licensed specialists in school psychology. Although not every complaint against or dispute with a licensee involves professional misconduct, the Executive Council will provide you with information about how to file a complaint.

Please call 1-800-821-3205 for more information.

BY SIGNING BELOW I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.