



## INFORMED CONSENT FOR TREATMENT INFORMATION

Welcome to the Clinic for Christian Counseling, LLC (CCC). Thank you for choosing CCC to assist you. We pray that the matters you bring are resolved to the glory of our loving Lord. CCC, founded in 2006, is a Christian counseling service committed to providing Christ-centered healing and helping services. It is our prayer that your relationship with your Christian mental health provider will help you and/or your family members to gain better insight into your daily living and to grow towards a healthier more satisfying Christian life. This requires mutual effort by both you and your mental health provider. Change does not happen by itself; we would fail without the strength of our gracious Lord. Living the Christian life is both a joy and a challenge for all of us.

Please know that as a State of Wisconsin certified mental health facility, CCC adheres to ethical and legal standards which state our mental health providers will not force our own values and beliefs onto our clients.

The following is important information about our services and your treatment. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask questions about anything that is not understandable.

### THE PROCESS OF THERAPY

Depending on the personalities of both the consumer and provider and the issues that the consumer brings to therapy, psychotherapy services may vary. There are different approaches to addressing different problems. The currently acceptable treatment modes to help you with your specific situation will be discussed with you. Be assured that the specific approach agreed upon to help you will be a God pleasing one. Unlike medical care, psychotherapy requires an active effort on your part. You have the right and responsibility to work together with your provider to choose how to approach your concerns. To be successful you will have to work toward goals both during sessions and at home.

There are two main steps in psychotherapy. The first step is intake and assessment. You and your provider will spend time evaluating your needs, goals, and gathering pertinent information. A treatment plan will be completed and will include an initial assessment, diagnosis (as appropriate), your treatment goals, and intervention techniques to accomplish these goals. You will then need to decide to continue the therapy process with your provider. If you choose not to work with your provider, your provider will refer you to another mental health professional in your area. Therapy involves a commitment of time, energy, and money. Any questions you have about the process should be discussed whenever they arise. Should you choose to not pursue therapy or discontinue prematurely against your provider's advice, your symptoms may return and/or worsen. The second step is the actual therapy. While the first step usually takes 1 to 2 sessions, the actual number of sessions needed to accomplish goals for consumers will vary. Some matters are quite complex, and considerable time is needed to accomplish the goals. Other situations take less time to resolve. Your provider will make every effort to be as time and cost efficient as possible to help you resolve your concerns.

### RISKS OF THERAPY

Psychotherapy has both benefits and risks. Psychotherapy has been shown to reduce feelings of distress, create better relationships and resolve specific problems. Risks include experiencing increased uncomfortable feelings such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, loneliness, and helplessness that may be part of the process of change.

Research indicates that most people who engage in counseling benefit from the experience; even so, it is possible for things to get worse before they get better. Additionally, some people who work on especially troubling issues in counseling may find it difficult to concentrate on other things immediately after their sessions. Relationships may also be affected. You and your mental health provider will work together to determine the pace and form of treatment to minimize the risks while maximizing progress. Side effects or risks of side effects from any psychotropic medications should be discussed with your physician.

Per State of Wisconsin DHS 75.24(9) As a state certified health facility, CCC Staff will discuss risk factors for communicable disease with each client upon admission and at least annually when continuing services and shall include in a discussion of behaviors that could lead to sexually transmitted disease (STDs), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B and C or tuberculosis (TB).

## SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS

CCC business hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 9:00 am to 12:00 pm on Fridays. Please call during these hours to make or change appointments, if have questions regarding your bill, insurance, etc. Some evening hours are also available for therapy. Please call for availability.

**Psychotherapy typically occurs in 45-minute blocks of time.** A session usually occurs once per week or every other week to begin with and then, as progress toward your goal for therapy is being made, the time between your sessions is spread out. In case of emergency or 'after hours' coverage, please call the office and the out-going voice-mail message will give you directions of who to contact for assistance.

Due to the nature of therapy, your commitment to the therapy process is important and includes keeping your scheduled appointments. Our cancellation policy requires 24-hour notice of any cancellations (except for emergencies or other circumstances beyond your control such as illness which prevents attendance at work or school). **If such notice is NOT given, a \$75.00 fee will be charged to you and not to your insurance.** Also, any future appointments already scheduled will be cancelled – this includes lack of notice for initial sessions. You will need to contact your provider to discuss scheduling your next appointment. It is also important for you to be prompt for your sessions; the charge will not be reduced if you are late.

## TELEHEALTH SERVICES

To use telehealth, you need an internet connection and a device with a camera for video. Your Provider can explain how to log in and use any features on the telehealth platform. If telehealth is not a good fit for you, your Provider will recommend a different option. There are some risks and benefits to using telehealth:

Risks – 1) Privacy and Confidentiality. You may be asked to share personal information with the telehealth platform to create an account, such as your name, date of birth, location, and contact information. Your Provider carefully vets any telehealth platform to ensure your information is secured to the appropriate standards. 2) Technology. At times, you could have problems with your internet, video, or sound. If you have issues during a session, your Provider will follow the backup plan that you agree to prior to sessions. 3) Crisis Management. It may be difficult for your Provider to provide immediate support during an emergency or crisis. You and your Provider will develop a plan for emergencies or crises, such as choosing a local emergency contact, creating a communication plan, and making a list of local support, emergency, and crisis services.

