

Hope and Meaning

C O U N S E L I N G

Administrative Policy

Our goal is to provide quality individualized psychotherapy in a timely manner. If you reserve time to talk with us, we want to make sure as much of that time as possible is spent on the reason why you want to have a therapy session, not on administrative concerns. For that reason, we have many of our administrative policies listed in this document. Because we can't predict every situation that comes up, there may be times when you have a question that isn't covered in this document. In that event, please send an email and we will respond as soon as we can or bring it up in-session with your therapist.

Cancellation of an Appointment

No-shows and late cancellations interrupt the therapy process by stretching out appointment times and increasing the likelihood that we will forget what we wanted to discuss, or we may have to spend extra time catching up and repeating work that we may have already done before. No-shows and late cancellations also prevent other clients in need from being able to schedule appointments during that timeframe. To respect everyone's therapy process and to be fair to all clients, we have a no-show/late cancellation policy.

A cancellation is late when the appointment is cancelled with less than 24-hour advance notice. A no-show is when a person misses an appointment without any advance notice at all. This means that they do not arrive at a scheduled in-person appointment, they are not present online/on video for a scheduled video session, or they do not answer the phone for a scheduled phone session. If a late cancellation or a no-show occurs, a \$45 fee is assessed, and no future appointments can be scheduled until this fee is paid. Appointments are in high demand, and your timely cancellation will allow another patient access to psychotherapy.

How to Cancel Your Appointment

If you are unable to be present for an appointment, you can call, email or text. For phone calls and text messages, please use the phone number provided to you by your therapist. For emails, please email your therapist directly or use appointments@hopeandmeaning.com

Late/No Show Policy

There is a 15-minute grace period a session. An outreach to client will be attempted by the clinician and documented in the file. Once 15 minutes have passed and no response has been received, the session will be marked as a no show and a \$45 fee will be charged.

Inclement Weather

The policy is to remain open during most periods of inclement weather; however, where extraordinary circumstances warrant, due to weather or other unforeseen business interruption, the company reserves the right to close the facility. During a period of inclement weather, you may contact the office or your clinician directly and discuss options for your session. If a cancellation occurs and it is less than the 24-hour policy notice, there will be a \$45 fee charged.

How Appointments Are Conducted

For in-person sessions: we have office space available for clients at 6926 Old Easton Rd Pipersville, PA 18947.

For phone sessions: We can call, or the client can call at the scheduled time. We will often send a text to the client a few minutes before the session is scheduled to begin to ensure that the client is able to talk now, we call.

For telehealth sessions: This process is very similar to the phone process. We use TherapyNotes as the main platform for online video therapy, and other options can be discussed at the time we schedule the session. At the scheduled time of the session, both of us are expected to be present and available on the platform of our choosing. We ask that all clients consider their comfort level and privacy needs in choosing where they want to be for their session. Many clients will be in their homes; some clients have found private spaces at their jobs as well. We cannot conduct a session with a client who is in a public setting, such as a coffee shop, please remember that as people walk around you, they may overhear your conversation, even if you are using headphones and speaking quietly. We conduct my sessions in an office space where we can ensure that we are alone and that there will be silence and no distractions, but please be aware that when you move into a public setting, you lose the ability to control the outside sounds and distractions you pick up during your session. We can be liable and responsible for ensuring privacy and as few distractions as possible on our end, but we cannot be liable or responsible for privacy and controlling distractions on your end.

Writing, Reports, Phone Calls, etc.

We cannot bill an insurance company for writing letters and reports. If we are not directly working with you at the time of service, then we can't tell an insurance company that we worked with you, and they will not recognize that there is anything for them to pay for. Therefore, we have a separate fee for writing and completing reports as well as phone calls for outside parties. This includes but is not limited to completing FMLA, disability compensation documents, preparing reports for legal purposes, phone calls to outside parties other than your insurance company. We never charge a fee for a phone call to an insurance company because communicating with payers is considered part of the routine work of therapy. However, phone calls to companies that approve or deny FMLA, and disability can be lengthy, and so can the time it takes to write a letter in support of an emotional support animal or a report for a school.

