



## **Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc.**

---

### **DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Welcome to Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota! While this is a lengthy document, please read through it entirely and if you have any questions or concerns about these policies please feel free to discuss at any time.

#### **Mission**

Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc. promotes the enhancement of the quality of life for adults, children and families by providing comprehensive individual and family centered services that integrate mental and behavioral health, and educational services to help foster the total development (mind, body, and spirit) of each individual we serve.

Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc. is committed to empowering our clients to help enhance and maintain skills necessary to help each individual function effectively within his/her own life and contribute responsibly to our community.

#### **The Process of Therapy/Evaluation**

##### ***Intake Packet***

Prior to your initial appointment you will be asked to complete a Personal History Information form and clinical forms that request your signature. This information assists your therapist in your care; therefore, complete and accurate information is important.

##### ***What to Expect***

Video conferencing is offered via Doxy.me. The platform can be accessed in Chrome at <https://doxy.me/creativecounselingsrq>. It is recommended that you log on at least five (5) minutes prior to your session start time, as you are responsible for initiating the connection at the time of your session. The intake appointment will take approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours and will consist of review of your personal history and assessment of your clinical needs and treatment goals. Therapeutic fit will also be assessed, as it is a key factor to success in therapy. While it is important to ensure your therapist has the necessary qualifications, skills and expertise it is of equal importance that the relationship feels comfortable. Further, questions and concerns are addressed during this time, as well as scheduling (frequency, dates and times). Within a reasonable period of time after starting treatment, we will discuss a proposed treatment plan, therapeutic objectives and possible outcomes of therapy.

##### ***Limitations of Distance Counseling (Telehealth)***

Distance counseling/Telehealth should not be viewed as a substitute for face-to-face counseling or medication by a psychiatrist or other physician. It is an alternative form of counseling with certain limitations. Distance counseling may have disruptions in service and quality of the technology used and may not be appropriate if you are having a crisis, acute psychosis or suicidal or homicidal thoughts.

##### ***Emergency Management for Distance Counseling***

For your safety, in case of emergency, the following are important and necessary, and must be understood and agreed upon-



- You will inform your therapist of the location in which you will consistently be during your sessions, and inform your therapist if this location changes.
- You will identify on your Client Information Form, a person, whom your therapist is allowed to contact in case you are believed to be at risk.
- Depending on assessment of risk, you or your therapist may be required to verify that your emergency contact person is able and willing to go to your location in the event of an emergency and if deemed necessary, call 911 and/or transport you to a hospital or crisis stabilization unit. In addition, your therapist may assess and subsequently require that you create a safe environment at your location during the entire time you are receiving treatment. This may mean disposing of all firearms and excess medication from your location.

### ***Backup Plan in Case of Technology Failure***

The most reliable backup plan is a phone; therefore, it is recommended that you always have a phone available and that your therapist know the number. If you are disconnected from video conferencing, end and restart the session by logging on to <https://doxy.me/creativecounselingsrq>. If you are unable to reconnect within five (5) minutes call your therapist. If you are unable to reconnect via video, the session may continue via phone.

### ***Commitment, Benefits and Risks***

Participation in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improved interpersonal relationships and resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy and in order to be most effective, the therapeutic counseling process requires your active involvement, honesty and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings and/or behavior. Your feedback and views on your therapy and its progress will be solicited.

There is a recognition that while there are benefits associated with counseling there are also risks and during the initial evaluation or over the course of treatment, remembering unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts may result in your experiencing considerable discomfort, anxiety, depression, anger, insomnia, etc. Some changes may lead to what seems to be worsening circumstances or even losses, for example, counseling may not necessarily keep a marriage intact, and attempting to resolve issues that brought you into therapy may result in changes that were not originally intended. Therapy may result in decisions to change behaviors, employment, substance use, education, housing or relationships. Change can sometimes be quick and easy; however, most times it is slow or gradual and frustrating. While there is an expectation that therapy will be helpful, there is no guarantee of any specific outcome; therefore, it is imperative that you discuss any questions or concerns about the process at any point during treatment.

### ***Termination and Follow-Up***

Deciding when to end therapy is meant to be a mutual process. Before ending, we will discuss how you will know if or when to come back or whether a regularly scheduled “check in” might work best for you. If it is not possible for you to phase out therapy, it is recommended that there is closure on the therapy process with at least one termination session.

