



PROFESSIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT AND INFORMED CONSENT

Nature and Purpose of Counseling

Counseling is a unique and professional relationship between a client and a counselor in which both parties collaborate to help the client grow, mature, and overcome difficulties in the his/her life. Counselors at Grapevine Counseling Center utilize Cognitive Behavioral, Interpersonal, Gestalt, Motivational Interviewing, Emotion Focused, and a variety of other established counseling theories and techniques to promote positive change in their clients. Counselors at Grapevine Counseling Center operate from a Christian worldview which influences their understanding of the healing process. Grapevine Counseling Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. Consequently, our counselors are prepared to meet with clients from any religious background. Ethically, however, they cannot help clients accomplish goals or behaviors that are contrary to their beliefs. Should such a conflict arise please speak with your counselor, and if the situation cannot be resolved they will provide referrals for other counselors who could better meet your needs.

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Limits on Confidentiality

Information discussed in the counseling office is considered private and confidential much in the same way as a doctor/patient relationship. There are, however, circumstances when disclosure can occur without your prior consent. The following are typical, but not exhaustive, examples of situations and circumstances under which information may be disclosed without prior consent:

- Your counselor assesses that are a danger to yourself or someone else
- In situations of suspected child abuse, elder abuse, or abuse of a disabled person
- Upon disclosure of sexual contact with another mental health professional
- Your counselor is ordered by the court or otherwise legally required to disclose information
- Your counselor is discussing aspects of your records with other professionals to determine the best course of treatment
- The handling of scheduling and filing of your records by clerical staff

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Confidentiality in Couple's or Family Counseling

If you enter therapy as a couple or family, it is important that you understand that the couple or family and not the individuals within the system, is considered the client. As such, it is standard practice for all concerned parties to be present during counseling as much as possible. In the course of treatment, there may be situations in which one party or another meets with the therapist individually. In such circumstances the following conditions will be in place:

- Other members involved in counseling will be made aware of the individual session and

have the opportunity to respond

- Individual sessions will be added as needed to benefit the system as a whole
- Individual sessions, even if beneficial to you on the one hand, do not become a hindrance to your overall ability to take hold of, organize, and manage your own personal growth while in the presence of others in therapy

If therapy is started for a couple or family and one person chooses to disclose secret, personal information (such as an affair, mismanagement of financial resources, etc...) in an individual session, that information will be held in confidence between that person and the counselor with the following provisions:

- Ramifications of the disclosed information will be examined
- Options as to what to do with the disclosed information in relationship to the marriage or family will be examined
- You will be encouraged to take personal responsibility and proceed with integrity as this information is processed and applied to the growth process of the marriage or family

Because family systems cannot thrive when secrets are present, your therapist will ask that information pertinent to the health of the marriage or family be disclosed in a timely and appropriate manner. If you are not willing to do this and the withholding of this information creates a block in the process of marriage or family counseling your therapist may suggest termination of the counseling and provide referrals for other therapeutic options.

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Benefits and Risks of Counseling

Therapy can have many benefits and risks. Change is difficult. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of life, at times you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, anger, guilt, shame, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, counseling often brings greater freedom, increased happiness, restored relationships, deeper friendships, increased confidence, and spiritual transformation. It is, however, impossible to guarantee specific results regarding your therapeutic goals.

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Course of Treatment

During the initial visit, your counselor will seek to understand your situation and help clarify your goals. On approximately your second visit, your counselor will provide you with a plan of care outlining the working understanding of the problem, a treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and possible treatment alternatives. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of therapy or about the treatment plan, please ask and your counselor will explain them to you. You have the right to decline any services provided by Grapevine Counseling Center or request alternative treatment options. It is important that you are engaged in the treatment process because the degree of your participation will affect the degree of success you experience. It is also very important that you complete the entire course of treatment, not circumventing the full therapeutic process. Sometimes people experience a high degree of relief early on in therapy. Other times, change is slower and the process may not be pleasant. People in both situations may be tempted to end counseling prematurely. If you find yourself wanting to stop counseling before completing your plan of care it is extremely important that you discuss this with your counselor. Failure to do so increases the risk that your situation may worsen. Please notify your counselor at the beginning of treatment if you are currently

receiving therapy from another professional. Your counselor may ask you to discontinue therapy elsewhere if you decide to begin therapy at Grapevine Counselor Center.

