



Department of Psychology
Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic
Box 70416, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN 37614

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS CLINIC CLIENT INFORMATION

WELCOME TO THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS CLINIC

We appreciate the trust you place in us to help you or your family. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions that you might have so that we can discuss them with you. Once you sign this, it will constitute a binding agreement between us.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CLINIC

The Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic is a training clinic operated by the Department of Psychology at East Tennessee State University. The Department of Psychology has a doctoral program in Clinical Psychology. The program is for graduate students who are training to become psychologists. The BHWC is located at 122 Lucille Clement Hall on the campus of ETSU.

HOW THE CLINIC OPERATES

In most cases, individuals who come to the Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic will be treated by an advanced graduate student who is supervised by a licensed psychologist or faculty member. The supervising psychologist may attend your sessions, may watch your sessions in another room on a video monitor, or may watch video recordings of your sessions at a later date. The supervisor will talk with the therapist about your visits in regularly-scheduled supervision meetings. In some cases, individuals will be treated by a licensed psychologist who is also a faculty member in the Department of Psychology. Student therapists may participate in your treatment with the psychologist.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Services provided at the Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic include psychotherapy for individuals, couples, families and groups. The BHWC also provides a wide range of assessment services. Populations served by the BHWC include children, adolescents and adults of all ages. Because the BHWC is a training clinic, we are not able to be involved in any legal cases or work that is "court ordered". We do not render any opinions for forensic cases, including divorce or child custody. Some of the clinical faculty have private practices. This document does not apply to their practices.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

It can be difficult to describe psychotherapy. People come to psychotherapy because they have a personal problem that they have not been able to solve by themselves. Psychotherapy typically involves talking about your problem with a therapist. Because the therapist is objective, he or she can help you look at your problem differently and help you identify possible solutions. When a person comes to psychotherapy, they are admitting "there is something wrong in my life." In psychotherapy the focus will be on your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, behavior, and perceptions. Understanding *why* you have a problem is only part of the process. Making a change is also appropriate and desirable. In general, problems do not get better by doing nothing. Your therapist will help you make necessary changes so that you can live a happier, healthier, and more satisfying life. There are a number of different approaches that a therapist can use to address your problems. The approach will depend on the theoretical orientation of the therapist and the personalities of the therapist and the client. It will also depend on the particular problems that the client brings to treatment. Psychotherapy requires an active effort on your part. In order to be most successful, you may be asked to do "homework" between appointments.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

Psychotherapy has risks and benefits. Psychotherapy requires discussing unpleasant aspects of your life. Risks include negative feelings such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger or frustration. Psychotherapy can have benefits for people, too. Therapy often leads to feeling better, better relationships, and new skills for dealing with life's problems. Psychotherapy is not for everyone. If you think you are not being helped or are getting worse, please discuss this with your therapist. We will respond to your concerns. Because psychotherapy requires a strong effort by you and a strong relationship with your therapist there are no guarantees about the outcome.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

The Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic offers a wide range of assessment services. The BHWC can offer intelligence testing, personality testing, vocational or career testing, and assessment for special concerns such as learning disabilities or autism. Fees for assessment vary according to the nature of the assessment question and the materials that are utilized.

MEETINGS

Meetings at the Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic are scheduled at times that are convenient for the client and therapist. The first appointment with you is called an intake interview. During this meeting, the therapist will gather information from you about what is causing you to seek help at this time, as well as some background and medical information. Following the intake interview, a therapist will be assigned to work with you. Unlike other clinics, the BHWC does not “overbook” appointments. Your appointment time is set aside just for you. Therefore, it is important that you keep your appointment once it is scheduled. If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment, we ask that you contact us at least 48 hours (2 days) in advance so that we can put someone else in that appointment slot. It is equally important that you arrive on time for your appointment. We are not able to allow your appointment to run over if you arrive late because other people will be scheduled to be seen right after your appointment.

EVALUATION

The first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, the therapist will offer you some initial impressions. The therapist will develop an initial treatment plan with you. You should evaluate this information. You should also decide whether you feel comfortable working with the therapist.

THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

The nature of psychotherapy is very emotionally close and often intense. It is not necessary for a client and therapist to like each other. It can be very helpful, though. It is most important to form a trusting relationship with each other. You should believe your therapist wants the best for you. And your therapist should believe that you are being as open and honest as you can. The therapeutic relationship is one-sided. Your therapist will know a lot about you and you will know very little about your therapist by comparison. This can sometimes feel uncomfortable for a client. You may want to discuss these feelings of discomfort if they arise. Additionally, it is important to realize that the therapy relationship is always a professional relationship. It does not lead to another kind of relationship. So-called “dual relationships” are considered a violation of legal and ethical guidelines in the state of Tennessee. Because we live in a fairly small community, it is sometimes unavoidable that you may see your therapist in other settings. In situations like this, it will be important to discuss this and determine a course of action that is reasonable and will protect your rights as a client.

FEES

Fees for individual, couple and family psychotherapeutic services at the Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic are set on a sliding scale. This scale is based on total family income (before taxes) and the number of people in the family. The fee ranges between \$5 and \$40 for a 45-50 minute appointment. To determine the fee, you are asked to provide proof of income. This includes your last two pay stubs and the most recent tax return. Services for full-time ETSU students are offered at no charge. The BHWC does not bill insurance. Fees for assessment vary according to the nature of the assessment question and the materials that are utilized. Fees for group therapy vary according to the type of the group offered.

