

Practice Policies 2023-2024

PRACTICE POLICIES 2023-2024

Business Hours and Scheduling

- My business hours are Monday-Thursday 9a-3p. Regularly scheduled time slots (i.e. weekly and bi-weekly appointments) are scheduled from 9a-1p and the 2p hour is for floating schedulers (people who meet with me on a non-regular basis or want to meet monthly). Of course, if a time slot between 9a-1p is open due to a 'regular' taking off, that spot is welcome to be filled by anyone. Floating schedulers (non-regulars) may only schedule session by session; meaning, they cannot book (without discussing with me first) more than 1 appointment at a time.
- When booking online, please select **Psychotherapy 53 min.** as your service as a default. Until further notice, I have also added **Brainspotting Session** if a client needs an additional appointment during the week to do Brainspotting work. This is only available Friday mornings. Of course, we can do BSP during our typical Psychotherapy session, but this code allows for you to schedule on Friday mornings to do BSP. Simply put, continue to use **Psychotherapy 53 min.** to book in 95% of cases, but use the BSP session code when needed.
- As a solo practitioner, I am unable to be a 24 hour crisis center. I cannot guarantee that I will be available to answer your call or message in the event of a crisis, so please default to contacting 911 or a mental health crisis center in event of an emergency. I have numbers listed according to county on my website under "Crisis and Other Mental Health Information."

Communication

- My default form of communication with clients is the Client Portal messenger due to protections as required by HIPAA. There is a free mobile app available (*Simple Practice Client Portal*) you can download to ease the burden of messaging, so I encourage you to download this on your phone. Be sure the settings are on to receive notifications from the messenger so to not miss communications from me. You can also set a 4 digit security code to make log-in easier as opposed to logging in through an email link. There may still be times that I communicate with you via email or text such as if the SP messenger is down but in 99.9% of instances, please communicate with me through the messenger. If you chose to use the web browser version and not the app, make sure that messages from SimplePractice do not go to your spam folder.
 - *Here is an article about the app:* <https://support.simplepractice.com/hc/en-us/articles/9651784620045-The-SimplePractice-Client-Portal-mobile-app>
- It is important that I am able to get in contact with you in a timely manner in between sessions, if needed. For example, outstanding paperwork or payments, scheduling changes, etc. If it becomes a pattern that I am not able to get in touch with you in a reasonable amount of time (24-48 hours in most cases), we will need to discuss if virtual care is appropriate for you at this time.

Announcements

I will broadcast practice-wide announcements at the top of *Appointment Reminder* emails that you receive 72 hours and 15 minutes prior to your appointment (email will also have “& Announcement(s)” in the title so you will know to read it) so please be sure to let me know if you are not receiving appointment reminder emails regularly. You are responsible for reading that information and reaching out if you have any questions or concerns based on the material. Unfortunately, there is not yet a HIPAA-compliant mass-messaging option other than this so I use this feature when announcements are not extremely time-sensitive to save myself a good amount of time. **Please be sure that you are paying attention to this.**

Paperwork

- PHQ-9 and GAD-7 symptom screeners will be automatically sent to you 24 hours prior to every other appointment if we meet weekly or bi-weekly and every appointment if we meet “as needed” or otherwise don’t have a regular time slot. Please try to have these complete prior to 8am the day of your appointment, or at the latest, before your appointment.
- Other necessary paperwork such as additional screeners, policy updates, treatment plan reviews, etc. will also need to be completed prior to 8am the day of your appointment or we will need to complete them/review them together at the start of session.

Cancellations/Missed Sessions

- Cancellations must be communicated 48 hours prior to scheduled appointment time or fee will apply.
 - \$60 fee for appointments cancelled within the time frame of 48-24 hours prior to appointment time.
 - \$85 fee for 24 hours or less notice.
 - \$100 for a missed session or a "no-show" (not presenting to session with 10 mins of start time).
 - You will receive 2 waivers per year (starting on the date of your first session) to use in lieu of paying a late cancellation/missed session fee. Your waivers will be renewed 1 year after start date. Once used for the year, all late cancellations/no-shows will be charged with a fee going forward with no exceptions, so please plan accordingly.
 - I understand that emergencies can arise so if I can reschedule you within 3 business days, then you may opt to not use the waiver and save it for a later time/not be charged the fee. However, if you do not attend the rescheduled appointment, you will be liable for the cost of both of the appointments (either through waivers or fees).
 - I also will credit additional waivers to your account if I late cancel on you more than two times per year.

