

Welcome Packet

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You're going to want
to read this.

Frequently Asked Questions about **MONEY & THERAPY**

Hello,

Most people probably don't read through the multiple pages of intake consents.

So, let's quickly review some of the most important policies that routinely come up & that I'm finding are best addressed up front:

- Money you could owe (to make sure you're not caught off guard)
- Your expectations about therapy (to make sure we are on the same page)

I'm Jes

I totally love what I do and sincerely want to be of help.

There's no where else I'd rather be; there's nothing else I'd rather be doing.

Please ask me any questions you like,

and just know that I really look forward to getting to know you.

Jennifer, Office Manager

- Jennifer does **ALL** your appointment scheduling, billing, updates to your credit card, insurance, or contact information, etc.
- Even if you alert me to updates in session, you'll still need to update Jennifer again yourself
- On average, appointments are booked approximately every 2 weeks - but this is adjusted according to needs as they change
- Yahoo email is not HIPPA secure & is used **ONLY** for setting appointments/administrative issues
- Simple Practice is HIPPA secure & is used for PHI/sensitive information/digital signatures

\$85 Late Cancellation Fee

3 WAYS YOU WILL BE CHARGED

1. If you cancel under 24hrs
2. If you are late to your session by more than 10 minutes (regardless of payer source)
3. If we cannot ethically bill your insurance for the full session time because:
 - You wish to end your session early because you need to leave/do not have much to talk about
 - You're doing couples therapy & the insured person is not in session

We Are Sticklers!

YOU WILL STILL BE CHARGED IF YOU....

- Are sick, called into work, do not have phone/internet connection, need to care for someone, etc.
- Cancel 1 minute over the 24hr mark
- Cancel, but then decide you want to keep your session
- Told me in session you were cancelling, but did not tell our office manager Jennifer who manages the calendar
- Thought you cancelled, but it wasn't clear to our office or we didn't receive your email
- Didn't think you cancelled, but the way you inquired about switching appointment times close to the 24hr mark seemed to us as though you were
- We are lucky and can still fill your spot (this is difficult to do last minute, often when our office manager isn't working)
- [Insert any other reason]

How To (Correctly) Cancel An Appointment

SO YOU'RE NOT CHARGED \$85

- Email, don't call (so we both can have a time-stamped receipt)
- Start a new email that only addresses your cancellation
 - Don't respond to a thread
 - Don't bury the cancellation in paragraphs about other things
- Subject line should read "Cancellation (Date)"
- Wait for our response confirming your cancellation- if you don't hear from us, we didn't receive your cancellation

Your Appointment

- We do not use text unless you're running late for your appointment (727-808-4818). This is the **ONLY** time text is used
- Have your phone nearby in case an internet connection cannot be made or is interrupted
- Turn on "Do Not Disturb" on your phone for Doxy.me (otherwise, calls will drop the connection)
- No driving during therapy appointments - you'll need to pull over, safety first!!
- Walk With Me sessions use audio only (no Doxy.me- I will call you)

No Therapy Between Sessions

- I cannot respond to or read emails
- Any paperwork you need completed needs to be done during your session time
- I cannot provide quick calls or crisis therapy between appointments- email Jennifer requesting an earlier appointment and/or to be placed on the Wait List for cancellations
- The only exception is for an “immediate life-threatening emergency” in which you cannot keep yourself safe from taking your life or harming another after having used all your tools/supports. Alert us BY EMAIL if this is the case.

Focused Therapy

- **My practice is geared towards Focused Therapy and our work will reflect this.** Focused Therapy is like physical therapy to fix an injury: some difficult feelings, requires active efforts during your session AND active efforts on your own between your sessions.
- On the other hand, Supportive Therapy is more like a massage at a spa: pleasant feelings, passive participation only during your session, and no work is expected between sessions. **Supportive Therapy would include simply reporting on/updating about events between sessions without any new insights or actions, venting about things outside your control, coming to sessions not prepared with an agenda for why you booked the appointment, repeating the same concerns in therapy while also refusing the suggestions and steps offered, or simply attending therapy out of habit but not being ready to make further changes right now.**
- Insurance requires that our time be Focused- just like physical therapy.
- I've found that the more conscious/intentional (Focused) you are about each and every session, the more you will get out of therapy.