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Concerns or Complaints

If you have a complaint or concern, we strongly encourage you to inform your counselor. Your counselor will work hard to understand and resolve any differences you may encounter. Furthermore, working through a conflict can be of tremendous therapeutic benefit. If, however, you cannot resolve the issue, and wish to discontinue therapy, as per your right, your counselor will be happy to provide referrals for other treatment options. If you feel you must make a formal complaint you may do so by contacting the Texas Board of Licensed Professional Counselors in one of the following ways: By mail at Management and Investigative Section P.O. Box 141369 Austin, Texas 78714-1369 or by calling 1-800-942-5540.

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Scheduling, Fees, and Payment

Counseling sessions are scheduled by calling the primary office number (817-778-9071). The fee for each 45 minutes session is \$125.00. In order to facilitate payment, Grapevine Counseling Center requires that a credit card number be kept on file to be charged for any unpaid fees at the end of the session. The credit card information is stored in a secure, PCI compliant, virtual safe and all paper records of the card are shredded. Should you wish to avoid charging your card, you are welcome to pay with cash, check (made payable to "Grapevine Counseling Center"), or an alternate card at the beginning of the session. **Please note that returned checks will incur an addition \$35.00 fee.** In some cases, a third party may be paying for counseling sessions. If this is the case, please discuss this arrangement with your counselor at the beginning of the counseling process. It is important to note that regardless of the third party involvement you, the client, are ultimately financially responsible for the counseling fees.

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Cancelling a Session

If you must reschedule or cancel a session, please inform Grapevine Counseling Center at least 24 hours in advance. **If you fail to cancel your session at least 24 hours in advance you will be charged the full fee of your session unless you are able to re-schedule your appointment for the same calendar week.** If you are more than 20 minutes late or fail to attend your session (No Show) without notifying your counselor in advance your session may be cancelled and you will be charged the full fee for the appointment unless you are able to re-schedule your appointment for the same calendar week. If your counselor is unable to attend your session, they will attempt to notify you as soon as possible concerning the cancellation. If your counselor will be unavailable for longer than one week, they will discuss this absence with you in advance and provide you with the name of an alternate counselor with whom you may meet should you feel the need to see someone during their absence

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Inclement Weather Policy

Grapevine Counseling Center does not cancel individual or couples sessions due to inclement weather. If you do not feel comfortable traveling to the office your counselor may be able to host your session via HIPAA compliant video conference call or telephone call. If you cancel due to inclement weather your cancellation will fall under the regular cancellation procedures discussed above.

Telephone and Emergency Procedures

Phone consultations with your counselor should be limited to scheduling or brief clarifications and should last no longer than 5-10 minutes. If the call lasts longer than 10 minutes you may be charged as follows:

Phone call lasting 11-15 minutes	Charge of 1/3 your session fee
Phone call lasting 16-30 minutes	Charge of 2/3 your session fee
Phone call lasting 31-45 minutes	Charge of your full session fee

This office is not a 24 hour emergency service. **If you experience a medical or mental health emergency please call 9-1-1 or a suicide hotline immediately.** The phone number for the **National Suicide Crisis Center is 1-800-273-8255.** Should you require an urgent appointment please call our mail line (817-778-9071) to set up that appointment.

Confidential Communication with Your Therapist

Your security and privacy are of utmost importance to Grapevine Counseling Center. Understanding how to communicate confidentially with your therapist can help ensure your privacy. The most confidential way to communicate is by speaking over the phone. If you would like to communicate with your therapist in written format Grapevine Counseling Center utilizes a HIPAA compliant email system called "Hush Mail," which has the ability to encrypt messages. To use "Hush Mail" you must use a pre-established password. Right now, please create a password and reminder question that will be easy for you to remember (example: Reminder Question: "What is the name of my first pet?" Answer: "Sparky").

