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## **Office Policies & Patient Agreement**

Welcome to Integrated Psychological Center of Indiana (IPCI). This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and feel free to discuss any questions you might have with your clinician at your next meeting. When you sign the consent to treatment document, it will represent an agreement between you and your clinician.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods your clinician may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. We draw on a number of approaches including, but not limited to, cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, humanistic-existential, family systems, emotionally-focused therapy, and eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR). Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during sessions and at home.

You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with your clinician. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be selective about the therapist you choose. If you have questions about our procedures, please discuss them with your clinician whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, your clinician will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress, but there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

### **MEETINGS:**

The first 2 to 4 sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, your clinician will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. During this time, you and your clinician can both decide if that person the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If you are being seen for couples/relationship therapy, the first session typically occurs between the couple, followed by 1-2 individual sessions with each partner, before resuming conjoint sessions to discuss treatment planning and begin subsequent treatment.

If you are being seen for psychological evaluation, the initial session involves obtaining a thorough history, followed by several multi-hour sessions involving face-to-face test administration, and a feedback session 3-4 weeks later to review evaluation results. The feedback session is scheduled at a later date to provide us with appropriate time to score and interpret test data as well as complete the report. Please note, feedback sessions

will not be scheduled until all necessary forms, including parent and teacher questionnaires, are completed and returned to your clinician. If psychotherapy begins, your clinician will usually schedule one 55-minute session (one appointment hour of 55 minutes duration) per week at a time you and your therapist agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Sessions will need to end promptly in order for the therapist to document the session, return phone calls, etc. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be responsible for paying for it unless you provide **24 hour** advance notice of cancellation. If you are able to reschedule the appointment within the same week, you will not be charged for your missed appointment. Your first late cancellation/no show within one calendar year is not charged, given a variety of circumstances can occur. A second late cancellation/no show within a calendar year is charged at half of the typical session rate, and third and subsequent late cancellations/no shows in a calendar year are charged at the full typical session rate.

**Therapy Relationship:** Developing a collaborative therapeutic relationship is one of the biggest predictors of therapy success. As a result, we at IPCI find it vitally important to ensure the therapeutic relationship is working well with you so that you may feel able to explore concerns and emotions in a supportive environment. Therapy never involves sexual, business, or any other dual relationships that could impair your clinician's objectivity, clinical judgment, therapeutic effectiveness, or could be exploitative in nature. If you have any concerns during the course of therapy, your clinician always invites conversation addressing these issues in more depth.

If you and your clinician determine that it is time for therapy to come to a close, we have found it most helpful to have at least two sessions to process the work done to date, discuss reactions to ending the therapy process, and provide you with any further information and/or referrals that could be helpful to you in the future.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission except under certain conditions.

**When Disclosure is Required or May Be Required by Law:** There are some circumstances where disclosure is required or may be required by law. These include the following:

- 1.) Where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent, or elder abuse or neglect. We are required to report this information to the Indiana Department of Child Services or the Adult Protective Services agencies, depending on the age of the individual at risk.
- 2.) Where a client presents a danger to self. If the patient threatens to harm themselves, we may be obligated to seek hospitalization for them or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.
- 3.) When a client presents a danger to others. If we believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to another person, we are required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient.
- 4.) Duty to report if the patient presents a "serious and present danger to the health of others" under the following conditions: (a) The carrier engages repeatedly in a behavior that has been demonstrated epidemiologically (as defined by rules adopted by the state department under IC 4-22-b) to transmit a dangerous communicable disease or that indicates a careless disregard for the transmission of the disease to others.<sup>1</sup>
- 5.) Disclosure may also be required pursuant to a legal proceeding by or against you. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by your clinician. If we receive a court order to turn over your records, we are required to do so by law.

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<sup>1</sup> IND. CODE ANN. § 16-41-7-1.

