



Community Counseling Center

Informed Consent and Payment Agreement

Please read this information in order to better understand what to expect and to know what limitations apply to counseling in general.

Confidentiality

- Everything done in counseling – our conversations, your records, and any information that you give us— is protected by legal privilege. This means the law protects you from having information about you given to anyone. Our office respects your privacy, and we intend to honor your privilege. However, there are some exceptions to your privacy that would be helpful for you to understand.
- If it is believed there is a risk you might harm yourself or someone else, we are required to contact the authorities or a caregiver. If there is abuse to children, the elderly, or a person with a disability, we must notify the authorities, so they can protect others from harm.
- If you become involved in any lawsuit in which your mental health is an issue, the court or the attorneys may insist upon, and may obtain your information from us.
- You would lose the protection of your privilege if you file a complaint against us with the state licensing board.
- By your signature below you authorize our office to designate an appropriate custodian to assume responsibility for your record in the event of your counselor's death or disability.
- If you are using insurance or another third-party payer, our office must share certain information with them, including (but not limited to) your diagnosis and the times of your visits. If there is a managed care company, they may require us to provide additional information, such as your symptoms and your progress. Insurance and managed care information is often stored in national computer databases. By your signature below, you authorize our office to provide information to your insurance and managed care companies to the extent necessary for them to pay for your services. If there is a dispute over billing, our office may only provide the information necessary to clarify and to collect any outstanding balance.
- Counselors at CCC meet together on a regular basis to consult on cases in order to provide the best possible treatment. All counselors are bound by confidentiality, and if you would prefer that your counselor not discuss your treatment with colleagues, please let them know and they will honor this wish.



Effects and Other Potential Obstacles of Counseling

- Counseling is not always easy. You may find yourself having to discuss very personal information that can leave you experiencing embarrassment and some anxiety after such conversations. As you learn more about yourself, you might encounter increased conflict with friends, co-workers, and family members. Counseling is intended to alleviate those problems, but sometimes at first, as you get to the root of things, you may start to experience them even more acutely than you have in the past. Questions may be asked and behaviors requested that at first may make you feel uncomfortable or awkward. Sometimes counseling requires trying new ways of doing things. However, you will always be free to move at your own pace.
- We will work with you to make changes you request, but we cannot promise anything about the results you will obtain. Your outcome will depend on many things.
- If your problem requires knowledge that your counselor does not have, the counselor may refer to another counselor here or someone outside of this agency. This will be discussed with you before it happens. Early in treatment, a treatment plan will be developed for your specific needs. The counselor will assess what you would like to change, what we will do to change it, how we will evaluate your success, and how long it may take. Every now and again, we will review that plan to see if it needs to be modified.

Our Office Policies

- We schedule appointments to begin at the top of each hour. Counseling sessions usually last 45-60 minutes. Payment is due at the time of your appointment. We can accept cash, checks or credit cards for your payment.
- Our office may charge a \$25 fee if you cannot make your appointment and you do not cancel the appointment twenty-four hours in advance. Your insurance will not pay for missed sessions; you must pay for that yourself.
- Our office charges a \$30 fee for any check returned for any reason.
- Messages are checked regularly, and whenever possible returned the same day. If we have not returned your call within twenty-four business hours, please try again as your message may have been lost. We do not check messages after 6:30 p.m. If you have an emergency after that time, call 911, or go to an emergency room and ask them to contact us. We often do not have an office manager on Fridays, so messages left on Fridays will likely be returned on the following Monday.
- If your counselor is out of the office for several days, the messages you leave may be answered by another counselor. If so, the other counselor may not be able to discuss your case with your counselor, but the other counselor will make every effort to be helpful to you in your counselor's absence.



Services

- You and your counselor will meet as often as is appropriate with your treatment plan. The scheduled time is your time to use to your best advantage. At your discretion and with the agreement of your counselor, the counselor will meet with you alone, or with you and your spouse or other party, together.
- This agreement for services will remain effective until ended by agreement between you and your counselor. If you miss a scheduled visit, and you do not call our office within seven days to reschedule, your counselor will accept that as your notice that you have terminated this agreement and that you wish to discontinue counseling with our office. By your signature below you agree that in the event of your counselor's death or disability, the office may designate a proper custodian to be responsible for the care and disposition of your records.

Telehealth Services

- To use telehealth, you need an internet connection and a device for a camera for video and audio. Your counselor can explain how to log in and use any feature on the telehealth platform. If telehealth is not a good fit for you, your counselor will recommend a different option, such as a phone call.
- Risks of telehealth include technical problems- you could have problems with your internet, video, or sound. If you have issues during a session, your counselor will follow the backup plan that you agree to prior to sessions.
- It may be difficult for your counselor to develop immediate support during an emergency or crisis. You and your counselor will develop a plan for emergencies or crises.
- Benefits of telehealth include flexibility and ease of access. You can attend therapy wherever is convenient for you and without worrying about traveling to therapy.
- We recommend that you make sure that other people cannot hear your conversation or see your screen during sessions.
- Please do not use video or audio to record your session unless you ask your counselor for their permission in advance
- Let your counselor know if you are not in your usual location before starting any telehealth session.



