

AGREEMENT FOR SERVICES/INFORMED CONSENT



This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies, including limits of confidentiality. Please take a few minutes to read and sign this Agreement, indicating you agree with all the terms below.

Therapist/Client Relationship

At Talk-a-While, our mental health professionals (“therapists”) have the education and licensure requirements to provide mental health services. Each mental health professional utilizes empirically based treatment modalities, and determines the best approach with each client. The therapist goal is to provide a safe and nurturing environment where the client can share their personal emotions, challenges, and stressors. Sessions can sometimes be uncomfortable, upsetting, and frustrating as some of these aspects are discussed and processed.

Our Center provides therapy in various forms including but not limited to: individual, child/adolescent, PCIT (Parent Child Interactive Therapy), couples/co-parenting, family therapy, and group therapy. Each therapist may use different methods to support you in addressing the problems you are experiencing.

In order for therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things during your sessions and at home. Your first session will involve an evaluation of your needs (i.e. intake session). After evaluating your needs, your therapist will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue in therapy. Your therapist will review your plan with you, and you will have the opportunity to give input on your goals and decide whether you would like to continue. Therapy involves a lot of time, money, and energy, so you should be thoughtful about the therapist you will work with. Please be aware that in some cases, the intake session and evaluation of your needs may indicate that our Center is not a good fit for your needs.

Risks and Benefits of Therapy

Therapy is a process that can lead to many benefits to you and the family, including a deeper understanding of yourself, your personal insights and goals, as well as improved relationships including better family dynamics and interactions. Another benefit is resolution to specific problems and significant reductions in feelings of distress. While there are many benefits, therapy has risks as well. During therapy, individuals may experience considerable discomfort and uncomfortable feelings like sadness, anger, shame, guilt, frustration, inadequacy, loneliness, and uncertainty. Please know that you can let us know of any concerns or doubts you may have during your personal path in therapy.

Records and Record Keeping

The laws and standards of mental health professions require that we maintain treatment records for a minimum of seven (7) years from the date therapy terminates; and for a minor client's record for a minimum of seven (7) years from the date the minor reaches eighteen (18) years of age.

Under the law, you are entitled to request inspection or a copy of your records, or have a summary prepared instead. Upon receiving your request, we will provide a response that may include an inspection during work hours, a copy, or a summary of the record. Please be aware that there are circumstances where we are precluded from releasing a minor client's record to the minor's representative/guardian. These circumstances include but are not limited to:

- If the minor has inspection rights of his or her own (when a minor has consented to his or her own treatment); or
- If the mental health provider determines that access to the minor's record would either have a detrimental effect on the provider's professional relationship with the minor or, be detrimental to the minor's physical safety or well-being.

Confidentiality

The information discussed with you in therapy sessions is generally confidential and will not be released to others without your written consent. We respect the sensitive nature of mental health services and the absolute need for privacy and trust between the client and the therapist. Therefore, we will limit our documentation to the minimum information necessary to conform to professional and legal standards.

There are other situations that require only that you provide written advanced consent. Your signature on this Agreement provides consent for those activities, as follows:

- We may occasionally find it helpful to consult other health and mental health professionals ("other professionals") about a case, including other therapists within our Center. During a consultation, we make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of the client. The "other professionals" are also legally bound to keep the information confidential. Following standard practice, we will not inform you about these consultations unless you would like us to do so.
- All of our therapists are bound by the same rules of confidentiality. All staff members have been given training about protecting your privacy and have agreed not to release any information outside of the practice without the permission of a professional staff member. In some cases, we need to share protected information for both clinical and administrative purposes, such as scheduling, billing and quality assurance.
- We are an "out-of-network" provider and will provide you with a superbill with the required information that you may submit to your private insurance company for

possible reimbursement. We will not provide information directly to any insurance company.

There are some situations where we are permitted or required to disclose information without either your consent or authorization:

- If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information concerning your evaluation, diagnosis or treatment, such information is protected by the therapist-patient privilege law. We cannot provide any information without your (or your personal or legal representative's) written authorization, or a court order signed by a judge. If you are involved in or contemplating litigation, you should consult with your attorney to determine whether a court would be likely to order us to disclose information.
- If a government agency is requesting the information for health oversight activities, we may be required to provide it for them.
- If a client files a complaint or lawsuit against us, we may disclose relevant information regarding that client in order to defend ourselves.
- If a client files a worker's compensation claim, the client must execute a release so that we may release the information, records or reports relevant to the claim.

There are some situations in which we are legally obligated to take actions, which we believe are necessary to attempt to protect others from harm and we may have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. Exceptions to confidentiality:

- If there is reason to believe a child, elderly person, or dependent adult is or has been a victim of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect;
- If you threaten to commit serious bodily harm to yourself;
- If you threaten to commit serious bodily harm to another person; or
- If I am presented with a subpoena or court order that has been signed by a judge.

Your Talk-a-While therapist will only reveal the minimum information that is necessary, and will do their best to inform you of the information being disclosed and to whom the disclosure will be provided to before we do so.

The laws governing confidentiality can be quite complex. In situations where specific advice is required, formal legal advice may be needed.

Minors and Confidentiality

If you are a minor, under the age of 18, your parents/guardians may be legally entitled to some information concerning your therapy. Your Talk-a-While therapist will discuss with you and your parents/guardians what type of information is appropriate for them to receive and which specific issues are more appropriately kept confidential.