No authorization from you is required to release protected health information about you under the following circumstances:

- 1.) For “legitimate business practices” (i.e. submission of claims for payment from third parties; collection of accounts; litigation defense; quality assurance; peer review; scientific, statistical, and educational purposes).
- 2.) Your clinician may consult from time to time with other mental health professionals regarding clients to provide you with the best possible care. Each client's identity remains completely anonymous and other mental health professionals are legally and ethically bound to maintain client confidentiality, just as your clinician is. Unless you specifically state otherwise, your clinician will not tell you about the consultations, unless they believe it is important for your continued work together. If your clinician believes it is important to consult with another mental health professional in a more in-depth nature, they will explicitly discuss this with you and ask you to sign a release of information allowing the clinician to share your information with that individual.
- 3.) In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members, unless otherwise agreed upon. Your clinician uses their clinical judgment when revealing such information. We will not release records to any outside party unless your clinician is authorized to do so by all adult parties who were part of the family therapy, couple therapy or other treatment that involved more than one adult client.

A note about confidentiality in the context of couple’s work: In order to build trust within the couple dyad, it is important that everyone is on the same page. As a result, IPCI has a “no secrets” policy. If one partner informs the clinician of information without their partner present, that information will be available to the other partner.

- 4.) We sometimes have other business professionals in the office to manage the upkeep of the office (cleaning staff, repair workers, etc.). As required by HIPAA, we have a formal business associate contract with these businesses in which they promise to maintain the confidentiality of PHI except as specifically allowed in the contract or otherwise required by law.
- 5.) To a coroner or medical examiner, in the performance of that individual’s duties.
- 6.) If a patient files a complaint or lawsuit against your clinician or IPCI, we may disclose relevant information regarding that patient in order to defend the clinician/practice.
- 7.) If a patient engages, or attempts to engage, in violence against any clinician/employee of IPCI, their property, or the practice in any way, we will disclose this information to the proper authorities. This behavior may also result in automatic discharge from services.
- 8.) You should also be aware that your contract with your health insurance company requires that we provide it with information relevant to the services that provided to you for various purposes. We are required to provide a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes, your clinician is required to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of your entire clinical record. By signing the Consent to Treatment document, you agree that we can provide requested information to your insurance carrier.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that you discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at your next appointment with your clinician. We are happy to discuss these issues with you if you have further questions, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and we are not attorneys. If you request, we will provide you with relevant portions or summaries of the state laws regarding these issues.

#### 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. We will provide them only with general information about our work

together, unless we feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else or there is another safety issue they should know about. In this case, your clinician will notify them of their concern. Your clinician will also provide them with a summary of your treatment when it is complete. Before giving them any information, your clinician will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do their best to handle any objections you may have with what they are prepared to discuss.

### **COMMUNICATION POLICIES**

Phone: Feel free to leave a message on our confidential voicemail if your clinician is unable to answer. We strive to return all phone communication within 48-hour business hours of receiving your message. We are not available outside of office hours. As a result, in the event of an emergency, please dial 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. You can also go directly to psychiatric emergency departments including the following:

St. Vincent's Stress Center  
8401 Harcourt Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46260  
(317) 338-4800

Community Hospital North  
7165 Clearvista Way  
Indianapolis, IN 46256  
(317) 621-5100

Clinicians often are not immediately available by telephone and do not answer the phone when in-session with a patient. If you leave your clinician a message, please inform them of some days and times when you will be available.

Email: We use a HIPAA-compliant, secure email system via Hushmail.com. In order to keep messages encrypted, Hushmail will prompt you to enter a passcode, similar to a password, that you must remember each time you open an encrypted email from your clinician. Please remember your passcode, as there is no ability to reset your password and you will not be able to see the history of content of the email messages with a new passcode. Please note that any clinical information sent via email will be addressed during clinical session times, and all communication sent to your clinician will become a part of your medical record. We use email communication only with your permission and only for administrative purposes, like setting and changing appointments, billing matters and other related issues, unless we have made another agreement.