Prior to sending a letter or making a phone call, we will always get your permission in writing. We can write a letter or report privately and give it to you to do as you wish, or we can send it ourselves with your written permission. If we send it ourselves, we will bill you for the shipping/postage if we use FedEx, UPS, or USPS. If we fax it or email it, there is no fee.

Sometimes we have received unsolicited phone calls about clients from people that clients haven't given us permission to talk to. If this happens, we are allowed to receive the information they provide, but we cannot legally tell the caller that we even know your name, let alone that you are a client. If we receive a phone call or email about you, we will not respond without your written permission, and we will notify you immediately that we received the communication, the contents of the communication, and who it was that contacted us. Our clients' privacy is extremely important to us, and we want to protect it as much as we are allowed.

Duty To Warn

As much as we want to protect privacy, there are times when we must disclose information, even without your consent. If you are hurting yourself or someone else or if someone is hurting you, we may have to report it to local or state authorities. We do not report suicidal ideation or self-harm if that happens to be the reason you are seeing us anyway, but if the ideation or the self-harm crosses into having a plan to hurt yourself and possibly die as a result, we are legally bound to notify the police/EMS closest to where you are. If we have reason to suspect child abuse in any case – your own child, or if you are under age 18 and we suspect you are being abused, we are also legally bound to report that to your local children and youth services (CYS). If we ever must call police, EMS or CYS, we try to make sure that we discuss this with clients first and if possible, make a report with them. We don't want anyone to ever feel surprised or betrayed by these reports, but we also need clients to know that this is a legal requirement in all states that we must abide by. Because this is a legal mandate, we never charge a fee for Duty to Warn phone calls.

Payments

If your insurance company is responsible for paying for your session, we communicate directly with them, and you do not have to do anything. Sometimes clients have insurance copays, and this is discussed prior to beginning sessions. We also work with private pay clients who pay us directly with no insurance company involvement. Lastly, some private pay clients have insurance companies that we are not contracted with, and they need to communicate with their own insurance company themselves to get out-of-network (OON) reimbursement. We accept cash, checks and electronic payment services for those who want to use credit and debit cards. For checks, we accept mail payments sent to:

Hope & Meaning Counseling
ATTN: Bonnie Healey LCSW
PO Box 250
6926 Old Easton Rd.
Pipersville, PA 18947

When we receive a payment, we can send a receipt. There is no charge for receipts to be either emailed or mailed. Our receipts will have all our license and tax ID numbers, which your insurance company will require for OON reimbursement.

****All services not covered by insurance are the responsibility of the client for payment****

Fees

We try to keep the fees very simple: it is \$1.00 per minute. For example, if we spend 20 minutes writing a report for Social Security, it is a \$20.00 fee. We have participated by phone for IEP sessions for children; from the time we call in or am called to the time we hang up the phone, it is \$1.00 per minute. There can be other times when a fee is charged for writing, reports, and phone calls, but it is limited to \$1.00 per minute and always discussed in advance. And just to reiterate, there is never a fee for a phone call to an insurance company or a legally required phone call for Duty to Warn purposes.

Philosophy

Therapy should be a conversation that changes you, or your day, or your outlook or your life. Therapy should be exactly what you need it to be, whether it is someone to tell your secrets to, someone to hold you accountable, or someone to remind you of the things you already know. We got into this line of work because we want to be a part of these conversations in life – we love seeing how sometimes the simplest conversations in therapy can turn everything around for someone. Sharing in conversation is one of the greatest gifts and one of the greatest responsibilities we can have as both a therapist and as a fellow human being.

The administrative process isn't part of the conversation, so it isn't our favorite part of therapy, but we must admit therapy can't happen without the administrative process in place, especially when we are working with insurance companies that we are also responsible to. Thank you so much for your patience and understanding with the administrative policy in place, and please let us know immediately if you ever have any questions or comments.

I have read and understood the rights and responsibilities in administrative policy, and I agree to abide by the administrative policy.

Client - Print Name

Client - Signature

Date

Parent if under age 18 - Signature

Date