PAYMENT

Payment for services is expected at the time of your appointment. The Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic accepts cash and check as a form of payment. It does not accept credit or debit cards. The fee for services will be agreed to at the time services are requested. In order to keep the costs of doing business down, we require all clients to keep their accounts current. By doing this, we do not have to use a billing service. However, if for some reason your account is more than 60 days overdue, we have the option to use legal means to secure payment. This includes collection agencies or small claims court. In most cases, the only information that is released about a client’s treatment would be the client’s name, the nature of the services provided, and the amount due. In the unlikely event a collection agency or small claims court is utilized, you will be expected to pay those costs in addition to the original therapy bill. **The fee for a returned check is \$20.00 per occurrence.**

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

The Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic is not able to bill insurance companies at this time.

ATTENDANCE AT APPOINTMENTS

Frequently missed appointments or canceling appointments at short notice can be a result of poor planning. However, past experience suggests it usually reflects mixed feelings about being in therapy. Irregular attendance at therapy appointments and repeatedly arriving late for an appointment is a “therapeutic issue.” It is an obstacle to making progress in therapy. If this occurs, your therapist will discuss your attendance at therapy and your motivation to be in therapy at this time. If you do not attend your appointments regularly or cooperate with treatment recommendations, you may be terminated from therapy.

CONTACTING US

The phone number for the Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic is 423-439-7777. The telephone is answered by a receptionist or a confidential voicemail. Most of the therapists and supervisors are in the BHWC on a part time basis because of other demands placed on their time. If you need to leave a message for someone, please leave some days and times when you will be available for a return call. **The BHWC does not offer crisis counseling or emergency services. If you cannot reach your therapist, and you feel that you cannot wait for a return call, you should phone your family physician. If you do not have a family physician, you should go to the emergency room at the nearest hospital and ask for the psychiatrist on call.**

THOUGHTS OF HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS

If you have thoughts of harming yourself or someone else between sessions, please call the **National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255**.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

Both law and the standards of the psychological profession require that we keep medical records. If you wish to see your records, your therapist will be happy to review them with you, or provide you with a treatment summary. HIPAA policies require that we limit who has access to your records. We will forward a treatment summary to another appropriate mental health professional at your request with a signed release of information.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, law protects the confidentiality of all communications between a client and a psychotherapist. Information about your work together can only be released to others with your written permission. However, there are a number of exceptions: 1) in a judicial proceeding, a judge may require testimony if he/she determines that resolution of the issues before him/her demands it;

2) if the therapist believes that a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person is being abused or neglected, the therapist must file a report with the appropriate state agency; 3) if a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, the therapist is required to take protective action, which may include notifying the potential victim, notifying the police, or seeking appropriate hospitalization; 4) if a client threatens to harm him/herself, the therapist is required to take steps to prevent this, which may require seeking hospitalization for the client, contacting family members or others.

In the state of Tennessee, a child who is 16 years of age or older has the same rights as an adult to seek outpatient mental health treatment and to make medication decisions. They also have the same rights to confidentiality. If your child is 16 years of age or older, he or she is able to seek outpatient mental health treatment without your consent. The staff of the Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic will work with you to understand this law and respect your child's confidentiality. Depending on the nature of your child's concern, we may also respectfully ask you to consider extending confidentiality to your child younger than 16 years of age as well.

This list of exceptions to confidentiality should provide information to you about potential problems. It is important that you discuss any questions or concerns that you may have with your therapist. The laws governing these issues are quite complex. If you need specific advice, you may want to consult an attorney.

SUPERVISION

Student therapists are supervised by licensed psychologists who are either employed by ETSU as faculty or who are contracted to provide supervision. The supervising psychologist may attend your sessions, may watch your sessions in another room on a video monitor, or may watch video recordings of your sessions at a later date. The supervisor will talk with the therapist about your visits in regularly-scheduled supervision meetings. Sometimes this supervision occurs in a group setting. Supervisors and supervisees are also legally and ethically bound to keep information revealed in these meetings confidential.

VIDEO RECORDING

If you are treated by a student therapist, video recording of your sessions is required as part of their educational requirements. These recordings are for training purposes only. They are kept temporarily and are not part of your medical record. They are locked in a secure location accessible only by the therapist and the supervisor. They are erased, recorded over or destroyed at specified times. You will be asked to sign a "Consent to Record Treatment and Assessment" form. If you do not sign the consent, you cannot be treated in the Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REPORTING LAW

The State of Tennessee has a domestic violence reporting law. It requires therapists to report current instances of violence toward romantic partners. It does not require us to report any past violent events or any violence that has already been reported by another health care provider. Reporting is required only for clients who have a Tennessee residence. Client information is limited to: county and zip code of residence of the client as well as their age, race, sex, and relationship to the perpetrator. No other identifying information is reported.

DIRECTOR OF THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS CLINIC

Dr. Kerry Holland is the Director of the Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic. If you have any questions about the policies or procedures of the clinic, you may contact her at 423-439-7777.

YOUR INFORMED CONSENT TO CARE

This information has been provided to you in the hope of fully informing you about the policies and procedures of the Behavioral Health and Wellness Clinic. Behavioral health care, like other things in life, offers no guarantee of success. There are limitations to any form of care offered. We invite you to discuss any questions you may have with your therapist.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship. It also means you have had all of your questions answered to your satisfaction. Please do not sign until you have had your questions answered.

Client

Date

Guardian (if applicable)

Date

I, the therapist, have discussed the issues above with the client (and/or his or her parent or guardian). My observation of this person's behavior and responses gives me no reason to believe that this person is not fully competent to give informed and willing consent.

Therapist

Date