Reminder Question: _____

Password Answer (case sensitive): _____

To utilize Hushmail, you must request that your counselor send you an email message with a link to a secure website. From that website you may click "REPLY" to the message sent to you. In doing so, your email will come to your counselor in encrypted format. Please note that if you simply send an email from your regular email account it will not be encrypted and will not be a HIPAA compliant form of communication.

Voicemails and texting are less secure ways of communication. Grapevine Counseling Center utilizes a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) business voice system. Text messages and voicemails are stored on a secure web server before being routed to the office phones which are restricted by passcode. Despite this high level of security, Grapevine Counseling Center cannot guarantee against a security breach. Consequently, we ask clients to read and acknowledge the following information for how texting and voicemails may be used at this practice.

- In this practice we use an app for locking / unlocking the entrance to the building in order to provide secure access. This requires the use of texting – i.e., that you text your counselor to give notice of your arrival so that the door may be unlocked via the app.
- In this practice we may use texting for making / confirming appointments.
- In this practice texting will NOT be used to provide any counseling services.

- In this practice we highly recommend you NOT text or leave in voicemail format any personal information / personal health information because the privacy of this information cannot be guaranteed. Instead, we recommend you leave brief voicemails or texts requesting a call or “Hush Mail” email in order to transmit your information more securely.

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Dual Relationships and Social Media

In order to protect your confidentiality and ensure the quality of the counseling relationship it is important that counselors not interact with their clients in a manner that is non-counseling in nature (social acquaintance, business partner, etc...). In order to ensure this does not happen, your counselor will not initiate a greeting or spend time with you socially outside the counseling office. In addition, they will not be able to connect with you via social networking sites like Facebook. If we are currently connected via these sites they will have to “un-Friend” you.

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Court Testimony

In regards to legal matters, counselors at Grapevine Counseling Center will not testify or discuss the content of any session with any legal representative unless compelled to do so by a court order. Even then, they will only share very specific content pertinent to the case. Because of the time and preparation involved for court appearances, an hourly fee of \$300.00 may be charged from the time of departure from the office to the time of release by the court with a minimum of 6 hours for each day of the court proceedings. A retainer fee for a minimum of six (6) hours must be paid in advance of the actual court appearance. If you are considering having your counselor testify on your behalf please discuss this with them further. Please note that if you are involved in couples counseling in the unfortunate event of a divorce, your therapist will not be in a position to testify or serve as a witness for either one of you against the other because the couple itself is the client.

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Your Records and Right to Review Them

Your counseling records are kept by Grapevine Counseling Center for 6 years (or 6 years after the client’s 18th birthday) after your counseling has ended. As a client, you have the right to review or receive a summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when your counselor feels that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. Upon receipt of written request, your counselor will release information to any agency/person you specify unless they feel that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. When more than one client is involved in treatment such as in cases of couple or family therapy, your therapist will release records only with signed authorization from all the adults involved in treatment. In the event that Grapevine Counseling Center is dissolved the custody of your records will pass to the care of Debby Wade, LMFT, LPC of ACTSolutions. You may contact her at 923 S. Church Street Grapevine, TX 76051 or through her website at www.debbywade.com

Consent to Enter Treatment

I have read the above statements and understand the nature of services provided, the potential benefits and risks of treatment, the availability of alternative treatments, and the limits of confidentiality outlined above. Understanding these statements I fully consent to treatment.

Client's Name (Please Print)

Client Signature (or client's Guardian if client is under the age of 18)

Date

Therapist Statement

I have inquired to insure that the patient understood the nature of services provided, the potential benefits and risks of treatment, the availability of alternative treatments, and the limits of confidentiality outlined above.

Therapist's Name

Therapist's Signature

Date