



## Omaha Psychotherapy

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### **Policies and Service Agreement**

Congratulations on taking the important step to pursue therapy with Omaha Psychotherapy. We look forward to working together. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and let your provider know if you have any questions or concerns.

### **Therapy and Counseling Services**

The practices of therapy and counseling vary depending on the needs, goals and wants of each client. There are many different theories and interventions your provider may use to address the things that you hope to address in treatment. Omaha Psychotherapy looks at therapy as a relationship between the therapist and the client built on mutual trust and respect. Both parties work hard during this process, and honor the commitment brought to therapy.

Psychotherapy can have both benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience temporary uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. For some people, when starting therapy, there may be feelings of anxiety and distress as upsetting memories are discussed. You might feel worse before you start to feel better. Psychotherapy has been shown to have significant and lasting benefits for those who commit to the process. Therapy often leads to better relationships, clarified and strengthened boundaries, solutions to specific problems, and significant reduction in feelings of distress. While there are no guarantees of what you will experience, many people who commit to participating in therapy on a consistent basis for some time report improvement in quality of life.

Omaha Psychotherapy does not have a cookie cutter approach to therapy. We truly believe that everyone is an individual who has independent needs and wants. One client's treatment may look a little different from another's. This may apply to frequency of sessions, length of sessions, or interventions used during sessions. Typically, people meet with a therapist once a week for about an hour, but sometimes people like to meet more or less often.

During the first session or two, we will evaluate your needs and goals and come up with a plan for treatment. During this early phase of treatment, you will evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with your therapist. Therapy involves a large commitment of time and energy, so it's important that you feel comfortable with the therapist you select. If you have questions about any of the techniques or interventions, your therapist will be happy to discuss these as they arise. Above all, Omaha Psychotherapy wants all clients to feel safe and as comfortable as possible with the therapy process.

You may have been referred to a specific therapist at Omaha Psychotherapy, or you may have requested to work with a particular provider. Omaha Psychotherapy will make every effort to make sure you can work with the provider you choose. If that provider is full

and/or not available, Omaha Psychotherapy will let you know and you'll be given the option to work with another provider.

## **Sessions and Cancellations**

Typically, clients will schedule one 60-minute (1 hour) session per week at a regular time agreed upon, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for the session unless you provide 24 hours of advance notice of cancellation. Omaha Psychotherapy does not charge if you miss an appointment because of illness (yourself or your child) as long as you let the office know you won't make it the day of the appointment. If it is possible, your provider will work with you to find another time to reschedule the appointment.

If you do not contact Omaha Psychotherapy or your provider to cancel a session and don't show for your appointment, a fee of \$75 may be charged. This fee is not typically covered by insurance.

Typically, face-to-face sessions in the office are most effective. In some cases, your therapist may be available to provide in-home services. These may happen for clients who are terminally ill, or for family sessions or extenuating circumstances. Most health insurance plans pay for in-home sessions.

Omaha Psychotherapy providers also work with some clients who don't live in Omaha. In those cases, providers are willing to supplement our face-to-face work with phone or Skype sessions. Health insurance plans do not typically cover these sessions, so clients pay out of pocket. These sessions are charged at \$100 per hour and prorated based on the time used. Although we make every attempt to provide a secure and confidential connection, we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of sessions conducted by phone or over internet.

## **Professional Fees and Payment: *fees may vary by provider.***

Initial Intake and Evaluation Session: \$180

Individual Session: (45-55 minutes): \$150

Individual Session: (65-90 minutes): \$150

Family Session (60-90 minutes): \$150

Group Session (90 minutes): \$50

Phone or Skype Consultation: \$100/hour, prorated for actual call length  
*(Please note: insurance will not authorize payment for any phone or skype sessions)*

Late Cancel or No Show: \$75

Returned Check Fee: \$25

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 that requires another arrangement. If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, Omaha Psychotherapy has the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may include hiring a collection agency.

## **Insurance**

Omaha Psychotherapy accepts private payment from clients who do not wish to access insurance benefits. Check with your provider to find out if your provider is in-network with your insurance policy.

By contracting as a provider, your therapist has a legal contract with insurance companies and bill them directly for their portion of the fee. In many cases, you may also be responsible for a co-pay and/or co-insurance and may have a portion of your policy's deductible to meet so you might still owe a fee for the session. Any portion not covered by insurance is due at the time of your session.