Fee and Fee Arrangements

Therapy Type:

1st Appointment/Intake Session (80 minutes): \$250.00

Individual, Child/Adolescent, Couples/Co-parenting Therapy Session (50 minutes): \$200.00

Family Therapy Session (70 minutes): \$250.00

Group Therapy & Seminars per Session (75 minutes): \$80.00 or as indicated in flyer

Specialized Therapy:

Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT) Session (50 minutes): \$250.00

Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT) Session (70 minutes): \$315.00

Other Services:

Collaborative Educational Planning (CEP) Session (60 minutes): \$200.00

Ancillary Services:

In some cases, additional fees may incur for services provided on top of the standard fees listed above. These services include report writing, telephone conversations or other communications lasting longer than 10 minutes, consulting with other professionals with your permission, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing other service you may request from your therapist.

If you become involved in legal proceedings that require our participation, you will be expected to pay for all of the professional time, including preparation and transportation costs, even if we are called to testify by another party. We charge \$200 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

Charges for fees:

Fees are charged on credit card accounts 24-hours prior to your scheduled appointment. Failure to make payments on time may result in termination of treatment.

*If any changes are made to fees, you will be notified of any fee adjustment in advance. All fees are due prior to the time of service.

Insurance

This practice is not part of any in-network insurance panels and does not participate in Medicare. Our practice is "out-of-network," which means you pay for your therapy sessions prior to the beginning of each session. If you have mental health benefits that allow you to see an out-of-network therapist (often called a PPO), you may be able to receive partial reimbursement for therapy services. We will provide you with a superbill at the first visit of each month which you may submit to your insurance company for possible reimbursement.

Please contact your insurance provider prior to starting sessions to determine the specifics of your coverage such as the "allowable amount", and requirements because some insurance companies require pre-approval, a valid mental health diagnosis, limit coverage by diagnosis, procedure code or number of visits, and may require that you meet a deductible before they begin to reimburse you.

Please be aware that you are responsible for any and all fees prior to your session.

Cancellation Policy

Standard policy for most therapy centers, including Talk-a-While, is a 48-hour cancellation policy. We understand that from time to time situations may arise that require you to reschedule your session with our office. We will strive to accommodate that as efficiently as best as we can. As a courtesy to other clients and the therapists providing therapy, we respectfully request a 48-hour business hours' notice. If you do not show up for your scheduled therapy appointment, and have not notified us within the 48-hour in advance, payment will be required for the full cost of the session. A total of two missed appointments without prior notification may lead to ending the therapy relationship.

Therapist Availability and Emergencies

The goal of the therapeutic relationship is to empower you to navigate life's difficulties and implement healthier coping strategies without creating a dependence that may limit your growth. Therefore, Talk-a-While does not provide a 24-hour crisis service.

We understand that clients may feel the need to contact our Center during moments of crisis, and we will make an effort to return a call within 24-hours (or by the next business day), but we cannot guarantee your call will be returned immediately. In the event that you are feeling unsafe, or require immediate medical or psychiatric assistance, please call 911, go to the nearest local emergency department, or contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline toll-free at 800-273-8255.

Social Media and Telecommunication

Due to the importance of confidentiality and the importance of the therapeutic relationship, our therapists/staff do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc). Our Center, however, does have Business pages in various social media forums including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Our social media business pages are typically open to anyone in the public for educational resources and program offerings, general information, and blogs on different challenges faced by families, and local resources. Please be aware that your participation including "following", "liking" or "group membership" on our pages may be visible to others.

Electronic Communications

We strive to maintain confidentiality within our electronic communications, whether it is through media, emails and/or text messaging. Threats, however, to confidentiality include, but are not limited to:

- The transmission may be intercepted;
- The transmission may be sent to the wrong recipient; and
- The email or text may be accessed by an unauthorized individual.

If you prefer to communicate via email or text messaging for issues regarding scheduling or cancellations, we can do that. While we attempt to return your messages in a timely manner as discussed above in "Therapist Availability and Emergencies", we cannot guarantee an immediate response and we ask that you refrain from using these forms of communication to discuss therapeutic content and/or request assistance for emergencies. We strive to protect your privacy and maintain confidentiality by maintaining this policy.

Termination of Therapy

Ending a therapeutic relationship can be difficult and it is vital that a termination process be in place to achieve some closure. The length of termination may depend on the length and intensity of the treatment. Your Talk-a-While therapist may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you if your therapist determines that the therapy/service is not being effectively used or if you are in default on payment. Your therapist will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring reasons and purpose of terminating. As a client, you also have a right to terminate therapy or our services at your discretion. If therapy is terminated for any reason or you request another therapist or resources, we will provide you with a list of qualified individuals or organizations. You also have the choice of choosing someone on your own or from another referral source.

Should you fail to schedule an appointment for four consecutive weeks without other advanced arrangements, for legal and ethical reasons, your therapist may discontinue the professional relationship.

Consent to Treatment & Notice of Privacy Practices

I have read *Agreement for Services/Informed Consent* and received a copy of the *Notice of Privacy Practices* requirements under HIPAA Privacy Rule. In signing below, I consent to treatment and agree to abide by its terms during the course of therapy.

Client Name (printed) _____ Date _____

If Couples/Co-parenting therapy, **Client 2 Name (printed)** _____

Client Signature _____

If Couples/Co-parenting therapy, **Client 2 Signature** _____

-----**Signatures required for Minor Client**-----

(Printed name of Minor Client, if 12 or over)

(Signature of Minor Client, if 12 or over)

Date

(Printed name of Parent/Caregiver 1)

(Signature of Parent/Caregiver 1)

Date

(Printed name of Parent/Caregiver 2)

(Signature of Parent/Caregiver 2)

Date