Benefits – 1) Flexibility. You can attend therapy wherever is convenient for you. 2) Ease of Access. You can attend telehealth sessions without worrying about traveling, meaning you can schedule less time per session and can attend therapy during inclement weather or illness.

Recommendations – 1) Make sure that other people cannot hear your conversation or see your screen during sessions. 2) Do not use video or audio to record your session unless you ask your Provider for their permission in advance. 3) Make sure to let your Provider know if you are not in your usual location before starting any telehealth session.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

**The therapy relationship is confidential.** Your provider cannot release any information about your therapy without your written permission. This includes the fact that you are a consumer receiving services at CCC. Confidentiality is governed by Federal and State law and CCC will abide by the law.

**Confidentiality does have its legal and ethical limitations.** A mental health provider may break confidentiality if, in his/her judgment, it is necessary to protect the safety or welfare of you (the consumer) or another person. If you threaten to hurt yourself or someone else, or raise suspicion of child abuse, your provider will report it to the proper authorities. In addition, your provider may discuss your case with other CCC professional staff and contracted consultants for the purpose of providing effective treatment.

When a couple seeks marital therapy, the therapy notes are 'owned' by the couple. The signatures of both participants will be required to release information to either party and/or third parties such as attorneys. Regarding confidentiality of minor clients, both parents will be asked to sign the Parental Approval and Safe Harbor Agreement stating they understand their child's therapy is for the express purpose of helping their child and agree with their child's provider to create a Safe Harbor for therapy to proceed.

**Mental Health Providers at CCC reserve the right to determine whether they choose to provide letters or documentation for clients regarding assessment of emotional support animals or leave of absence from work or school due to mental health issues.** Clients will need to provide written permission for providers to disclose any information to a third party. It is recommended for best results regarding concerns to consult a psychologist or psychiatrist who is certified to assess and make recommendations for those concerns.

## COMMUNICATION

Communicate with your mental health provider outside of your sessions for your confidentiality is restricted to two methods – 1) CCC phone number and your provider's extension and 2) secure messaging through your patient portal. These secure communication methods are the best way to communicate personal information, though no method is entirely without risk. If you decide you prefer to be contacted via non-secure methods, your mental health provider will document this in your record.

It is not recommended to use the following methods to communicate with your mental health provider for the reasons provided below:

Email and Texts - email is not a secure method of communication and should not be used to communicate personal information. Please use messaging in your CCC patient portal to communicate with CCC staff. You may choose to receive appointment reminders via text message or email. You should carefully consider who may have access to your text messages or emails before choosing to communicate via either method. Please note that CCC staff is not able to communicate with you via text due to confidentiality.

Social Media/Review Websites - If you try to communicate with your Provider via these methods, they will not respond. This includes any form of friend or contact request, @mention, direct message, wall post, and so on. This is to protect your confidentiality and ensure appropriate boundaries in therapy. If you see your Provider on any form of review website, it is not a solicitation for a review. Many such sites scrape business listings and may automatically include your Provider. If you choose to leave a review of your Provider on any website, they will not respond. While you are always free to express yourself in the manner you choose, please be aware of the potential impact on your confidentiality prior to leaving a review. It is often impossible to remove reviews later, and some sites aggregate reviews from several platforms leading to your review appearing other places without your knowledge.

## AVOIDING DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

The counseling relationship you have with your mental health provider is a professional relationship, and therefore, it should not become a social or business relationship at any time. This type of dual affiliation could be detrimental to the counseling process. Therefore, please do not invite your mental health provider to social events, send friend requests on social media, give presents, or solicit for business or fundraising. If your mental health provider encounters you outside of the counseling setting, the provider will not acknowledge the existence of a relationship unless you initiate interaction first.

## FEES AND INSURANCE

The fees for a licensed master level provider are as follows: first (assessment) session - \$240.00, individual sessions that follow - \$160.00 and conjoint sessions (i.e. family, couple therapy) with / without client - \$180.00. Marriage counseling (no diagnosis for either partner or not billed to third party such as insurance) - \$150.00. These fees are for a 45-minute session. The fees for a master level provider in training are the same as those for a licensed provider. The fee for working with a master level student intern in their first semester is \$25 for a 45-minute session. The fee for working with a master level student intern in their second semester is \$50.00 for a 45-minute session. The fee for therapy with a student intern cannot be covered by private insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare. All providers in training at CCC work under the supervision of a qualified clinical supervisor.

CCC billing is divided into two categories:

**Non-insured/private pay services** - Payment for services is due on the day of the scheduled appointment. Checks are to be made out to CCC. Credit card payments can be made at CCC office during business hours or on the patient portal at any time.