My “Medical Necessity” Obligations

Insurance contracts do not cover supportive counseling. Instead, they require that there be a:

- Medical diagnosis from the Diagnostic Statistical Manual-5
- Formal treatment plan with objective/measurable goals that are routinely updated
- Acute symptoms documented for every session's progress note
- Professional/skilled therapeutic interventions for every session's progress note
- Some form of resolution (i.e. progress towards goals, decrease in session frequency, discharge)

Your Job- NEXT SESSION WORKSHEET

- You have an active role in leading each therapy session
- I will lead the first two sessions only to get background information, but then our work pivots to you leading
- **After reading this packet, fully read my Next Session Worksheet.**
- Use my Next Session Worksheet (available on my website, under the tab "Getting Started" at the bottom of the page) **before every session** to ensure that your therapy is focused.
- Do not send me your Next Session Worksheet- keep it with you for your next session.

“Not much has changed since we last talked.”

- If you have an appointment and find that nothing much has changed- externally or internally- since we last talked, consider rescheduling your session.
- PLEASE GIVE US MORE THAN 24 HOURS NOTICE
- Each session should be a thoughtful intention to work through something specific and not a rote habit you just passively show up for.
- Remember, you lead each and every session. To do this, you need to spend time before each and every session (e.g. doing a Next Session Worksheet) to become clear on *what specific aspect of your difficulty you want to tackle and what changes/stretching you are actually ready to confront....or, not ready for.*

EAP/SAP-Employee/School Assistance Program

- EAP/SAP benefits normally allow only one authorization per year
 - New authorizations within the same year are only approved by me if you have a truly distinct & separate issue for therapy (i.e. not the same topic already being discussed)
 - EAP/SAP operators & fellow employees may give incorrect info
- After your EAP/SAP authorization ends and if you wish to continue working with me, you'll transition to your regular managed care benefits/self-pay
- Each year (or 365 days from your last EAP visit if you are using ND EAP), you're entitled you to another authorization

Exceptions to Confidentiality

- EAP/Insurance
- Immediate harm to yourself or others
- Concern for harm to a child, the elderly, or a person with special needs
- Subpoenaed by a judge
- You sign a release
- You dispute a valid credit card charge (i.e. \$85 Late Cancellation Fee)

Evaluations are NOT Provided

- I provide exploratory counseling and not judgement-based counseling.
- Therefore, I do not provide evaluations or letters determining or recommending any eligibility, status, or services based on our work together. This includes, but is not limited to: ADHD, disability, parenting rights, etc.
- However, you can have a copy of your file to provide to whomever you wish.

Your Feet Must Be in Florida

- My clinical Florida license stipulates that I can only talk to people if their feet are in Florida during our session- meaning, we cannot ethically have a session if you are temporarily visiting another state (or if you should permanently move).
- This stinks! I agree!

Feedback

- All of your feedback is welcomed & actually some of the most helpful information for me!
- Our work together is unique, but how you communicate with me is also practice for all your other relationships
- I definitely, always want you to tell me if:
 - Something I am doing isn't helpful or you disagree
 - You feel hurt or confused by something I said
 - You have an idea of what would be more helpful

Ending Therapy

- Together we will review your Treatment Plan over the course of therapy and decide when it feels right to close
 - Ideally, we will have a few sessions prior to you ending to discuss your overall experience and particular tools you'll carry forward on your own
 - On average, people tend to stay in therapy for 6 months to one year. However, I have some clients who've been with me for several years. And I have many clients who end therapy but return later for a short while for some extra booster sessions
- However, if it's been 30 days since you last booked an appointment and you don't respond with an appointment after we reach out, we'll assume you wish to end therapy and we will discharge you

Referrals for the Right Fit

The other possibility is that if I cannot meet your therapeutic needs, we will need to discuss some alternatives including providing referrals to other therapists. This can happen when:

- You don't feel that I am the best fit for you or if you're not feeling particularly motivated
- I do not have the skill set/specialization/have enough experience for your care (e.g. trauma work, addictions, eating disorders, and children/parenting, etc)
- I do not have enough appointments available to meet the appropriate level of care needed (i.e. for frequency/consistency, especially around issues of self-harm, etc)
- Telehealth is not an appropriate format for certain issues (e.g. safety issues to yourself or others and other sensitive topics better served in-person)
- You no longer meet the "medical necessity" criteria & do not want to switch to self-pay for Supportive Counseling

Once A Client, Always A Client

- Unfortunately, I cannot have a friendship or any other dual-relationship with you, ever
- Even if you are no longer an “active client” (you are discharged), you are still considered a “client”
 - Positives: You can always to return as a “new client” if needed
 - Boundaries: You can update me on how you are doing from time to time, but I cannot be your “friend,” initiate communication, share in banter, or provide support outside of a formal session

Thank you for reading,
I'm really looking forward to working with you.