You may also opt to pay directly for services, even if you do have behavioral health coverage through insurance. There are many benefits to paying privately for therapy. Your provider is allowed under HIPAA regulations to refrain from contacting your insurance company regarding your treatment, provided you pay your full session fee out of pocket at the time of each session. If you pay privately, you are also not limited to a specific number of sessions.

If your therapist is not a contracted provider for your insurance company, it may be possible for you to receive partial reimbursement for the fees by working with your therapist on an "out-of-network" basis. You can obtain your out-of-network benefit information from the customer service number on your insurance card. It is also possible that your health insurance policy may only cover medical expenses and not mental healthcare. Regardless of your particular insurance situation, each client is fully responsible for the financial cost of treatment.

In some cases, your insurance company may contact your provider for information to authorize payment. This may include diagnosis, treatment plan, and progress in treatment. In these cases, your therapist will make every effort to provide only brief details and minimal information to satisfy the request.

## **Contact Information**

Your provider will make every effort to be available by phone and e-mail. While providers are in the office Monday through Friday during most regular business hours, we do not answer the phone when with a client. When your provider is unavailable, we ask that you leave a voicemail. Most often, all calls and e-mails will be returned within 24 hours with the exception of weekends and holidays. If it may be difficult for me to reach you, please provide some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach your provider and

feel that you can't wait for your provider to return your call, contact your family physician, call 911 or visit the nearest emergency room. If your provider will be unavailable for an extended time, he or she will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

## **Professional Records**

The laws and standards of our profession require that all providers at Omaha Psychotherapy keep treatment records. These records are kept in a secure and protected electronic format. These records are confidential and only released with your written permission or when mandated by state law or insurance. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or we can prepare a summary for you instead.

Clients will be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent in preparing information requests.

## **Minors**

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is the policy of Omaha Psychotherapy to request an agreement from parents that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, they will be provided only with general information about your therapy, unless your provider feels there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, your provider will notify them of the concern. We will also provide them with a summary of your treatment when it is complete. Before giving them any information, your provider will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do our best to handle any objections you may have with what we are prepared to discuss.

## **Confidentiality**

In general, all communication between the client and the therapist is protected by law, and your provider can only release information about your therapy to others with your written permission. There are a few exceptions, including when information is required in conjunction with a legal proceeding, or if your provider is concerned about your safety or the safety of someone else.

Your therapist may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, the therapist makes every effort to avoid revealing the identity of the patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. More information about confidentiality is provided in the Privacy Policy.

## **The Therapeutic Relationship**

Your provider will treat each client with respect honoring the courage and strength required by the therapy process. If you have any concerns or are not satisfied with the therapy, please share this with your therapist. Your therapist may not be aware if you are unhappy with therapy or are unsure of the direction. We will make every effort to address any complaint

you have and will work to seek mutually agreeable solutions to resolving conflict. If you feel that you have been treated unfairly by any health care professional, including your therapist, please let us know. You may also contact the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services or the local chapter of NASW to receive assistance clarifying your concerns and, if necessary, filing a complaint.

Therapists are prevented by the standards of professional organizations and state licensing boards from having a personal relationship with a client outside of the therapy relationship. This applies to social media as well (please see social media policy for additional information).

## **Termination**

In most cases, there is no predetermined amount of therapy sessions for any one client. Occasionally an insurance company may authorize a limited number of sessions, but in those cases we can apply for extended coverage. We believe that generally, for a client to achieve sustained benefits from therapy, consistent participation in therapy over a longer period of time works best. Most clients work with a provider for a period of several months, and some continue for some years. Other clients present with a specific issue or need that can be addressed in a short time, even in just a few sessions.

Therapy may end for a variety of reasons. Hopefully, we will mutually agree that you have achieved your goals in therapy and engage in a termination process together. If you are dissatisfied with therapy or wish to stop the process before your goals have been achieved, we ask that you provide one session's notice so that we may end the relationship in a respectful manner and so that the therapist may provide additional resources for continued support.

Omaha Psychotherapy does not discriminate against clients because of any of these factors: age, sex, gender, marital/family status, race, culture, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, place of residence, veteran status, physical disability, health status, sexual orientation, or criminal record unrelated to present dangerous behavior.

Please do not hesitate to let your provider know if you have any questions or concerns. We welcome your feedback. We look forward to our relationship and to working together throughout your therapy journey.