

Lake Travis Counseling Connection, PLLC

Client Agreement/Informed Consent

Overview: Lake Travis Counseling Connection, PLLC provides quality, affordable, no session limit psychotherapy. Psychotherapy (also called counseling) services are offered to individuals, couples, families and groups typically meeting once per week. Although there are many definitions and philosophies of psychotherapy, each therapist offers their own unique approach to treatment in unison with your goals, desires and preferences.

Therapeutic relationship: The relationship between therapist and client is the container in which client change takes place. As such, it is often one in which close emotional bonds develop. It is also a professional relationship, in which appropriate boundaries must be maintained. This safe space is separate from your social world, your friendships and work environment; therefore, connecting between sessions to 'chat' is discouraged as it can dilute the work we do in session.

Confidentiality: Texas state law requires that information provided to mental health practitioners remain confidential, and your therapist makes every effort to insure confidentiality is maintained with respect to all aspects of your treatment. As a client, you agree to the following exceptions to confidentiality, in which case, information may be disclosed to the appropriate authorities/agencies/individuals:

- If your therapist has reason to believe that you are in immediate danger of harming yourself or others.
- If your therapist has reason to believe that you are involved in or have knowledge of abuse or neglect of a child; abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a person who is elderly or has a disability.
- Ordered disclosure by state or federal courts.

Confidentiality with regard to minors: The parents or legal guardians of Lake Travis Counseling Connection clients under the age of 18 have the right to access their child's psychological records. The exception to this is in the case of an emancipated minor. A minor is emancipated if he or she is on active duty with the armed services, is married, or is 16 years of age or older and resides separate and apart from his/her parents, managing conservator, or guardian and manages his/her own personal affairs. Your child's therapist will discuss with you the limitations, procedures and implications with regard to your child's records and progress.

Length and Number of Sessions: Sessions typically last 50-60 minutes, with couples/family sessions usually going a bit longer.. They are expected to begin promptly, and end at the scheduled time. Although it is understood that there may be instances where you arrive late for a session, late arrival will not extend the scheduled ending time for a session. Your therapist is also expected to be on time, and will offer appropriate remedy if late, such as making up the time, pro-rating the fee, etc. The total number of sessions is dependent on a number of factors including your goals, timeframe, rate of progress, etc. It should be noted that psychotherapy resulting in lasting change is often a long-term process, lasting several months or longer. Please discuss any issues/concerns with your therapist so that an appropriate treatment plan can be formulated which will best suit your needs.

Risks of Counseling:

There are certain risks associated with the counseling process that should be understood before work progresses. These risks are often associated with ignorance of the processes and are direct consequences of positive therapeutic movement. Some of the more common risks with which you should be aware are:

- Long lasting psychological change often requires a significant investment of time, often longer than a client's initial perception/expectation.
- Clients often experience deterioration in emotional and psychological stability at different times during the therapeutic process. This often occurs during the beginning stages of therapy, but may occur at any point, often brought on by an awareness of previously unconscious, emotionally laden material.
- Relationships are often affected as a result of therapy. Significant relationships will often experience varying degrees of tension. This is most prevalent within family relationships, but may extend beyond into one's social and professional life.

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Grievance: You have the right to file a confidential grievance if you have an unresolved concern regarding your therapy or therapist. Any grievance should be in written form and addressed to:

Complaints Management and Investigative Section
Texas State Board of Examiners and Professional Counselors
P.O. Box 141369
Austin, TX 78714-1369

After Hours Policy/Emergencies:

If you need to contact your therapist at any time, you may do so by leaving a message on their confidential voice mailbox or via email, if electronic communications between counselor and client have previously been established. Please allow up to 24 hours for replies. **If you are in crisis, please call the 24-hour crisis hotline at 472-HELP or 911.** The therapy offices of Lake Travis Counseling Connection are not a crisis facility and will not be held responsible for any damages occurring as a result of unmet crisis or acute care needs. Your therapist is not available to respond to emergency situations. **If you need immediate assistance, please contact the hotline at 472-HELP or 911.**

Rates: Lake Travis Counseling Connection offers two types of professionals:

Our fully licensed counselors charge \$150 per a 50-55 minute individual session, \$200 per a 60-70 minute session for couples:

Jan Shope, M.A., LPC-S is a post graduate therapist with a Master of Arts degree in Professional Counseling from Texas State University. She has been in private practice for over 15 years. She is the Director and owner of Lake Travis Counseling Connection and the supervisor of the interns practicing here. You can read more about her on the website LTCounseling.net.

Our licensed interns charge \$90-\$115 per 50-55 minute session, \$110-\$125 per a 60-70 minute session for couples:

All interns have master's level professional counseling degrees and are working on their post-grad requirement of 3000 hours directed by the Texas State Board of Professional Counselors. They each work independently and come from their own unique perspective. They also specialize in working with certain client populations with a variety of presenting issues. You can find out more about each of them through the website LTCounseling.net.

Fees: The following policy addresses payment of fees:

- Payment is due at time of service
- If payment cannot be made for the current appointment, arrangements must be made for payment to occur by the end of the following scheduled appointment.
- If payment for the current appointment is not made by the end of the following appointment, sessions may be suspended until payment is made.
- If client becomes more than two-session-delinquent with regard to fee payment, termination or suspension of services may result.
- A \$50 late cancellation fee will be assessed for cancellations made with less than 24 hours notice.
- For appointments scheduled but not cancelled in advance and not kept, the full fee will be assessed.
- Clients agree to pay a \$25.00 service charge for each check that is returned unpaid to Lake Travis Counseling Connection.

Lake Travis Counseling Connection will make every effort to work with any client having difficulty remaining current with regard to fee payment or attendance. There may be allowances made for a temporary fee reduction or waiver, fee reassessment, etc. If a client is unable to pay their fee or maintain a regular appointment schedule, please discuss these issues with your therapist.

Payment: Payments are due upon receipt of services rendered. Cash, check, cashier's check or money orders are accepted. Credit cards are also accepted with a **minimum charge of \$100.**

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Insurance: You may have insurance which provides coverage for your provider and/or this treatment. Lake Travis Counseling Connection will be happy to file a claim with those companies with whom we are covered providers. For those companies we are not, you will be responsible for filing with your insurance company, and you will be provided a receipt at your request. You are responsible for the full fee regardless of your insurance company's reimbursement policies. Preparation of special forms, reports, court time, etc. will be billed at the rate of \$200 per hour (prorated in fifteen minute increments when necessary) **Insurance clients also agree to pay an additional \$35 administrative processing fee for each session.** That is in addition to any copayment or coinsurance the client may be responsible for paying.

__ I have received a copy of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act / HIPAA policy

Appointment Scheduling: Your therapist does not always maintain regular office hours at the office. She/he is generally here only when there are appointments scheduled. Regular psychotherapy promotes faster healing and progress, so it is important that you attend consistently. Please initial the attendance policies below:

__ If I cannot attend a session, I agree to notify my therapist at least 24 hours in advance.

__ I understand I will be charged \$50 for any session cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice, and will be charged in full for any session I miss without notifying my therapist.

__ I agree to attend at least 75% of my scheduled sessions and if I do not, my sessions may be terminated.

__ My therapist reserves the right to transfer/terminate services at any time, for any reason they consider therapeutically appropriate.

Your agreed upon fee is \$_____ per session. Your regular fee will be charged for any additional professional services rendered at your request, such as phone contacts over fifteen minutes, consults with other professionals, etc.

Statement of Understanding:

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by this agreement:

Signature of Client

Signature of Therapist

Printed Name

Date

Printed Name

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if minor client)

Date