

Client Policies and Procedures/Informed Consent

Hope Counseling Solutions, Inc. provides counseling services for individual teens and adults. The information below is designed to give you informed understanding of counseling services with Hope Counseling Solutions, Inc.

The Counseling Relationship

Each person who presents for counseling care comes with unique experiences and perspectives. The counseling therapist will provide professionalism, acceptance, approachability and respect surrounding your specific needs. Counseling therapy is a process which allows for understanding of self and others, and facilitates intentional change and achieved personal growth.

For the best possible outcome, your honesty and openness are vital to the process. In order for therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home. At the end of the first session, your counselor will describe a proposed plan for treatment, if you decide to continue with therapy. The length of the counseling process will be determined by presented needs and goals, and the severity and intensity of those needs. Throughout treatment, you will be offered the opportunity to review goals and continuing needs so that efficient and effective care are delivered. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with your counselor. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about our procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, we will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

Counseling therapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have many benefits. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. However, there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

Your Rights

When seeking services, you have the following rights:

- Be treated with respect, and have rights to privacy.
- Receive care that acknowledges personal values and beliefs
- Reasonable access to services regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age or disability
- Understand your confidentiality rights, and limits of confidentiality, for your safety
- Participate in individualized treatment planning
- Be informed of expectations concerning your conduct
- Request access to your records (PHI)

Fees, Payment and Cancellation

All fees are due in full at the time of service and will be collected at the start of the session. Current rates for services are posted on our website (www.hopercounselingsolutions.com). Each client will keep a current payment card on file for payment of session fees at the time of service. Payments can be made with exact cash, Visa, Mastercard, HSA and FSA. A superbill can be provided upon request. Payment is expected in full at the time of service.

Please allow 24 hours notice to reschedule or cancel your session. Your appointment time is reserved specifically for you. As a result, late cancellation or a missed appointment, unless due to a

serious emergency, inclement weather, or illness, will result in a full fee charge. **In the event of a late cancellation or missed appointment, the full session fee will be charged to your card on file.**

Services Offered and Clients Served

At Hope Counseling Solutions, Inc., the therapeutic approach is eclectic in nature, designed to be efficient, effective and ethical. We offer a warm, accepting environment that allows you to disclose challenges and find effective solutions. We serve teens and adults, ages 12 and older.

Hope Counseling Solutions, Inc. values spirituality as an integral part of a person's identity and recognizes this as a basis by which mental health and thriving relationships can be achieved. While we are Christian in orientation, we are comfortable working with individuals with different spiritual backgrounds.

Brainspotting

Brainspotting is a therapeutic approach which can be offered in addition to other treatment modalities. In that a client seeks Hope Counseling Solutions, Inc. specifically for brainspotting services, while receiving care from other mental health providers, a release of information will be necessary to coordinate care.

During a brainspotting session, a client participates in an individual session in which a topic, emotion, or physical sensation is targeted through eye placement. Throughout the session, client and therapist collaborate, allowing the brain to perform subconscious processing. The client is able to verbalize as much or as little as is desired throughout the session. As the session draws to a close, client and therapist again collaborate to transition client back to daily routine. The brain may continue neural processing for the next 1-3 days. Instructions regarding monitoring internal processing outside of session will be provided.

As with all therapies, clients do not experience identical processes with Brainspotting. The most common responses are to feel a change in energy, emotions, physical symptoms or psychological symptoms. Still some participants report no change. You are always welcome to discuss questions or concerns about your experiences in Brainspotting process. You may do this during a session when the experience occurs, in a future session, or between sessions through written communication or a phone call.

Online Counseling

Hope Counseling Solutions defines online counseling as therapy sessions that occur via encrypted, HIPAA-compliant video chat. We aim to make the online therapy experience as beneficial as traditional in-office therapy. Current telemedicine licensing laws allow HCS to work with clients who are residents of Indiana.

Online counseling is a great option for clients who have barriers to attending sessions in an office, which might include:

- Busy schedules with work or kids
- Commute time to the office
- Travel
- Living in a rural area
- Would feel more comfortable in their own environment

Session content is kept confidential through encrypted video chat. Just as in face-to-face sessions, online counseling will be provided in a private, closed office to ensure privacy. **Sessions are not to be recorded**

without prior written consent of both the client and the therapist. Situations such as child abuse, suicidality and homicidality are a few examples of when confidentiality may not be guaranteed.

It is your responsibility to create a safe, private atmosphere in your environment. Please take some time to consider how you can create an environment that will feel comfortable as you concentrate on counseling work. This may include removing distractions and asking family members or coworkers not to disturb you during sessions.

Online-based services as care may not be appropriate for your needs. Online therapy is not recommended in the following situations:

1. If you are having thoughts of harming yourself (e.g. suicidal thoughts) or harming someone else (e.g. violent thoughts toward others) or psychotic symptoms. Please call 911 or 1-800-SUICIDE, which is the National Suicide Hotline
2. If you are in an abusive or violent relationship.
3. If you have been seriously depressed.
4. If you have serious substance abuse dependence.

If, during assessment, it is determined that face-to-face is more appropriate for you, an in-person appointment or referrals will be provided.