- **For SSP-only clients:** all of the above policies apply with the exception of late-cancel/missed session costs which are: \$20 for 48-24 hours notice, \$35 for less than 24 hours notice, and \$50 for a missed session (not arriving within 5 min of start time).

Rescheduling

- Please default to managing all appointment changes through the Client Portal as a first approach as opposed to contacting me directly. I have allowed self-scheduling within the parameters of 24 hours prior to an appointment time and no later than 4 weeks from time of viewing so that you may attempt to reschedule your appointment if something comes up.
- To “reschedule” you must first cancel the appointment that you can no longer attend and then “request” a new appointment. There is no true “reschedule” feature.
- Frequent rescheduling can result in losing access to this ability as it is important to maintain a consistent schedule for our meetings as much as possible.
- If you need to reschedule and don’t see a time on the portal that works, please let me know and I will add you to my cancellation list for particular days/weeks. When openings occur, I will be communicating those openings through SP messenger and will send the notification to everyone on the cancellation list at the same time. The first one to log into the portal and schedule the opening will receive the appointment and others will remain on the waitlist until another appointment becomes open.

Attendance/Discharge

- You are expected to maintain a minimum of an 80% attendance rate regardless of whether the cancellation was made late or not. If you fall below 80%, you will drop down to the next tier of frequency (weekly to bi-weekly, bi-weekly to monthly, monthly to scheduling session by session) until your attendance returns to good standing (80% average), provided that the time slot is available.
- If attendance drops below 80% within the first 2 months of treatment, client is subject to be discharged.
- Clients must be seen at least once every 30 days to be considered an active client.
 - In certain cases, if discussed and determined to be clinically appropriate, this time can be extended to 2 months from last appointment as long as the client checks in with therapist via messenger and/or physically schedules an appointment within 30 days for it to occur within the following 30 days. (i.e. January 2nd is last appointment so client would need to check in with therapist and/or log on to the portal by February 2nd to schedule an appointment to meet by March 2nd). There will be no exceptions to this as this is a liability concern for the business. Discharge will occur at 30 days if client does not reach out to therapist and/or schedule by the 30 day mark. I highly recommend scheduling next appointment at the end of every

appointment, but if that is not possible, then I encourage clients to set a personal reminder around 2-3 weeks past the appointment time to make sure to schedule a follow-up to avoid discharge.

- 2 consecutive “no shows” with no contact with therapist will result in discharge.
- You are responsible for attending all previously scheduled sessions, whether or not an appointment reminder was received, as technology can fail at times. If you expected to get a reminder and did not, please reach out to me at your earliest convenience so that we can ensure that your appointment is in my calendar. A reminder that you can see all scheduled appointments in your Client Portal at any time.
- You are asked to be on time to every session and appointment will be forfeited if you do not show up within the first 10 minutes of start time, unless otherwise discussed and agreed upon. I will not send a message to check in if you are late due to receiving reminders 72 hours, 24 hours, and 15 min. prior to the session time.
- If I am late for any reason, this time will not be taken away from your full session time (53 min). I will do my best to contact you in advance if I am to be than 5-10 min late, but you may also reach out to me if you haven't seen me by 5 after. If you don't hear from me via messenger (or in rare cases, email or text) by 10 min. after start time and I am not online, please excuse yourself from the session and reach out to me to reschedule as an emergency likely came up for me.

