



hope . wellness . authenticity .

MW COUNSELING

PRACTICE POLICIES

Welcome to MW Counseling! We are so glad that you have taken this step to invest in your mental health. We look forward to getting to know you better, but before we get started, it is very important that you read and understand the information in this document. MW Counseling is deeply committed to the therapeutic climate and wants your therapeutic experience to be focused on you and your treatment goals. By following and understanding these policies, it allows us as professionals to conduct our practice freely and with integrity so we can avoid taking time away from your therapeutic work. We will discuss information contained in this document at our first session. You can ask any questions you have prior to signing it, or at any time afterwards as well.

Treatment Planning & Evaluation

During the first session or two, we will help you identify your goals for therapy. Therapy involves a commitment of time, money, and energy. If you have any questions about any procedures, it is important to discuss them with us whenever they arise. If your doubts persist or you are concerned that you and your therapist are not suitably matched, we can provide a referral to another therapist who may be a better fit.

Appointments & Fees

Standard counseling sessions are 50 minutes. Our standard fee is \$90 per 50-minute session. Other types of sessions will be billed accordingly:

- Initial Intake Session (80 minutes): \$125
- 80-Minute Session: \$135
- Phone Calls (over 10 minutes): \$90/hour (existing clients only)
- Late Cancellation: \$50
- No Show: Entire session fee

Your fee is due in full on the day of your counseling session. Clients will be automatically billed after each session securely through Simple Practice via debit or credit. An invoice will be sent to your email address after each billed session. All debit/credit card information is stored securely within Simple Practice. If a client is delinquent on payments, the counseling relationship may be terminated following a conversation between MW Counseling and your therapist. If you end therapy with an unpaid balance and do not make arrangements to settle the bill, MW Counseling will first try to charge your card on file. If payment still is not satisfied, then your account may be turned over to a collection agency. Any costs incurred in the collection are your responsibility.

Any court testimony, appearances, or other requests for legal services such as: testimony-related matters like case research, report writing, phone conversations pertaining to legal matters, travel, depositions, actual

testimony, cross examination time, and courtroom waiting time will be charged at a rate of \$250/hour with an advanced deposit of \$1,000. MW Counseling may require an additional advanced deposit of fees or costs and expenses. Included in the advanced deposit is a \$250 non-refundable retainer. MW Counseling will refund to you any remaining balance of the advanced deposit.

Cancellations

Please remember to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance. You will be charged a \$50 cancellation fee if you cancel or reschedule your appointment with less than 24 hours' notice. If you do not show up for your appointment or contact the therapist with less than 2 hours' notice, the entire session fee will be charged. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time. All late cancellation/no show fees will be charged to the credit card on file. In the event of a true emergency, the fee may be waived. Please contact MW Counseling as soon as you possibly can if you have an emergency. When cancelling an appointment, clients should understand that we will make every attempt to reschedule the appointment in a timely manner, though it is not guaranteed. This all depends on your therapist's current availability and schedule.

Third-Party Payments

Currently, we do not contract with any specific health insurance companies. If you would like to use your health insurance to cover counseling services, we can provide you with a Superbill that you can submit to your insurance company as an out of network service. You are responsible for knowing your coverage and for submitting all paperwork to your insurance company. MW Counseling will not disclose confidential information to the third party without your written consent.

Agreement to Pay for Professional Services

You request that MW Counseling provides professional services and agree to pay the therapist's fees for all therapy services at the rate outlined in this document. You understand MW Counseling does not accept insurance. You agree that this financial relationship with your therapist will continue as long as the therapist provides services or until you inform your therapist that you wish to end it. You agree to pay for services provided to you up until the time you end the relationship, including any no show/late cancellation fees that may have accrued.

You have also read the Informed Consent for Therapy, Notice of Privacy Practices, and any applicable Addenda thereto and agree to act accordingly, as shown by your signature below and on the appropriate forms.

Between-Session Contact

Boundaries are very important in the therapeutic relationship. Part of our jobs as therapists is to help our clients recognize the importance of boundaries and help them learn to adhere to and/or maintain good, healthy boundaries. Our role is to help you in session, so that you can go out into the world and practice the things you have learned. It is for this reason that MW Counseling has a strict between-session contact

policy. Phone calls and written communication can be used between sessions, when absolutely necessary, but any contact over 10 minutes will be charged at the full rate above (or the hourly rate predetermined by you and your therapist).

Though we are not always able to receive calls, you can always leave a message on our confidential voicemail and we will return your call when we are able. You may also open a chat with us via secure chat in Simple Practice. You will receive emails from MW Counseling which are sent securely through Simple Practice. We do not engage in text messaging with clients due to privacy. Please let us know if you do not wish us to leave a voice message at your number or need us to send email communication to an alternate email address.