Noncompliance with treatment recommendations may necessitate early termination of services. I will assess your issues with you and exercise my educated judgment about what treatment may be in your best interest. Your responsibility is to make a good faith effort to fulfill the treatment recommendations to which you have agreed. If you have concerns or reservations about treatment recommendations, I strongly encourage you to express them so that any possible differences or misunderstandings may be resolved.



If during our work together I assess that I am not effective in helping you reach your therapeutic goals, I will discuss this with you and if appropriate terminate treatment and give you referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, I may talk to the therapist of your choice in order to help with the transition. You have the right to terminate treatment at any time and if you choose to do so, I will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

### **Dual Relationships**

Therapy never involves sexual, business or any other dual relationships that could impair a therapist's objectivity, clinical judgment or therapeutic effectiveness or could be exploitive in nature. It is possible that during the course of treatment, I may become aware of other preexisting relationships that may affect our work together, and I will do my best to resolve these situations ethically, but this may entail our needing to stop working together, depending on the type of conflict. Please discuss with me if you have questions or concerns.

### **Scheduling, Cancellations and Lateness**

To schedule an appointment call the main number (941) 932-1134. In an effort to maintain consistency, every effort is made to have a set schedule for appointments; however, your scheduled day/time may vary. There is great respect for time, as everyone's time is valuable; therefore, sessions begin at the appointed time. If I am running behind for some reason, the full 60-minute session will be honored.

Your appointment time is a personal commitment and is held specifically for you. It is extremely difficult to fill your cancelled session on short notice; therefore, half of your session fee is charged for appointments cancelled **with less than 24 hours notice.**

If you are running late for your appointment, please phone or text me as soon as possible to let me know you will be late. If I do not hear from you by 15 minutes into your session, I will call to check on you to touch base and make sure you are okay. If you are late for your session, the session will still end at the regular time. If you do not show for your appointment, you will be charged your full session fee. Also upon scheduling a missed appointment, your preferred time cannot be guaranteed.

Cancellations should be made at least 24 hours prior to your scheduled appointment time in order to avoid a cancellation fee. If you know you will not be able to keep your appointment contact the office as soon as possible. You may leave a voice mail, send a text or email to inform the office of a cancellation on evenings and weekends. After a cancellation or no show it is your responsibility to contact the office to reschedule your appointment, and please be aware your preferred time cannot be guaranteed. If you cancel or fail to show for two consecutive appointments Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota reserves the right not to reschedule your appointment.

### **Payment and Financial Arrangements**

The standard fee is \$100.00 for a 60-minute session. Prorated fees are offered for extended sessions at the same rate (e.g. \$150.00 for 90 minute session). Most major credit cards are accepted including health savings account credit cards. All fees and co-pays are payable to Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota at the time of each session via the website- [www.creativecounselingsrq.org](http://www.creativecounselingsrq.org).

A reduced fee is an option based upon income and circumstances. If the fee is a concern, please discuss with me and if I am unable to accommodate your financial situation, I will provide you with referrals.



### ***Billing and Insurance***

It is your responsibility to ensure proper authorization and in network participation prior to making an appointment. It is recommended that you read your policy manual or call your insurance company to learn about benefits and coverage of your policy. Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc. will submit your insurance claim; therefore, it is important that you have your correct insurance information at the time of your appointment and that you notify your therapist if your insurance coverage changes anytime during your care. Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc. participates with the following insurance companies- Magellan (AvMed, TriWest); Humana TRICARE (Prime or Standard); ValueOptions (Emblem Health Non HMO, New York State Empire Plan, Value Options Commercial Non HMO, MVO Commercial Non HMO Network-IPA); Sunshine Health (AmBetter, Medicaid, Healthy Kids, Child Welfare, Long Term Care); Cigna Behavioral Health; Optum Behavioral Health; Coventry Health Care of Florida; Beacon Health Options (Clear Health Alliance Health Plan, ValueOptions Commercial HMO Network IPA, Optimum Health Plan Dual Medicaid). If you have another type of insurance, Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc. will be considered an out of network provider and you will need to contact your insurance provider and inquire about your out of network benefits. Should you choose to pay for services out of pocket and seek reimbursement from your insurance company, Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc. will provide you with a receipt for submission to your insurance company for reimbursement. Please be advised that insurance companies require reporting a diagnosis to process insurance claims.

### ***Other Professional Services and Fees***

In the event consultation services are required (i.e. with psychiatrists, primary care physicians, school professionals, or previous treatment providers), you will be billed at the regular session fee in 15 minute increments.