Social Media Policy: In order to maintain your confidentiality, we do not communicate with, accept "friend requests," or accept requests to follow any of clients on any social media platforms. If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter one of our staff inadvertently. If that occurs, please discuss it with your clinician during your time together. In addition, if we discover that we have accidentally established an online relationship with you, we will cancel that relationship as these types of casual social contacts can create significant security risks for you. We also believe that communications with clients online have a high potential to compromise the professional relationship. IPCI does have professional social media sites online; however, you are under no obligation to "follow" IPCI in any way. It is our utmost priority to ensure your confidentiality is maintained.

Web Searches: We will not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission. We believe that this violates your privacy rights; however, we understand that you might choose to gather information about your clinician in this way. There is a vast amount of information available about individuals on the internet, much of which may be known to that person and some of which may be unknown or inaccurate. If you encounter any information about any IPCI staff through web searches, or in any other fashion, please discuss this with your clinician during your time together so that you can address it and its potential impact on your treatment together.

Recently, a trend has emerged for clients to review their health care provider on various websites. Unfortunately, mental health professionals cannot respond to such comments and related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews of your clinician, IPCI staff, or any professional with whom you are working, please share it with your clinician so you can discuss it and its potential impact on your therapy together.

## FINANCIAL POLICIES

**Fees & Payment:** Payment is due at the time of service unless otherwise approved or unless you have insurance coverage which requires another arrangement. Below is the fee schedule effective December 1, 2019. If our fees are expected to change, we will provide at least 60 days' notice to you:

### Rates:

- 55-minute intake: \$210
- 55-minute therapy session (53-60 minutes): \$190
- 45-minute therapy session (38-52 minutes): \$145
- 75-minute therapy session: \$230
- Psychological/Psychoeducational testing:
  - \$2500 for a full evaluation (including intake, testing time, scoring, interpretation, report writing, and feedback session) [Does not apply to legal/forensic evaluations]
  - or—
  - \$200/hour for other evaluations that do not require a full, comprehensive evaluation
  - For fee-for-service evaluations: Payment is due in full at the end of your first appointment in order for the remaining testing appointments to be scheduled. If you cancel an assessment appointment with less than **48-hour** notice, you will be charged. Please refer to the “Late Cancellations and No-Shows” section for more information.

### Post-doctoral Resident Rates:

- 55-minute intake: \$150
- 55-minute therapy session (53-60 minutes): \$130
- 45-minute therapy session (38-52 minutes): \$100
- 75-minute therapy session: \$170
- 90-minute therapy session: \$190

### Graduate Student Trainee Clinician Rates:

- 55-minute intake/therapy session (53-60 minutes): \$45
- 45-minute therapy session (38-52 minutes): \$25
- 75-minute therapy session: \$60
- Psychological/Psychoeducational testing:
  - \$500 for a full evaluation (including intake, testing time, scoring, interpretation, report writing, and feedback session)

### Miscellaneous Rates (practice-wide):

- Educational consultation: \$200/hour (including travel and attendance)
- Legal proceedings: \$300/hour (including travel, preparation, and attendance paid in-full prior to the court appearance)
- Preparation of documents (including, but not limited to, letters & forms): \$25/15-minute increment (15-minute minimum)
- Phone consultation with collateral sources: \$25/15-minute increment
- Returned check fee= \$35
- Greater than 1 therapy session in a week=25% discount

If you become involved in legal proceedings that require your clinician's participation, you will be expected to pay for your clinician's professional time, even if they are called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, we charge \$300 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding, at a minimum of 4-hour increments due to having to clear portions of your clinician's schedule. Payment, in full, for legal services is expected 48-hours prior to any court appearance; otherwise, your clinician will not be able to appear.

