



Christian Life Counseling is a Christian-based mental health clinic with offices in Brookfield. Below you will read important information about our services and your role in treatment. Please read it carefully and consult your therapist if you have any additional questions.

Christian Life Counseling offers both psychological assessment and Christian counseling. All therapists at our clinic are Christian and have attained state required levels of education and training to be licensed to practice psychotherapy.

While we are a Christian-based counseling clinic, our clientele includes both Christians and those with other beliefs. In counseling, we make every attempt to meet our clients at a level they are comfortable with in their faith. If you or your therapist believe there is a conflict, which may limit your progress in therapy, we will help you locate another therapist with whom you may feel more comfortable.

### **The Process of Therapy**

Your therapist will meet with you initially to take a detailed history of your presenting concern. By the end of the first or second session, your therapist will summarize his/her impressions of your case and provide you recommendations about what may benefit you the most. Your therapist is likely to provide alternative or additional treatment options as well.

In many ways, therapy is a partnership between you and your therapist. You will define the problem areas to be addressed and your therapist will use his/her knowledge and training to help you make the changes you desire. This will involve a "treatment plan", in which problems, goals, and methods to achieve these goals are defined. Psychotherapy is not a passive process, but it requires your active involvement both during the therapy session and outside of your session. Your therapist will likely give you "homework", which may involve applying some of the new skills that you are learning (reading, journaling, etc.). The therapy process is more efficient when you complete such tasks suggested by your therapist. Your therapist will answer any questions regarding how assignments pertain to your situation.

Your therapy sessions will typically be 45-60 minutes in duration. The first session may last longer as your therapist gathers information for the initial assessment. Frequency of sessions will be discussed between you and your therapist. Sessions may be scheduled once per week initially and may become less frequent as progress toward your goals are achieved. The process of ending therapy, called "termination," can also be a valuable part of our work. Ending therapy should not be done casually, however, you or your therapist may decide to stop counseling, if it is in your best interest. If you are planning to stop therapy, it is best to inform your therapist at least one session before you are planning to stop. This allows you and your therapist to review your work together, as well as discuss any future work that may be recommended. If you are interested in taking a break from therapy, your therapist can be helpful in suggesting activities to make this break beneficial to your progress.

If you become involved in a divorce or custody dispute, we do not provide custody evaluations or expert testimony in court. Your therapist will refer you to another professional to provide these services if needed to preserve the therapeutic relationship.

### **Benefits and Risks of Therapy**

Psychotherapy has both benefits and risks. Psychotherapy has been shown to reduce feelings of distress, create better relationships and resolve specific problems. Risks include experiencing uncomfortable feelings such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, loneliness and helplessness that may be part of the process of change. Relationships may also be affected as you progress in psychotherapy. Sometimes, a client's symptoms may temporarily worsen after the beginning of treatment. Most of these risks are to be expected when people are making important changes in their lives. Finally, even with our best efforts, there is a risk that therapy may not work out well for you.

### **Appointments**

An appointment is a commitment to your work with your therapist. You should agree to be at your appointment on time. If you are late, your therapist will not be able to meet with you for the full time due to other appointments. Because your therapist holds the hour of your appointment open for you, cancellations less than 24 hours in advance will result in the usual fee being charged. Most insurance companies do not pay for missed appointments so you will be responsible for this charge.

We request you do not bring children with you, if they are young and need supervision, if they are not involved in therapy. You will be unable to leave young children unsupervised in the waiting room.

## **Contacting Us**

Our office is generally staffed from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on Friday. Please call during these hours when you are making or scheduling appointments. All therapists have confidential voice mail.

Psychotherapy is best done in person, so your therapist may suggest that you meet with them if you call with a problem that is not critical. We understand, however, that sometimes the immediacy of circumstances requires personal attention. When this occurs, we may bill for telephone time at our usual rate. Please understand that telephone consultation is typically not reimbursed by insurance.

It is our policy to be as responsive to clients as possible, particularly during times of crisis. Your therapist, however, will not always be available. Each therapist has a confidential voice mail upon which you may leave a message. Your therapist will check voice mail at least once daily and will return your call as soon as possible. If you have an emergency, please contact your medical doctor, an emergency crisis line, or dial 911.

## **Confidentiality**

The therapy relationship is confidential. Your therapist will not release information about the therapy process without your written, informed release specifying to whom the information should be released and what information to be released. There are certain limits to confidentiality your therapist will discuss with you. These include:

1. If you make a serious threat to harm yourself or someone else. The law requires us to try to protect you and others, which generally involves telling others (including authorities) about the threat.
2. If you disclose the ongoing physical, sexual or emotional abuse of a child. We are required by law to report any suspicion to the Department of Health and Human Services.
3. If you are using health care insurance. Health insurance companies require varying amounts of information including; dates of service, diagnoses, symptoms, and treatment plans.
4. If you are suing someone, being sued, or involved in a crime. If you inform a court official you are involved in counseling, a judge has the authority to overrule client/therapist confidentiality and force us to disclose certain records.
5. For purposes of professional consultation. To ensure high-quality treatment, your therapy file will be periodically reviewed by the supervising psychologist, who is bound by the same level of confidentiality.

## **Fees, Payments, and Billing**

Payment for services is an important part of any professional relationship. This is even more true in therapy; one treatment goal is to make relationships and the duties and obligations they involve clear. Please see our fee schedule.

We will work with most insurance companies. If you have a co-payment or do not have health insurance, payment is generally due at the time of service. Checks, cash, and major credit cards are accepted forms of payment. Please talk with your therapist about these procedures.

## **Client Rights and Satisfaction**

If you consider the services you received unsatisfactory or think your rights have been violated, you have the right to use a grievance procedure.

*For more information or if you have concerns that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your personal health information, you may send a written complaint to Tanya Gerhard, MSW, LCSW at 12630 W North Ave Bldg E Brookfield, WI 53005-4626.*

For more information see:

[www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hopaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hopaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html).

## **Client Acknowledgment**

You will be asked to sign a form acknowledging you have reviewed this "Consent to Treatment" and agree to abide by its terms regarding treatment services and your professional relationship with your therapist. You have the right to ask additional questions about this form before you start therapy. By signing you have received and agree to the procedures stated in this form, you are not waiving any of your rights. You have the right to withdraw your consent to therapy at any time and for any reason.