

Informed Consent for Counseling

Welcome to the private practice of Sareet Taylor, LMHC. In order to promote a trusting and productive counseling relationship, the following is provided for your understanding and consent.

The Counseling Experience

The goal for counseling is generally to assist you in making positive steps toward achieving wellness. Many people come to counseling because they want to make significant changes in their lives and are interested in the supportive, non-judgmental assistance that counseling can provide toward achieving that change. Others seek counseling because change or other difficult circumstances have been thrust on them, and they want some assistance in learning to cope healthily with such changes. Whatever your reason for coming to counseling, I will offer you all the professional expertise I have to give.

That being said, there is no guarantee that counseling will “fix” the problem, and no guarantee that you will “feel better” within a certain period of time. Counseling is most effective when approached as a collaborative effort between counselor and client. At times, the process of counseling may be difficult. Working toward positive change often requires you to step out of your comfort zone and take some risks. As your counselor, I will be there to support your journey of healing and growth. There are likely to be times when I will suggest “homework assignments” between sessions. Such exercises are designed to make the counseling process more effective. If necessary, there may be a time when I will recommend consultation with psychiatrist or other physician for medication therapy.

I often incorporate a number of mind-body techniques into therapy, including yoga therapy. Yoga therapy is very gentle, but it does involve some very light physical exercise, and it also is a hands-on approach, rather like an extremely light massage or “healing touch”. It is imperative that you communicate with me your comfort level with this approach. Counseling is about you, and it is up to you to let me know what works for you, and what doesn't.

Confidentiality

Generally, information disclosed during counseling will be kept strictly confidential, and will not be revealed to anyone outside of my counseling practice without your written permission. There are several exceptions to this general rule as follows. If any of these exceptions should arise during the course of your counseling, I will make every effort to inform you of the need to break confidentiality.

- 1) If you threaten to harm yourself or another person, I am legally, ethically, and morally obligated to take action to protect the safety of the threatened person. Actions could include notifying the intended victim, arranging for hospitalization for you (and/or your child), notifying family or other support system, or alerting law enforcement.
- 2) If abuse or neglect of a child, elderly, or disabled person is known or suspected, I am required by law to report my concern to the Department of Children and Families.
- 3) If I were to receive a legally binding court order from a judge for your counseling records or for my deposition or court testimony, I would be required by law to comply.

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- 4) If you (or your child) are in counseling or being evaluated by order of the court or as a condition of continued employment, I may be required to provide the court or employer with reports, documents, or testimony.

If you are utilizing your health insurance or employee assistance benefits to cover the cost of your counseling, please be aware that nearly all insurance companies require the counselor to disclose a fair amount of information in order to authorize treatment. This occurs not only after the initial session but often on an ongoing basis, in order to authorize further sessions. Many insurance plans also require that a DSM-IV diagnosis be made in order for treatment to be authorized. If I am required to submit a diagnosis, the diagnostic information will be shared with you.

While you are welcome to utilize e-mail for purposes of scheduling coordination, please realize that I cannot guarantee the confidentiality of electronic communication.

Emergencies or Crises

I check my e-mail and voicemail several times daily and will return your correspondence at my earliest opportunity. In you are in need of immediate assistance and cannot reach me, please call Lifeline of Central Florida at 407-425-2624, or call 911. If you have a life-threatening emergency, please go to a hospital emergency room or call 911. Your safety and well-being is of utmost importance to me.

Fees and Policies

Counseling fees are generally \$90 per 55 minute session for individual or couples therapy. There are some discounted options available, which we may discuss, including discounted rates for pre-payment of 3 or 6 sessions. Group counseling fees vary slightly depending on size and length of group. There is never a charge for a brief telephone “check-in” or scheduling coordination. Payment is due at the beginning of each session, and may be in the form of cash, check, or credit. It is required that, whenever possible, a credit card be kept on file (it will never be charged without you being notified). I will be happy to provide you with a receipt for payment on a monthly basis that you may use in filing insurance claims, or for personal financial records. Other than a genuine emergency or serious illness, you will be billed for missed appointments unless you provide notification 24 hours in advance.

Consent for Counseling

I have read and understood the information on this form, and voluntarily agree to participate in counseling, or consent to participation of my child in counseling.

_____ Date _____
Adult Client

_____ Date _____
Adult Client

_____ Date _____
Minor Child