

OFFICE/PRACTICE POLICIES

SAN DIEGO PSYCHOLOGY & TELEHEALTH

619-314-5560

5252 Balboa Ave. #1004

San Diego, CA 92117

MEETINGS

I normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 4 sessions. During this time, we can both decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If we agree to begin psychotherapy, I will usually schedule one 50-minute session (one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration) per week, at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide at least a **24 hours advance notice** of cancellation and we both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. If it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment. Cancellations and re-scheduled session will be subject to a full charge if **NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE**. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

My hourly fee is **\$100** per hour. If we meet more than the usual time, I will charge accordingly. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this same hourly rate for other professional services you may need, though I will prorate the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other professional services include report writing, psychological evaluations, telephone conversations lasting longer than **10 minutes**, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for any professional time I spend on your legal matter, even if the request comes from another party. I charge **\$100** per hour for professional services I am asked or required to perform in relation to your legal matter. I also charge a copying fee of **\$0.10** per page for records requests.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage that requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when such services are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. [If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim.] In most collection situations, the only information I will release regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the dates, times, and nature of services provided, and the amount due.

A \$30.00 service charge will be charged for any checks returned for any reason for special handling.
INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy that I accept, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance I can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. I can also provide a "superbill" of services rendered if your insurance reimburses for out-of-network providers. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Of course, I will provide you with whatever information I can based on my experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If necessary, I am willing to call the insurance company on your behalf to obtain clarification.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. "Managed Health Care" plans often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. Though a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. Some managed-care plans will not allow me to provide services to you once your benefits end. If this is the case, I will try to assist you in finding another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require that I provide them with your clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I have to provide additional clinical information, such as treatment plans, progress notes or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. I will provide you with a copy of any records I submit, if you request it. ***You understand that, by using your insurance, you authorize me to release such information to your insurance company. I will try to keep that information limited to the minimum necessary.***

Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end our sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above unless prohibited by the insurance contract.

CONTACTING ME

I am often not immediately available by telephone however, I will attempt to return your call within 24 hours although my availability is limited on weekends and holidays. If you need to contact me between sessions, please leave a message on my voice mail. Though I am usually in my office between [11 AM and 8 PM], I probably will not answer the phone when I am with a patient. [I do have call-in hours between 9 AM and 11 AM on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday]. When I am unavailable, my telephone is answered by an answering machine. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of some times when you will be available. If a true emergency situation arises, please call 911 or any local emergency room, but in less serious situations you can try me at my cell number (619-314-5560). If you are unable to reach me and feel that you cannot wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

EMERGENCIES

San Diego Psychology & Telehealth refers out patients in need of immediate inpatient care. We do not treat acutely ill individuals, and if a patient needs immediate care, they are referred to the Psychiatric Hospital of San Diego County at 3853 Rosecrance St., San Diego, CA, 92110 for mental health emergencies. In case of an immediate mental health emergency, a 5150 or 5250 hold is initiated by contacting the local police department (San Diego Police Department – Northern Division) by dialing 911 or 619-531-2065 or 858-552-1700. In case of a medical emergency, the San Diego Police Department – Northern Division is also contacted at 911 or 619-531-2065 or 858-552-1700. San Diego Psychology & Telehealth does not transfer patients, and refers transfers to qualified persons such as the San Diego Police, or the local Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) of San Diego County by dialing 911. PERT Provides emergency assessment and referral for individuals with mental illness who come to the attention of law enforcement through phone calls from community members or in-field law enforcement request for emergency assistance. PERT pairs licensed mental health clinicians with uniformed law enforcement officers/deputies. Clinicians work out of individual law enforcement divisions and respond in the field with their law enforcement partners. The PERT team evaluates the situation, assesses the individual's mental health condition and needs, and, if appropriate, transports individual to a hospital or other treatment center, or refers them to a community-based resource or treatment facility. In addition, you will be asked to fill out an “Emergency Contact Card” with initial documentation designating an emergency contact person in the family, as well as identifying local emergency resources.

Continuity of care is assured by contacting a your primary care physician, psychiatrist, or social worker with relevant information regarding admission or emergency situation including the admitting diagnosis, recent relevant mental health and medical information, history of inpatient

care, and the provider's contact information for correspondence regarding discharge and follow-up care. A release of information is requested for all persons involved in the patient's treatment, except those designated by HIPAA, for whom a release of information is not necessary.

BY CLICKING ON THE CHECKBOX BELOW I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.