HCS office is located in central Indiana. **Because you may not live near this area, we will need to identify local resources in case you are in need of services that online therapy cannot provide.** This includes a local hospital and police phone number. Should a life threatening crisis occur, by signing this consent, you agree to call a crisis hotline, call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room.

If we assess that your safety is at risk, we may contact your emergency person listed at the end of this form and/or your local police department to request a welfare check.

When communicating by Internet or other electronic means, disruptions in service or other technical difficulties will likely occur from time to time. If we experience a poor connection during an online session, we will attempt to call your phone and we may choose to continue the session over the phone or reschedule. Should a disruption occur at a time of crisis, please call HCS at 317-961-8366. If we are unable to connect with each other and you are experiencing a mental health crisis, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

Confidentiality/Privileged Communication

Content of all sessions will remain confidential to persons outside the counseling process with exceptions as noted in the NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES form. Legal exceptions include but are not limited to disclosure when a client presents a danger to self, client threatens to harm another person, or there is reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect. Should an emergency arise during active treatment or following termination, in which we become concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring another person or about you receiving psychiatric care, we will do whatever we can within the limits of the law to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive proper medical care. For this purpose, we may also contact the policy, hospital or an emergency contact whose name you have provided. Please review the NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES.

Should a family member or other significant person participate with you in treatment, a proper signed release will be obtained.

Client files are stored through an encrypted and secure online electronic medical records system that implements all required components to ensure HIPAA compliance.

Litigation Limitation

Due to the fact that therapeutic process often involves making a full disclosure with regard to matters which may be confidential in nature, it is agreed that should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.) neither you (client) nor your attorney, nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on your counselor or any employee at Hope Counseling Solutions, Inc. to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested.

Contacting Us

Due to the nature of this business, we are often not immediately available by telephone. We will not answer the phone during a session. When we are unavailable, telephone is answered by voicemail. We will make every effort to return your call on the same day, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform us of some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach us and feel that you cannot wait for a return call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the counselor or psychiatrist on call.

Social Media and Email Communication

In order to protect your confidentiality, we do not engage in online social networking with current or previous clients. Please keep in mind that communications via email over the internet are not secure. To better ensure the protection of your protected health information (PHI), Hope Counseling Solutions, Inc. will utilize a patient portal through an electronic health records system as well as a secure HIPPA compliant email application that uses secure channels to send emails. As technology is ever-changing, please be mindful of use of any communication other than the patient portal mail function.

Emergencies

Hope Counseling Solutions, Inc. is a private practice providing outpatient services and does **not** provide 24-hour emergency services. If you feel that you are in crisis, DIAL 911 or go directly to the nearest medical or psychiatric hospital.

Interruption in Treatment

Occasionally there will be interruptions in therapy due to vacation, illness, or personal reasons of the therapist. For planned interruption, you will be notified as far in advance as possible. For unplanned interruption, Hope Counseling Solutions, Inc. will notify you as soon as possible and arrange for rescheduling, or, if extended interruption will be necessary, information will be provided for a contact with whom you may meet in the event of an emergency.

Client Responsibilities

Clients agree to make a good-faith effort at participation and engagement in the therapy as an opportunity for personal growth. You may be asked to complete assignments between sessions. It is vital that you inform your counselor of other professional helping relationships that exist and both providers must be aware of your care, so that the therapeutic process is not disrupted. All care providers must agree to such an arrangement.

Minors & Parents

Clients under 18 years of age who are not emancipated and their parents should be aware that the law may allow parents to examine their child's treatment records. Because privacy in psychotherapy is often crucial to successful progress, particularly with teenagers, it is sometimes our policy to request an agreement from parents that they consent to give up their access to their child's records. If they agree, during treatment, we will provide them only with general information about the progress of the child's treatment, and his/her attendance at scheduled sessions. We will also provide parents with a summary of their child's treatment when it is complete. Any other communication will require the child's authorization, unless we feel that the child is in danger or is a danger to someone else, in which case, we will notify the parents of our concern. Before giving parents any information, we will discuss the matter with the child, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections he/she may have.

Terminating the Therapeutic Relationship

Suspension, termination or referral may be initiated by either the counselor or the client. Treatment will terminate when a) sought goals have been met; b) the client chooses to leave; or c) if a need for change in treatment relationship or specialization occurs. You have the right to terminate participation at any time for any reason, without financial obligation other than those already accrued. Termination is most often a mutual decision for the benefit of the client.

Agreement

I have read the above information completely, understand what it says, and have discussed any questions with the counselor. I realize that this is a binding agreement and I will be held to all standards mentioned above. By signing this, I agree with this document in its entirety. My signature below indicates that all forms completed for Hope Counseling Solutions on the electronic medical record, CounSol, were completed and signed by myself. I agree that my electronic signature is the legally binding equivalent to my handwritten signature. Whenever I execute an electronic signature, it has the same validity and meaning as my handwritten signature. I will not, at any time in the future, repudiate the meaning of my electronic signature or claim that my electronic signature is not legally binding.

I also acknowledge that by signing below, I have read and reviewed the Notice of Privacy Practices. I understand that a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices will be made available for me to keep if requested.

Signature of Client/Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Name of Client if a Minor

Signature of Counselor

Date