



POLICY INFORMATION SHEET

This copy is for you to keep.

Payment Policy:

Payment is due at the time of each session. The fee for **telephone calls with your therapist** is \$30 per 15 minutes for calls in excess of 10 minutes (not insurance billable.) The therapists are here to help you, and their time and yours is better served meeting directly with you in person.

Cancellation Policy:

We require 24 hours notice of your decision to cancel a scheduled appointment. For any unattended appt without 24 hr. notice, **you will be charged a fee of \$50**. If you are using insurance, please be aware that your insurance does not cover missed appointments and you will be billed our fee per session. Missed appointments will be immediately charged to a credit/debit card account of your choosing. Payment of any outstanding late cancel or missed appointment fees is required in order to schedule your next appointment. Client may grant consent to Samaritan for billing the credit/debit card account, provided by client, as specified above. Please be advised, if you do not cancel or attend your first appointment, payment will be required in order to schedule another appointment for intake.

Samaritan LCSW, PC Training Program:

Samaritan Licensed Clinical Social Work, PC is also a training center for intern and resident therapists. We take the responsibility of being gatekeepers to the field of mental health very seriously. The training program consists of both internship and residency opportunities. Our interns and resident undergo a strict interview and screening process and are chosen from a competitive pool of candidates. Participants in the training program are monitored under close intensive supervision in an effort to provide our clients with the highest quality in psychotherapeutic services. This may include that you will be asked to agree to have your sessions audio or videotaped to ensure the best possible treatment. All recordings are immediately destroyed following case consultation. Our commitment to our clients, ensuring the best possible treatment while attending therapy at the center and our legal, moral and ethical integrity are our priority.

Confidentiality:

Your relationship to your therapist and to the center is a personal and private matter. On occasion your therapist may be assisted by requesting information from other professionals with whom you have had contact. No contact will be made with any outside person and/or agency without your written permission, except in the event of danger to yourself and others, or with your written permission to receive payment from a third-party payer (i.e. insurance company) for services we provide for you.

Family Therapy:

Samaritan Counseling Center is dedicated to the foundation of family, first and foremost. We will make every and any attempt to incorporate as many members of a child/individuals natural environment part of their treatment for the purposes of increasing support and the reduction of outside stressors. Given our focus on the the family, The Samaritan Counseling Center **does not see children or adolescents individually, unless otherwise indicated**. Rather, our intake process involves a three session assessment. The first appointment requires that minimally the child along with his/her parent(s)/ guardian(s)

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meeting with therapist. The following two appointments include a combination of meetings with parents/guardians, child, family members who reside in the household and any other supports important to your child's care. At the end of this process the therapist will meet with you to provide feedback and discuss treatment recommendations and options.

Contacting Therapist Between Appointments:

You may contact your therapist via voicemail with any issues regarding scheduling appointments, policy, billing and other non-emergency or non-clinical concerns. In case of a life threatening emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. We strive to respond to communications within 48 business hours if possible. **E-Mail:** Your therapist may use email in order to arrange appointments or address billing questions but will not respond to any other matters via email. **Social Media:** We are committed to maintaining professional and ethical boundaries that include, but are not limited to, protecting the privacy and confidentiality of our therapeutic relationship. Therefore, your therapist will not accept "friend" or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site. **Legal:** Any email exchange between you and your therapist become a part of your Legal Clinical Record.

Center Policy on Legal Matters and Documentation:

Our therapists do not participate in legal/court proceedings. Our commitment to the profession is to protect the confidential nature of the therapeutic relationship unless there is the threat of harm to oneself or someone else, in which instance the appropriate authorities will be immediately contacted. Ethically, it is a violation of a therapeutic relationship and can damage that relationship in ways that clients cannot, nor in many instances, can others foresee. We do not weigh in at any point, on legal matters, even if it is potentially beneficial or considered advocacy for the client.

First and foremost we are clinicians and our primary obligation to the profession and to you as the client is to provide therapeutic services, we are in no way, shape or form a part of the "system," nor is therapy a place where judgements made about anything legal in orientation. There are facilities and providers that provide evaluations for court related matters, they have specific state credentialing and specialize in that service. We do not. It is not what we do. The only circumstance under which a center employee will ever breach the confidentiality of a therapeutic contract is if served with a judicial subpoena. Not a subpoena from an attorney or an agency or anywhere else.

