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LifeChange, LLC

Information About Psychotherapy, Teletherapy & Office Policies
Updated May 2022

The following provides general information about therapy and the specific office policies of LifeChange, LLC — as well as your rights and protections as a patient under Massachusetts law. If you have any questions about these policies or the therapy process, please discuss them with me.

Expectations and the Therapeutic Process:

The benefits of psychotherapy are different for each person and depend on a number of variables. Typically, benefits include an easing of symptoms, an improvement in mood, and a better understanding of oneself and the stresses in one's life. In addition, one may learn some self-help and communication skills, experience better interpersonal relationships and make lifestyle changes.

The relationship between a patient and therapist is a collaborative one. A therapist brings their clinical expertise and caring to first create an environment that feels emotionally-safe and second to orchestrate the therapeutic process in a way that aims to be most helpful for you.

Therapy also requires effort on your part -- a willingness to reflect on yourself and your life-choices — perhaps in new ways — and a willingness to experience some emotional discomfort in the process. Feelings of sadness, anxiety, frustration, guilt, loneliness, and helplessness, etc. are often aroused and are a normal part of the therapy process. We will work together to make sense of such responses and to get through any difficulties that may arise. If ever you have questions about our work together, or are concerned that therapy is not helping, please discuss this with me.

Emergencies:

My practice is not structured to respond to emergencies. In the event of a mental health emergency, call 911 or go to your local emergency room. Once safe and no longer in acute crisis, please get a message to me to let me know what's going on so I can help in coordinating further care.

Teletherapy, Lateness & Cancellations:

While my private practice primarily has held in-person sessions, during this time of coronavirus prevention, teletherapy sessions are necessary. Teletherapy is the providing of therapy through a live video connection, over the internet. The use of video for therapy has been shown to be effective but involves some special considerations as indicated on the separate Teletherapy Consent Form.

Most people attend therapy on a weekly basis which maintains a momentum and continuity of focus towards resolving issues and achieving goals. Some people do attend on alternating weeks, or less often. The frequency of meetings is based on clinical need and financial means.

Therapy sessions are 50 minutes long, and punctuality is expected.

Appointment times are reserved, and the full session fee is owed even if you arrive late, forget or otherwise miss an appointment. Being detained at work, forgetting an appointment, or being ill, or having a sick child are unfortunate circumstances, but do not exempt you from having to pay for missed sessions ~ including teletherapy sessions.

To avoid paying for an unattended session, cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance of the beginning time of the scheduled appointment.

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Payment:

The current fee for a 50-min hour is \$185. If you haven't already done so, please check with your particular insurance company if you are going to seek reimbursement to clarify that they will reimburse and at what the percentage. Teletherapy is sometimes reimbursed at a different percentage rate than in-person sessions.

Payment for teletherapy can be made by credit card or by check. Checks should be made out to **LifeChange, LLC** and mailed to: **Shawna V Carboni, LICSW at 235 Cypress Street, Suite 01C Brookline, MA 02445**. All checks must be received by the 25th of each month for the month's sessions.

The No Surprises Act of 2022

Congress has passed the "No Surprises Act" which went into effect 1/1/2022. The Act is designed to protect insured consumers from surprise medical bills from out-of-network hospitals, doctors, or other providers they did not choose. It is highly unlikely that this will affect our work together. As described above, my fee and cancellation policies are clear. Also, if there are any additional services (eg extra paperwork, extra telephone calls, etc), I will let you know in advance if there would be additional charges. Rest assured I will be transparent about the costs for all services we agree on and that you will receive no "surprise" bills.

Confidentiality & Privacy:

All sessions are confidential. This means that the fact of our meeting, any identifying information about you, as well as the content of our discussions, are private and will not be disclosed, except under the following circumstances:

(a) if you give me verbal or written permission to do so in order to coordinate your care with another provider you're seeing, for insurance reimbursement and/or for some other reason.

(b) if information on the abuse of a child, elderly individual or disabled person becomes apparent. Licensed clinicians like myself are mandated by law to report.

(c) if you are at risk of causing serious harm to yourself or another person. As of 2010, LICSWs have the legal authority to issue a Section 12 "Pink Paper" to involuntarily commit someone to a hospital for up to 3 days for psychiatric evaluation if it is believed you are at such a risk by reason of mental illness. Preferably, you would admit yourself.

(d) if directed by the Court in certain legal proceedings.

Use of Text, Email & Voicemail:

The HIPAA Privacy Rule, enacted by Congress in 1996, establishes national standards to protect individuals' medical and health information communicated electronically. Please know that my office phone and computer are accessed and used only by myself. Further, I do not keep therapy notes on my computer. However, using text & email are inherently insecure.

I have read and accept the policies of LifeChange LLC & Ms. Carboni, LICSW.

Signature _____ Date _____