### ***Court Proceedings/Litigation***

If you are in a divorce or custody litigation or involved in the court system in any other manner, please be advised it is not policy to serve as a witness or advocate for you in court proceedings; however, if I need to prepare documentation for any court proceeding, a fee will be assessed. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation you will be expected to pay for my professional time and services. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement and the interruption to my regular practice, there is a \$250.00 per hour charge for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

### **Phone Calls, Emails, and Emergencies**

For small administrative matters such as checking appointment times, cancelling and rescheduling, you are welcomed to either call and leave a voice mail, text or email. The time you attempt contact is date and time stamped and will be used in determining the amount of notice given for cancelled appointments.

A therapist is not available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to handle emergencies, nor does Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc. provide emergency therapy services. Although every effort is made to be available to you if crises arise, there is no guarantee a therapist will be available in an emergency situation. In the event of an emergency, dial 911, go to the nearest emergency room or call one of the following resources that provide emergency support:

- 24- Hour Crisis Stabilization Unit (941) 364-9355; 1451 10<sup>th</sup> Street Sarasota, Florida 34236
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-TALK (8255) or (800) SUICIDE (7842433)



Taking time off is part of self-care. I will periodically take time off for vacation or other related matters, which may temporarily interrupt your sessions. I will give advance notice whenever possible. If for some reason I cannot make your scheduled appointment due to illness, a family emergency, etc. I will do my best to contact you as early as possible.

### **Confidentiality**

I have a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) with Doxy.me, which means they have safety measures in place to keep your personal health information (PHI) secure and confidential, and they are regulated by the government.

As a therapy client you have privileged communication which means all information disclosed during your session and written records of those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission, except where law requires disclosure. Exceptions include the following:

- When there is reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect
- When a client presents a danger to self and/or others or is at imminent risk of harm to self or others
- In a legal proceeding under legal obligation to comply with a judge's court order of subpoena of records
- In couple or relationship therapy or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege does not apply between the couple or among family members; clinical judgment is used when revealing such information
- Your health insurance carrier may require disclosure of personal health information in order to process claims and only the minimum necessary information will be communicated (including diagnosis, the date and length of sessions and what services were provided, and sometimes treatment summaries or progress toward goals); while insurance companies claim to keep this information confidential, I have no control over the information once it is submitted
- Use of electronic communication (i.e. email and text), as they cannot be guaranteed to be confidential although provisions to secure confidentiality will be taken whenever possible; email and text messaging should be limited to scheduling and changing appointments and billing matters; please do not email or text about clinical matters as these are not secure ways to contact me
- Considering all the above exclusions, upon your request and with your written consent, I may release limited information to any person/agency you specify unless I conclude that releasing such information might be harmful to you



## Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc.

---

### SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This document outlines Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota, Inc.'s policies related to use of Social Media. Please review and if you have any questions you are encouraged to discuss during your intake appointment. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when this policy is updated and you will be notified in writing of any policy changes and given a copy of the updated policy.

#### *Friending*

Friend requests or contact requests from current or former clients are not accepted on any social networking site (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.). Adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and your therapist's privacy, and may also blur the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship.

Clients may choose to follow or not the postings of Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota; however, clients will not be followed via social networking. In addition, viewing of clients' online activities without consent and without explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on the therapeutic relationship. If there are posts or any other information that you wish to share with me, please bring to your session where it can be shared together.

#### *Interacting*

Please do not contact Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota via messaging on sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter. These sites are not secure and may not be read in a timely manner. Also please be aware that electronic means (i.e. email and text) are not completely secure and therefore cannot be guaranteed to be confidential. Provisions to secure confidentiality will be taken whenever possible; however, email and text messaging should be limited to scheduling and changing appointments and billing matters; please do not email or text about clinical matters as these are not secure ways to contact me. If you chose to communicate via email, be aware that emails are retained in the logs of the respective internet service providers. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they are in theory available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the internet service provider. Also, please be aware that any emails received from you and any responses sent to you become part of your legal record. If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do it is by phone.

#### *Business Review Sites*

You may find Creative Counseling Solutions of Sarasota on sites such as Healthgrades or other business listing sites. Some of these sites include forums in which users rate their providers and add reviews. Many of these sites comb search engines for business listings and automatically add listings regardless of whether the business has added itself to the site. If you should find my listing on any of these sites, please know that it is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as my client, as I do not solicit testimonials. Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish; however, due to confidentiality, I cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. I urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as I take my commitment of confidentiality to you. While working together you are encouraged to directly share your feelings and reactions related to the therapy process. This can be an important part of therapy, even if you decide it is not a good fit.