

Practice Policies

Becky Kuch Counseling

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PRACTICE POLICIES

APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS Please remember to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance. **You will be responsible for a cancellation fee of \$150 if cancellation is less than 24 hours.**

The standard meeting time for psychotherapy is 53 minutes. It is up to you, however, to determine the length of time of your sessions. Requests to change the 53-minute session needs to be discussed with the therapist in order for time to be scheduled in advance.

A \$50.00 service charge will be charged for any checks returned for any reason for special handling.

Again, cancellations and re-scheduled session will be subject to a charge of \$150 if **NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE**. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Financial Agreement Please understand that you are financially responsible for your treatment and that payment is expected when services are rendered at the end of each session. If payment for services that you receive is not made, the clinician has the right to stop treatment services. Payments made are non-refundable. Payment can be made through cash, check and all major credit cards. You will be asked to provide current credit card information prior to your first appointment. Payments for services will be charged to the credit card on file unless other arrangements for cash or checks have been agreed upon with your clinician. Checks can be made payable to **Becky Kuch Counseling**. There is a returned check fee of \$50 to cover bank fees.

Insured clients are expected to understand their particular insurance policies. Becky Kuch Counseling & Consulting, LLC is not certified, in any way, in insurance billing. If we erroneously pass along information to clients about their deductible and/or co-pay, it does not annul client's responsibility once the explanation of benefits is received. Clients are responsible to pay in full the amount that their insurance company does not pay.

- **Billing and Payments:** You will be expected to pay for each session at the beginning of our meetings, unless we have agreed on other arrangements. In the case of health insurance, you will be expected to provide any deductible or co-payments prior to our session meetings. Keep in mind that it is you (not your insurance company) that is responsible for full payment of fees. Therefore, it is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. **Please note that many insurance carriers do not cover couples or family counseling and payment for these services may be directly billed to you if your insurance company denies the claim.**
- **Copays & Co-insurance:** My signature below indicates that I understand and agree to pay for any copays at the beginning of my session on the date it is provided. If I am utilizing health plan benefits, I understand that I am responsible for any amount my insurance does not cover. Deviation from this agreement must be arranged with Becky Kuch Counseling & Consulting, LLC directly.
- **Cancellation, No Show or Late Arrival:** In general, all clients must provide the therapist a minimum of 24 hours notice in the event of a cancellation, which does not include weekends. This means if you have an appointment at 1:00pm on Monday, you will need to have cancelled by 1:00pm on the Friday prior. Clients will be charged \$150 for appointments that are not canceled at least 24 hours in advance and for all no shows. Insurance companies do not pay for missed appointments, therefore, you will be responsible for the full amount charged. Clients arriving late will not be provided an extension of time beyond what they were scheduled so as not to disrupt other client appointments. Additionally, if a client misses two appointments, your therapist has the option to terminate services and refer you to another clinic for services.
- **Account Balance Maximum:** Whenever a client's account reaches an outstanding balance of \$500 and no payments have been made or received toward the account, additional counseling services will be suspended. Services will remain suspended until client begins making payment toward their account. If no payments are made, services will remain suspended and/or clients may be referred to alternate providers for services.

- **Collections:** If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, we have the option of using legal means to secure payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. In most collection situations, the only information released regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of the services provided, and the amount due. Accounts turned over to collections may be subject to future requirements such as providing a retainer for future services.

TELEPHONE ACCESSIBILITY If you need to contact me between sessions, please leave a message on my voice mail. I am often not immediately available; however, I will attempt to return your call as soon as possible. Please note that Face- to-face sessions are highly preferable to phone sessions. However, in the event that you are out of town, sick or need additional support, phone sessions are available, but may not be covered by your insurance. If a true emergency situation arises, please call 911 or any local emergency room.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATION Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

RECORDING OF SESSIONS

Becky Kuch Counseling & Consulting will record sessions for the purposes of progress notes and treatment planning. A separate consent form will be issued for signature and sessions will not be recorded without this consent.

Becky Kuch Counseling expressly prohibits covert recording of sessions.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

I cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages. If you prefer to communicate via email or text messaging for issues regarding scheduling or cancellations, I will do so. While I may try to return messages in a timely manner, I cannot guarantee immediate response and request that you do not use these methods of communication to discuss therapeutic content and/or request assistance for emergencies.

Services by electronic means, including but not limited to telephone communication, the Internet, facsimile machines, and e-mail is considered telemedicine by the State of California. Under the California Telemedicine Act of 1996, telemedicine is broadly defined as the use of information technology to deliver medical services and information from one location to another. If you and your therapist chose to use information technology for some or all of your treatment, you need to understand that:

- (1) You retain the option to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting the right to future care or treatment or risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.
- (2) All existing confidentiality protections are equally applicable.
- (3) Your access to all medical information transmitted during a telemedicine consultation is guaranteed, and copies of this information are available for a reasonable fee.
- (4) Dissemination of any of your identifiable images or information from the telemedicine interaction to researchers or other entities shall not occur without your consent.
- (5) There are potential risks, consequences, and benefits of telemedicine. Potential benefits include, but are not limited to improved communication capabilities, providing convenient access to up-to-date information, consultations, support, reduced costs, improved quality, change in the conditions of practice, improved access to therapy, better continuity of care, and reduction of lost work time and travel costs. Effective therapy is often facilitated when the therapist gathers within a session or a series of sessions, a multitude of observations, information, and experiences about the client. Therapists may make clinical assessments, diagnosis, and interventions based not only on direct verbal or auditory communications, written reports, and third person consultations, but also from direct visual and olfactory observations, information, and experiences. When using information technology in therapy services, potential risks include, but are not limited to the therapist's inability to make visual and olfactory observations of clinically or therapeutically potentially relevant issues such as: your physical condition including deformities, apparent height and weight, body type, attractiveness relative to social and cultural norms or standards, gait and motor coordination, posture, work speed, any noteworthy mannerism or gestures, physical or medical conditions including bruises or injuries, basic grooming and hygiene including appropriateness of dress, eye contact (including any changes in the previously listed issues), sex, chronological and apparent age, ethnicity, facial and body language, and congruence of language and facial or bodily expression. Potential consequences thus include the therapist not being aware of what he or she would consider important information, that you may not recognize as significant to present verbally the therapist.

MINORS

If you are a minor, your parents may be legally entitled to some information about your therapy. I will discuss with you and your parents what information is appropriate for them to receive and which issues are more appropriately kept confidential.

TERMINATION

Ending relationships can be difficult. Therefore, it is important to have a termination process in order to achieve some closure. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the treatment. I may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you and a termination process if I determine that the psychotherapy is not being effectively used or if you are in default on payment. I will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the reasons and purpose of terminating. If therapy is terminated for any reason or you request another therapist, I will provide you with a list of qualified psychotherapists to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source.

Should you fail to schedule an appointment for three consecutive weeks, unless other arrangements have been made in advance, for legal and ethical reasons, I must consider the professional relationship discontinued.

BY SIGNING BELOW I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.