Please notify us if any problems arise during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. We allow patients to carry a balance for only 2 sessions before services may be interrupted if an account is not brought up to current. If you are using insurance benefits, your clinician will tell you what your balance is at the time of the session based on the most recently received Explanation of Benefits (EOB). If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days, and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, we have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information we release regarding a patient's treatment is the name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

Insurance Reimbursement: Some of our providers are in-network with Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance companies (except EAP and HIP plans). It is important you know that, by choosing to use your insurance benefits, the insurance company reserves the right to request mental health diagnoses, treatment plans, clinical notes, or in some cases, the full clinical record. In these cases, we will make every effort to release the minimum amount of information necessary for the requested purpose. Although insurance companies report their commitment to protecting your health information, we cannot guarantee the privacy of your information once it leaves our possession. This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. We will provide you with a copy of any report we submit, if you request it.

If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment, although it is important to note that not all issues/conditions/problems are reimbursed by insurance companies. If our clinicians are not in-network providers with your insurance company, you may consider looking into out-of-network benefits. We are happy to provide you with a document called a "superbill," which contains your identifying information, session and services codes, as well as appropriate diagnosis code(s). You can then choose to submit this form to your insurance company, and many times, they will reimburse you for a portion of the service rendered, if you are entitled to out-of-network benefits. It is important to note that, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of our fees. Payment is due at the time of service. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end our sessions.

It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for our services yourself to avoid the problems described above, unless prohibited by contract. If you chose to pay for our services yourself, rather than utilize in-network insurance benefits, we will ask to sign a separate agreement indicating your choice.

Late Cancellations and No-Shows: The appointment time for which you are scheduled is especially for you. As a result, we require a **24-hour** notice for cancellations of therapy appointments and a **48-hour** notice for cancellations of assessment appointments. If you do not provide the appropriate amount of notice of cancellation, we charge the following within a calendar year:

1<sup>st</sup> occurrence: No charge

2<sup>nd</sup> occurrence: Half the price of the service

3<sup>rd</sup> and subsequent occurrence in one year: Full price of the service

If we are able to reschedule your appointment within the same week, we will not charge you for your missed appointment. If you begin canceling appointments on a regular basis, it will be important to discuss whether it still feels like a good time to pursue services. If you are running late for your appointment, please call or email your clinician as soon as you can to let them know you will be late. If we do not hear from you by 20 minutes into your session, we will call to check-in and may assume you do not plan to attend your session. If you are late for your session, session will still end at the regular time so that your clinician has time to prepare for the next appointment and can be on-time.

If your clinician has a planned absence, and they will not be in the office, they will provide you with as much notice as they can to plan accordingly. However, there may be times when they have to cancel your appointment with very little notice, due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e. illness, emergency situations, or weather conditions). If this occurs, your clinician, or other office staff, will contact you to inform you of the cancelation and a plan for rescheduling. Your clinician will also have an outgoing message on their voicemail indicating their absence. If the office needs to close due to inclement weather, there will be an outgoing message on the general voicemail box.

### **Records Review**

The laws and standards of my profession require that we keep treatment records. Unless otherwise agreed to be necessary, IPCI retains clinical records only as long as is mandated by Indiana state law (at the time of this writing, 7 years from date of case closure, or for minors, 7 years after a patient turns 18-years-old). If you have concerns regarding the treatment records, please discuss them with your clinician. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless your clinician believes that seeing them would be emotionally damaging, in which case we will be happy to send them to an appropriate mental health professional. Because they are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. We recommend that you review them in your clinician's presence so that you can discuss the contents together. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent in preparing information requests. When more than one client is involved in treatment, such as in cases of couple and family therapy, we will release records only with signed authorizations from all the adults (or all those who legally can authorize such a release) involved in the treatment.

If a third party is requesting psychological testing be completed (i.e. Federal Aviation Administration, Social Security Administration), that third party is considered the holder of privilege and has the right to records. As a result, if you wanted to request your records, you would need to do so with that third party, rather than with IPCI.