Social Media Policy

Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, please do not request your therapist and/or MW Counseling to “follow” or “friend” you etc. via any social media platform (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) We believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship. As such, any such request will be denied in order to maintain professional boundaries. Although MW Counseling may have a business Facebook Page, Blog, or other business social media accounts, there is no requirement that you “like” or “follow” MW Counseling on social media. If you choose to “like,” “follow,” or post comments on MW Counseling’s social media accounts/blog, there is the chance that others will see your name associated with MW Counseling. Any comments you post regarding therapeutic work between you and your therapist will be deleted as soon as possible after MW Counseling becomes aware of such posts. As such, it is important to note that should you disclose any behavior that is harmful to yourself or to others via social media, we are not expected to see it nor are we liable for any subsequent action you make.

By signing this form, you agree that you will refrain from discussing, commenting, and/or asking therapeutic questions via any social media platform. You agree that you will not use social media to communicate any therapeutic comments and/or questions to MW Counseling therapists.

Emergencies

MW Counseling does not provide emergency care or crisis services. Our therapists are often not immediately available by telephone. They do, however, check periodically for telephone messages. If you feel you are unable to keep yourself safe or you need to talk to someone immediately, call 911 or go to your nearest hospital emergency room. You are solely responsible for all costs arising from such care.

Litigation Limitations

We discourage therapist involvement in legal proceedings. Therapeutic relationships are based on trust and involving us as witnesses may jeopardize this relationship and progress in therapy. Even though you are responsible for all testimony fees, it does not mean that our testimony will be solely in your favor. We can only testify to the facts of the case. We are not evaluators and cannot make any recommendations (custody

or otherwise). The court can appoint professionals to conduct an investigation and evaluation and make recommendations to the court in the best interest of your children.

Electronic Records

MW Counseling may keep and store records for each client electronically on MW Counseling's computers and some mobile devices. In order to maintain security, MW Counseling employs the use of passwords and encryption methods to protect computers from unauthorized access. In addition, MW Counseling may also use electronic backup or storing systems either by using external hard drives, thumb drives, or similar methods, or on a cloud-based service. The cloud-based records system MW Counseling uses is Simple Practice. This is to help prevent the loss or damage of records. MW Counseling maintains the security of these backup devices through HIPAA-compliant encryption and passwords. The purpose of cloud-based backup and storage systems is to store backups on computers that are connected to the internet. In order to maintain security of these backups, MW Counseling has employed the following procedures:

1. Entered into a HIPAA Business Associates Agreement with the cloud-based company. Because of this Agreement, the company is obligated by federal law to protect these backups from unauthorized use or disclosure;
2. The computers on which these backups are stored are kept in secure data centers, where various security measures are used to maintain the protection of the computers from physical access by unauthorized persons; and
3. The company employs various security measures to maintain the protection of these backups from unauthorized use or disclosure.

Maintenance of Client Records

As a client, you may request a copy of your records at any time. MW Counseling will maintain your Client Record (consisting of contact information, reasons for therapy, notes, etc.) for a period of seven (7) years after the termination of therapy or the date of our last contact, whichever is later. MW Counseling cannot guarantee a copy of your Client Record will exist after this seven-year period. You have a right to request a copy of your record in writing, but there will be a document fee of \$35 for processing this request.

Professional Records

MW Counseling is required by the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners to keep appropriate records of the psychological services that they provide. Although psychotherapy often includes discussions of sensitive and private information, normally very brief records are kept noting that you have been here, what was done in the session, and a general mention of the topics discussed. You have the right to receive a copy of your file at any time. You have the right to request that a copy of your file be made available to any other health care provider at your written request. Your records are maintained in a secure location in the office listed above. If records or information are requested to be sent to or shared with other health care providers, you will be asked to execute a Release of Information authorizing MW Counseling to discuss your case or release the records indicated on that Release.

Termination

Ending relationships can be difficult. Therefore, it is important to have a termination process in order to achieve some closure. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the treatment. MW Counseling may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you and a termination process if they determine that the psychotherapy is not being effectively used or if you are in default on payment. MW Counseling will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the reasons and purpose of termination. If therapy is terminated for any reason or you request another therapist, your therapist will provide you with a list of qualified psychotherapists to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source.

Should you fail to schedule an appointment for three consecutive months, unless other arrangements have been made in advance, for legal and ethical reasons, MW Counseling must consider the professional relationship discontinued.

Complaints

We encourage all of our clients to discuss any concerns regarding therapy with us. However, you may also contact the supervisor, Leslie Pechkurow at (480)-420-8426. You may also file a complaint against us with the organization below should you feel we are in violation of any of these codes of ethics. We abide by the ACA Code of Ethics (<http://www.counseling.org/Resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>).

Arizona Department of Health Services Division of Licensing Services
150 N 18th Ave # 400, Phoenix, AZ, 85007
Phone: (602) 364-2536
Website: https://app.azdhs.gov/ls/online_complaint/MEDComplaint.aspx

OR

Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners
1740 W Adams St #3600, Phoenix, AZ, 85007
(602) 542-1882
Website: <https://azbbhe.us/node/840>

By signing below, I am agreeing that I have read, understood, and agree to the items contained in this document.

Client Signature

Date

Client Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name