In the event, there is a request for documentation to provide to a court/disability services, we would provide a minimum of a three session assessment and then provide maximally a treatment summary. A treatment summary is a two to three line summary listing the dates of the assessment, who was present, the contract developed for treatment if any and any treatment recommendation made, whether or not the client was agreeable to the contract/recommendation and is planning to follow through. In the event someone other than the client is requesting records, only a treatment summary is provided, unless there is a judicial subpoena for records. If a client requests their own records, our policy and procedures state explicitly that these need to be requested in writing from the client. Upon receipt of that letter, the client will be contacted by someone at the center to schedule a time when those records are released. At that time, the records are to be reviewed by the client in the presence of a clinician. They are then welcome to a copy of those records for **\$.75/page**. There is a **\$120/hr fee** for any and all letter writing and this will not be billed to an insurance company. If there is a custody/visitation issue in a family system being treated, you will be asked ask for a copy of any family court decision regarding custody and/or visitation and that will become part of the clinical record.

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~ Client Rights and Responsibilities ~

Clients have the Right to Receive Services:

- With respect for cultural and ethnic identity, religion, disability, gender, age, marital status and sexual orientation.
- In a physical environment that is safe, sanitary, conducive to effective treatment and which appropriately safeguards the privacy and confidentiality of client/provider interaction.
- From providers who are qualified, competent, focused on each individual's care and are reasonably accessible to the client. Free of unprofessional involvement with providers or staff.
- That emphasize client participation in developing a treatment plan which is specific to his or her needs, and includes the client's agreement to work toward defined goals.

Clients have the Right to Current Information Concerning:

- Diagnosis, treatment, benefits and costs in the terms that the client can reasonably understand.
- Names and credentials of providers involved in the client's care. Practices that relate to client care and treatment services. - Client's responsibilities to ensure better treatment outcomes.
- Records pertaining to the client's care, having the information explained or interpreted as necessary, except when protected or restricted by law.
- Resources available through Samaritan Counseling Center for communicating concerns or questions and for resolving disputes, conflicts or grievances.

Clients have the Right to Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality:

- In case discussions, consultations, examinations and treatment services.
- In communications and records pertaining to care, except cases such as suspected abuse and danger to self or others, when reporting is permitted or required by law.
- In cases where clinical information is shared to assure medical appropriateness, such as to a referring primary care physician, a signed release will be obtained from the client. The confidentiality of the information will be emphasized when any information is released.
- **Clients with concerns about treatment may call the Clinical Director at (518) 374-3514.**

~Insurance vs. Private Pay ~

Using Insurance

Lack of Confidentiality: a case manager and billing staff at the insurance company will be aware of your diagnosis and treatment plan; many health benefits are also contingent on periodic updates from your therapist; your therapy may become part of your permanent medical record.

Type of Treatment: treatment is crisis-oriented and required to be brief, focused and, behavioral only; growth oriented treatment is not covered.

Limited Number of Sessions: a case manager at the insurance company will decide how many sessions are covered; longer-term treatment is only allowed if it is "medically necessary" with a more serious diagnosis, and your insurance contract still sets the number of sessions covered.

Possible Denial of Life Insurance: some life insurance policies have been denied to those using mental health coverage, which is seen as a risk.

Initial Low Copay: many mental health plans do offer a low copay; however, a large deductible may first need to be paid. Out-of-pocket and/or co-pay may increase over time.

Private Pay

Complete Confidentiality: your case record is the property of Samaritan Counseling Center; information would only be released if legally required or if you gave your consent.

Type of Treatment: treatment can focus both on specific crises and on changing long-term patterns.

Unlimited Number of Sessions: you won't need to worry about being denied sessions; treatment can be growth-oriented; there is no time limit.

Life Insurance Policies: no medical record exists that could interfere in your gaining other policies.

Payment: often, fees can be equal to a copay that increases overtime; if a pre-tax account is used, you may even pay less than some copays.

Medical Flex Account/Cafeteria Plan: some employers allow you to set aside annual pre-tax dollars to pay for medical expenses. This can reduce your costs for counseling even more; depending on your tax bracket, you could save approximately 25% of the cost of treatment; check with your employer to see if they offer such a plan, as many require a sign-up each year.

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