

Counseling Services Provided at:

217 Wyoming Avenue, Wyoming, OH 45215

513-289-6759

Counselor-Client Treatment Contract

Welcome to counseling and to my practice in particular, Spirit(ed) Growth LLC. The choice to engage in counseling is a choice for mental health and wellbeing, and I am pleased to be the person you want to walk alongside you on this journey of healing. Please take a few moments to read and complete this document, as it describes the services I provide, the counseling process, and my business policies. This document will serve as your treatment contract for personal treatment (or, if appropriate, treatment for your child or ward). We will review this document together when you are done reading, so please take the opportunity to ask any questions that come to mind.

Therapeutic Services

I am a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor in the State of Ohio. I received my Masters in Community Counseling in a Mental Health Setting in 2002 from the University of Cincinnati and have maintained my credentials and education while being an at-home mom and a yoga studio owner. I am certified in hypnotherapy and trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), both evidence-based treatments for trauma, anxiety, depression, grief, mood disorders, emotional disorders, and peak performance. I have extensive experience in direct client contact providing individual and group therapy. I lead psychoeducational groups and approximately 20 years of experience teaching workshops for adults and children in the private sector and in community mental health and pastoral settings.

I am a firm believer that each person is their own best expert on their lives, but that sometimes life gets challenging and we need someone to guide us, to listen to us, and to witness our commitments to ourselves for positive change. I believe that core to our being is a desire to lead a meaningful life, and that no matter what our story, we can each find our unique path when given the environment and opportunity for safe exploration and self-acceptance. Because of that, my approach to therapy is goal-directed, which means your counseling sessions will be designed to help you overcome your current challenges and reach *your* goals. My approach is also integrative. I may use many different methods to treat the problems you've come to address, including but not limited to: cognitive-behavioral or Gestalt therapy strategies, positive psychology and neuropsychology practices, Jungian psychology and dreamwork, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, hypnotherapy, and evidence-based complementary and alternative therapies such as breathing techniques, meditation, mindbody awareness, yoga, and mindfulness practices. Each of these practices help us explore the messages and connection made in the mind and body while addressing the over-activation of the Autonomic Nervous System and to fostering healing through the Parasympathetic Nervous System or to help explore the messages and connections made in the mind and body. We will discuss each method, how it works, and if it seems a good fit to your counseling and wellness goals prior to use in the session.

How to get the Most from Counseling/The Counseling Process

Counseling is an active process! Unlike a visit to a medical doctor, you will be taking an active role in the counseling process. To get the most from counseling you will need to:

- Attend all scheduled appointments, which will be set mutually and at a pace in alignment with your personal goals and active need.
- Be as open and honest in all communications/sharing as you can.

- Work on the things we discuss during our appointments, and actively practice agreed upon and appropriate “homework” between sessions. Depending on you and your interests, homework may involve trying new strategies for dealing with challenging situations, practicing new skills, having difficult conversations, journaling, reading a recommended book/resource, or any of a number of other practices.
- Show up on time to all scheduled appointments/meetings and arrive ready to “work.”

Our first sessions together will be a process of getting to know each other and evaluating your counseling needs. I will be looking at the information you present and be able to provide some initial impressions in terms of our fit together as a counseling team as well as potential paths forward. Because therapy involves substantial time and money commitments, you should be doing the same: carefully selecting the counselor that you work with and carefully selecting your goals for treatment for the best possible results. If, at this point or at any point in the therapeutic process, you have persisting doubts, we can discuss these issues and I will be happy to help you to find and set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

Should you choose to continue with therapy, we will work together to develop a treatment plan, that is developing overarching goal(s) for the therapeutic process as well as steps that will be taken to get there. We will regularly review the plan to assess progress and make any necessary adjustments. When your goals are achieved, we will formally review the goals, say our goodbyes, create final supports, and terminate the counseling relationship.

While most counseling terminates when your goals have been achieved, there are some circumstances in which you or I will choose to end the counseling relationship without mutual consent. Please know that you are free to terminate therapy at any time and for any reason. If the need to terminate before completion arises, I request, though cannot require, that you discuss your plan to terminate with me. Such a conversation allows a final session to be scheduled so that we can review your progress with respect to your stated goals and discuss any referrals or additional resources that might be beneficial to you.

I reserve the right to end our therapeutic relationship if any policies and procedures stated in this agreement are not abided by or if I determine that someone else may be better suited to meet your specific needs.

Risks and Benefits of Counseling

Counseling and therapy can have benefits and risks. It is challenging to discuss the unpleasant aspects of your life, and sometimes as we approach these topics, challenging and uncomfortable feelings and memories can arise. This may include guilt, shame, anger, depression, or feeling triggered by old memories. Things can get stirred and things may get worse before they can get better. We do our best to work together to keep things in your range of tolerance for the most healing experience.

The benefits of persisting and reaching your goals are great. Life can take on new meaning, relationships can improve, you may feel greater energy, have a clearer sense of your values, solve your problems, and experience more stable mental and physical health. Counseling can be a very empowering process of courageously facing life and creating positive and purposeful change!