Pauses in Appointment Frequency

Clients may choose to take a pause in their regularly scheduled appointments for various reasons (travel, financial reasons, health reasons, etc.). As long as you are seen within 30 days of last appointment (or 60, in certain cases), you are still considered an active client, but you will not be able to reserve the recurring appointment time past 1 planned cancellation, due to high demand of therapy services. For example, if you are being seen weekly, your recurring appointment time will not be held past 2 weeks, bi-weekly schedulers will not be able to keep their appointment past one month. If the spot is open upon your return, you are welcome to return to that spot, but it is not a guarantee that it will be open.

Payment

- Payment is expected the same day of appointment. If payment fails, you will be notified and a \$5 non-payment fee will be added to the total charge if invoice is not paid by the end of the day (11:59pm EST).
- In cases of temporary financial strain, if communicated with me prior to the payment issue occurring (i.e. your card declining when I charge it the morning of our appointment), payment will be expected to be completed 72 hours prior to the next appointment and if it is not, your next appointment will be cancelled and you will lose your recurring appointment time.

- Insurance claim submission is not a guarantee of payment from them. You are financially responsible for any amount that insurance does not pay. Some claims may be denied for a variety of reasons. You can get more detailed information from your insurance company.
- If your insurance information changes, you must inform me within 7 days of this change or you will be responsible for the cost of session(s) that are denied due to misinformation.
- If you do not disclose that you have a secondary insurance plan, you will be responsible for re-payment if/when insurance takes the money back due to incorrect filing.

Location

- You must be physically located in the state of PA for all sessions and in a safe and private location at time of service (not operating a vehicle, in a public space, or in your home with others around without reasonable attempts at privacy such as headphones and closing the door to the room that you are in).
- You may choose to involve others in your therapy sessions but this must always be previously discussed and agreed upon prior to a session.
- No recording of session content of any kind is permitted and is subject to a fine, if proven, as stated in *Informed Consent* document.

Limits to Confidentiality

- I am a mandated reporter which legally requires me to report all suspicions and/or verbal confirmations of any kind of child abuse (someone under 18 years of age including prenatal), vulnerable adult abuse (such as someone mentally or physically disabled), and elder abuse.
- I am also required to take action to notify authorities and your emergency contact on file if you threaten to harm yourself or others, or if I have strong reason to believe that you are at risk of harming yourself or someone else.
- I may choose to inform you of my reporting of these incidents, but I am not legally obligated to and will not if I believe it will cause more harm.
- I also will report animal abuse that is disclosed, including hoarding and neglect.
- If insurance is involved in payment for therapy, they have the right to request information including, but not limited to: diagnoses, dates of treatment, progress reports, session notes, etc.
- If we see each other in a public place, I am not able to make initial contact or acknowledge you in any way unless you approach me first. This is to protect your confidentiality. I will not be offended if you do not choose to approach me in a public setting.

Updating Therapist to Changes

- You **must** keep me up-to-date on any changes to medications, especially psychiatric medications, as it is required by my licensure board.

- You must also keep me updated with any insurance changes as soon as possible, as stated previously in this document.

Additional Costs

- Client-initiated requests for paperwork or tasks completed on behalf of client including but not limited to: FMLA documentation, academic accommodations or other supportive documentation for outside reasons, calls with other providers for continuation of care purposes or collaborating on documentation requested, insurance claim resubmission due to failure to update therapist to insurance changes resulting in claim denials, etc. will be charged as a self-pay 'Professional Service.'
- Cost is determined by how long it took to complete requested task in the amounts of:
 - \$25 for less than 30 min. (same cost applied to a psychotherapy session or supportive phone call that is between 10 and 16 min. in length as insurance does not cover less than 16 min.)
 - \$50 for 30-60 min.
 - \$75 for 60-90 min.
 - Insurance does not cover these costs so these will be charged to the personal card on file. This is because insurance does not cover costs not associated with direct contact with a client (such as a traditional therapy session).
 - I do not provide ESA letters as I am not trained in performing such assessments.

Effective Date and Changes to Policies

This notice goes into effect October 1, 2023. As previously noted, I reserve the right to change the terms of this notice. I will provide you with a revised copy within 14 days of any changes. You will be required to review and re-sign once per calendar year.

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND, AND AGREE TO ALL OF THE ABOVE POLICIES.