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Record Keeping

- Your counselor is required to keep records about your treatment. These records help ensure the quality and continuity of your care, as well as provide evidence that the services you receive meet the appropriate standards of care
- Your records are either maintained in a paper form or in an electronic health record provided by our computer software, TherapyNotes. TherapyNotes has several safety features to protect your personal information, including advanced encryption techniques to make your personal information difficult to decode, firewalls to prevent unauthorized access, and a team of professionals monitoring the system for suspicious activity. TherapyNotes keeps records of all log-ins and actions within the system.

Communicating with your Counselor

- If you choose to email or text your counselor, be aware that these are not certain to be secure, confidential methods of communication and should not be used to communicate personal, clinical information. If you choose to e-mail, please be aware the e-mails are retained in logs of your internet and CCC's internet provider.
- You may choose to receive appointment reminders via text message or email. You should carefully consider who may have access to your text messages or emails before choosing these methods of communication. Text and phone communication may be used during crises in order to assess for safety.
- You may see a listing of the CCC on other websites or business forums. Many sites comb search engines for business listings and add listings regardless of whether the business has added itself to the site. If the CCC is listed on any of these sites, please know that the listing is NOT a request for testimonials, ratings, or endorsements from any of our clients. It is unethical for counselors to solicit testimonials from clients or other persons.

Social Media Policy

- CCC staff does not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site. These sites could potentially compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy.
- Please do not use messaging on social media networks to contact counselors. These sites are not secure and messages may not be seen. Please do not use wall replies, or any other means of engaging in online publication if there has been a client/counselor relationship. These exchanges will become part of your legal medical record and will be documented and archived in your chart.



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Payment for your Counseling

- We offer a sliding fee scale for our uninsured clients. This fee is a minimum of \$25.00 and a maximum of \$100.00. That fee will be charged each visit. Whether you are seen alone, or with other family members, your fee will be the same for each session. Be aware that if others are present, that may affect your rights to privacy.
- CCC accepts many insurance plans and files insurance claims to receive payment. Our office will file claims according to the contract terms with your insurance. By your signature below, you authorize our office to provide your insurance and managed care providers with any information necessary to file and to process your claim for payment and approval.
- Your co-pay is due at the time of your visit. If there is a problem collecting payment from your insurance or managed care company for the balance, you remain responsible for payment of the full fee for each visit. If we have not received payment from your insurance or other third-party payer within six weeks of any counseling session, we will bill you directly for past and for ongoing visits at the customary fee noted above. If your carrier does not pay, you will be responsible for payment of your fees, and if you fail to pay or you are unable to pay, we may refer you to another provider.
- **Please be aware that your insurance plan may require you to pay the full amount for sessions before a deductible is reached. In these cases, sessions typically cost \$150 for the initial intake and \$100 for each subsequent session, as determined by your insurance carrier. This may be the case even if you have a copay. For this reason, we STRONGLY ENCOURAGE you to familiarize yourself with your insurance plan by calling your insurance company or reviewing your policy so that you know what to expect regarding billing for your sessions.**
- Please be prompt in your payment of bills. If **THREE** statements are sent without a payment, sessions will likely need to be stopped until the bill is paid on. Please let us know if a payment plan is needed to take care of your bill.

Other Fees

- Other charges may apply: if you, or someone else needs a copy of your file or of other records for legal necessity, our office charges a reasonable fee for copying, plus postage.
- If a counselor is subpoenaed to testify in a court case, we will charge a fee for each occurrence in order to cover our costs for preparation time, time spent in court, and rescheduled or missed appointments with other clients. This payment is due at least two (2) days **BEFORE** the testimony. CCC will charge \$600 for a full day in court and \$300 for a half day. You will be responsible for paying this fee regardless of who requests the testimony.



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Complaints

- You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect from all CCC staff members.
- If you have concerns about your services, we encourage you to speak to your counselor first.
- If this does not resolve the issue or you are uncomfortable speaking with the counselor, please contact the Executive Director at CCC by calling 540-433-1546 and asking to speak to the director.
- If you feel the agency or any of the counselors have done something unethical or harmful that you do not feel comfortable discussing with the counselor or agency director, contact the following agency:

Virginia Department of Health Professions – (800) 533-1560
Perimeter Center
9960 Maryland Drive, Suite 300
Henrico, Va 23233-1463

Client Signature: _____

Date: _____