Appointments

Once therapy begins, we will typically meet weekly or every other week. Wider spacing is possible in some circumstances by mutual agreement. You will have the ability to choose between standard 50 minute sessions or longer 80 minute sessions. Depending on your needs and situation, some sessions may be longer or more frequent by mutual agreement.

During our appointment, we will schedule your next session. Once an appointment time has been agreed upon and scheduled, you will be expected to attend and pay for it. If you must cancel, I request that you give 24-hour notice as other clients would benefit from the slot with sufficient notice. Insufficient notice will result in being charged for the appointment.

We have made a commitment to one another regarding our time and availability for the appointment. If you are late for your appointment, you will still be charged for the full time allotted to the meeting, regardless of the actual duration of our meeting. I may or may not be able to accommodate an extension of the session, and that determination will be solely mine to make.

If I believe you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of an appointment, I may not begin or I may end the session immediately and ask you to find a safe method of transportation home. In such cases, you will be charged for the full session.

Children may NOT attend counseling sessions unless they are the client of the session. Children under the age of ten may not be left unattended in the reception area. If necessary, please feel free to bring another adult with you to watch your children when you are in a session. The exception to this is newborn or nursing infants or toddlers who can be in the room and under their parent's supervision during the session. Please consider if the presence of your child will be supportive or distracting to your ability to fully engage in the session. Consider the story and emotional range of your experience as you make your decision.

Contact Between Sessions

Please feel free to contact me via phone or email during regular business hours (TWRF: 9am-3pm). Although I am usually not immediately available by phone, I will check messages on regular business days and will return your call as I become available. On weekends and Mondays I do not keep regular business hours; therefore, calls may not be checked, and if they are, will be returned only if urgent. Non-urgent calls will be returned on my next available business day. Emails are generally responded to during business hours within one to two business days. Texting is NOT a reliable form of communication with me and should only be used to notify me of your arrival to the building. Please use phone for the most reliable means of getting information to me.

If you choose to contact me via email, contact will follow similar guidelines to phone contact. Please keep in mind that email contact is considered a less confidential means of communication since others can check your messages or access your account. If I receive an email from you, I will make an assumption that you are okay with the privacy "risk" involved in this form of communication and will respond via email. Before choosing this form of communication, please review my electronic media policy.

If you are unable to reach me and you are experiencing a true emergency, please dial 911 OR go to your local emergency room and ask for the mental health clinician or psychiatrist on call.

If I am unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact if necessary.

Professional Fees and Payments

My fees are \$120 for a 50-minute hour or \$170 for 80-minute sessions.

In addition to weekly appointments, I charge \$25 for each 10 minute increment required to attend to other professional services you may need. Other services can include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings and any other service you may request of me. If your clinical records are subpoenaed or I am subpoenaed, you will be liable for fees generated from any associated time such as testimony, travel, and postage. That said, I do not provide testimony as part of my practice and am happy to refer you if that is a foreseen need, as there are professionals who specialize in this kind of work.

Periodically my fee rate is reassessed. If the fee should change, you will be informed no less than one month prior to a fee increase.

You will be expected to pay your assessed charge at the time service is provided. If possible, you are requested to keep a credit card on file for these payments. In cases of extreme financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or sliding scale or create a payment plan by mutual agreement. Should any part of your account

become 60 days past due, you will be liable for a late charge of \$40. There will be a \$40 charge for checks returned for insufficient funds. After the first returned check, you will no longer be allowed to pay by check.

Insurance

My practice is a fee-for-service practice. At this point in time, I am making a conscious decision NOT to contract with health insurance companies as an in-network provider. In addition, I will not turn in information required for submission of claims. This choice takes cost and time out of the system and is the reason I am able to provide your services at a lower rate than similar counseling services you may be aware of. I can provide receipts, but I do not include diagnostic coding on the receipts.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is maintained as a part of the counseling process in accordance with the ethical standard set forth by my profession and applicable laws. This means that what you share in a session and even the fact that you attend counseling is kept private. You need to know, however, that there are exceptions to confidentiality as dictated by laws and ethical standards:

- Parents, regardless of custody, may have full access to their child's records.
- In the case of reports of child or elderly abuse, I must report to appropriate protective services. Reports will be discussed with you in the session.
- In the case of suicidal ideation, I will discuss and create a plan with you and will inform parties to keep you safe.
- In the event of threat of danger or imminent danger to an outside party, I must report to appropriate parties, protective services, or law enforcement officials.
- I must comply with court orders though will provide only information requested/needed.
- In some cases, I may also choose to consult with other professionals on cases. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. Professional consultants are also legally bound to maintain your confidentiality to the same standards as I am. If you do not object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel it is important to our work together.

Agreement/Signature

Your signature below indicates that you have read this document and that any questions you had about it or the therapy process have been answered to your satisfaction. You hereby agree to enter into the professional therapeutic relationship with me and to abide by the terms of this document during the duration of the professional relationship. This document is good for one year from the date of signing.

Print Client Name

Client or Parent (Guardian) Signature

Date