

Phyllis M. Richardson, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist

OFFICE POLICIES

Appointments

Sessions are by appointment and are 45 minutes long. I agree to meet you at the time agreed upon. If I am late, I will make up the missed time or prorate the session fee. If you are late, you will be charged the full session fee and the session will not be extended. I ask that you avoid missing appointments. Things do come up, however, so if you must cancel, please notify me 24 hours in advance. There is a \$50 charge for missed appointments and late cancellations and I will ask for this to be paid at the next appointment. Be aware that insurance companies do not pay for missed appointments.

Fees

The fee for the intake session is \$225. I will expect this to be paid at the time of the first session, unless other arrangements have been made. The fee for subsequent individual psychotherapy sessions is \$170. I will charge \$60 per hour for any activity outside of the therapy session, such as preparing reports, completing forms for disability claims or medical leave from work, coordinating care with other professionals, etc. I will also charge \$60/ hr for telephone calls longer than 10 minutes (\$1/min) outside of normal business hours (9-5). The fee for court appearance and preparation is \$135/hr. (There would be no charge to you if I am required by the court to appear on behalf of the “other side.”)

If you are using insurance to pay most of the cost, you are expected to pay your portion (the co-pay) at the time of the service. Check with your insurance company to confirm that I am an authorized provider. You are responsible to understand your benefits; for example, the maximum number of sessions allowed, over what time period, what your deductible is, etc. While I will keep track of how many sessions we have had at any time, it is your responsibility to make sure you do not run over your benefit amount. You are responsible for any account balance that your insurance company does not pay. Please keep me informed of any changes in insurance policies or carriers.

I do my own billing. I will bill your insurance company. There is no charge for phone calls regarding your account or any billing matter. There is a \$21 service charge for returned checks.

Contacting Me

I am a one-person office. I have no secretary or answering service. You can contact me by leaving a message for me to call you. Please leave your phone number on the message, even if you know I have it. Also leave times that I can best reach you. I am in my office Mondays through Fridays, except Tuesdays. When I am in my office, I check my messages frequently but not always hourly. I make every attempt to be timely in returning calls.

Emergencies

If you need to reach me in an emergency, call my office number and follow the instructions for an emergency call. Those instructions will give you my cell phone number for after hours calls: 971-212-9134. When I am out of town, there will be an on-call therapist available for you and that information will be on my phone greeting. If you ever cannot reach me or my “back up” and you are in a mental health crisis, call the Multnomah County Crisis Line at 503-988-4888. In a life-threatening emergency, of course, call 911 or get yourself to the nearest hospital emergency room.

Records

Since HIPPA, I keep information about you in two sets of professional records. The clinical file includes information about your reasons for seeking therapy, a description of the ways in which your problem impacts your life, your symptoms, diagnosis, medical, social and treatment history, treatment goals, and progress toward these goals. It also includes all of the forms you complete, correspondence with or records from other providers, reports that I complete and send out, copies of information sent to your insurance company, records of contacts with other providers about your care.

I also keep a separate file of psychotherapy notes. These are notes designed to help me remember important facts about your life or history, about what’s happening in the therapy, what I might want to consider or try in the next session, etc. There might be particularly sensitive information about you in these notes that are not required to be included in your clinical file. Insurance companies cannot receive a copy of your psychotherapy notes without your written authorization and, really, have no need for them. Be careful about what you are authorizing. Insurance companies cannot require you to release your psychotherapy notes as a condition of coverage nor can they penalize you for not releasing them.

You have the right to review or receive a copy of your records, unless I think that this would negatively impact you. In such a case, I would provide you with an explanation and a summary. Request for your records should be made in writing. I ask for a reasonable amount of time to assess for possible negative impact and to be present when you review the records. This would be to explain terms used, clarify misinterpretations

or to help process upsetting material. If you ask for a copy of your record, I will charge \$1 per page of photocopying.

I am very careful with client records. I keep current client charts in a locked file in my locked office. Inactive client charts are kept in a locked file cabinet in a locked area in the basement of this office building. The office building has a security alarm and windows have security bars.

Office Building Etiquette and Parking

While there is a parking lot in the back of the building, it is for office building tenants only. You can park on the nearby streets and come in the front door of the building--the back door is kept locked for security. There is a small waiting area in the building lobby. If the door to my office is closed, that means that I am in session or on the phone. I ask that you wait in the lobby area; I will come to look for you at our appointment time. If you are late for an appointment, please come to my office door. Knock, if it is closed; I will then know to come and get you from the waiting area. If you would like, you may leave by the back door and walk around the side of the building to the street.

I have read this policy statement and understand its provisions.

Signed: _____ Date: _____