**Insured services** - You will be asked to sign a form giving CCC permission to release sufficient personal health care information to file the claim with your health insurance company. Your health insurance may cover all or a portion of the fee for counseling services. CCC staff cannot guarantee payment from your insurance company. To avoid disappointment, we recommend you contact your insurance company to make certain that your health insurance will cover mental health counseling services BEFORE attending the initial appointment. As you know, most insurance companies pay only a portion of the services provided. Further, consumers must realize that professional services are rendered to a person, not to the insurance company. Hence, the insurance company is responsible to the consumer and the consumer is responsible to CCC. CCC cannot render services on the assumption that the charges will be paid by the insurance company. Should there be a dispute related to the service provided or the charge for that service, the settlement of that dispute is between you and your insurance carrier. Our office will not be involved in the settlement of such disputes. The final financial responsibility for the services provided to you is yours.

**It is our practice to receive payment for private pay, co-pays, co-insurance, and deductibles at the time of your visit.**

**No Surprises Act** – Effective January 1, 2022, the No Surprises Act, which US Congress passed as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 was designed to protect clients from surprise bills for emergency services at out-of-network facilities or for out-of-network providers at in-network facilities, holding them liable only for in-network cost-sharing amounts.

**Good Faith Estimate (GFE)** – Clients without insurance or those who are self-pay, will be given an estimate of the cost for services. For questions or more information about the No Surprises Act or Good Faith Estimate, visit <https://www.cms.gov/nosurprises> or call the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) at 1-800-985-3059.

You will receive monthly statements via text for paperless billing or via mail that will notify you of any balance on your account. Unless prior arrangements are made, past due balances may be submitted to a third party, such as a collection agency or attorney, for collection. Past due is defined as over 30 days delinquent from the date of billing. CCC reserves the right to determine when a past due account is referred to a third party for collection.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

When CCC is closed, an outgoing voice mail message will provide the consumer with options to call 988 (suicide emergency), call 911 (emergency), call Northwest Connections at 1-888-552-6642, or go to the nearest hospital for help. For consumers currently being served by CCC and are at risk of hurting themselves, the consumer's provider will work with the consumer to develop a specific action plan to follow when emergency services are needed by the consumer.

## LEGAL MATTERS

In the event a provider is subpoenaed to testify in court and the consumer does not want their privileged and confidential information released to the court and will not sign a release of information form to allow this, all legal costs to prevent the release of information, including attorney's fees to represent CCC, will be the responsibility of the consumer. Also, all costs incurred for deposition and court testimony including travel time, cost for travel, preparation time including time spent with legal representation for CCC, time waiting to testify, and testifying time will be the responsibility of the consumer. Time spent communicating with the consumer's attorney, either written (e.g. drafting a letter) or verbal, will be the responsibility of the consumer. Time will be billed at \$180 per hour. Mileage will be billed at fifty cents per mile. Paper copies of records will be billed at the following rates: \$1 per page for the first 25 pages; 75 cents per page for pages 26 to 50; 50 cents per page for pages 51 to 100; and 30 cents per page for pages 101 and above. A retainer of \$1200 is due in advance of giving testimony or communicating with an attorney regarding testimony. A minimum non-refundable charge for a court appearance, including time waiting to testify, is \$1200. If the case is rescheduled without a minimum of 72-hour notice, the client will be charged an additional \$500 (in addition to the \$1200). Any payment owed above and beyond the retainer is due within 30 days of service.

Composing letters for consumers regarding matters within a provider's scope of practice will be billed at \$180 per hour and will be the financial responsibility of the consumer.

## ALCOHOL / DRUGS

If, in the judgment of the consumer's mental health provider, the consumer appears intoxicated due to alcohol and / or drugs, the provider may choose to discontinue the session. The normal fee for the session will be billed to the client and not to insurance, if applicable.

## INVOLUNTARY DISCHARGE

A consumer may be involuntarily discharged by their mental health because of the consumer's inability to pay for services or behavior that is a safety risk for staff or other consumers of CCC. Before CCC involuntarily discharges a consumer, mental health provider will do the following: notify the consumer in writing of the reasons for the discharge, the effective date of the discharge, sources for further treatment, and the consumer's right to have the discharge reviewed by the subunit of the Department that certifies mental health facilities in the State of Wisconsin.

## CONSUMER RIGHTS AND SATISFACTION

If you consider the counseling services you received to be unsatisfactory or think your rights have been violated, you have the right to use a grievance procedure. Please contact the CCC office for an information packet on the procedures to follow. Include your name, address, and phone number. Also, the State of Wisconsin has established a Patient Bill of Rights. (Statute Section 51.61). These rights are posted in our waiting room and included in your intake information.

## CONSUMER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This form will be provided at your initial session or via your online patient portal. Your signature on this form indicates that you have received the **Informed Consent to Treatment Information** document, and you agree to abide by its stated terms regarding the cost/charges for care and treatment services and appropriate boundaries during your professional relationship with your mental health provider.

**The time frame for this informed consent shall be one year. At the end of this time frame this material will be shared with you again and your informed consent through your signature will be obtained. You have the right to withdraw informed consent at any time, in writing. Withdrawing informed consent will, in effect, terminate therapy.**

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