

Joe Borders, LMFT
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INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS – Couples Therapy

Confidentiality

All material discussed in therapy is confidential and will not be released without your written consent, except information related to child abuse, elder, or dependent adult abuse, situations involving imminent harm to oneself or others, or as otherwise required by legal or ethical standards.

Informed consent

The process of therapy requires courage, commitment, and risk taking. There may be times when the information discussed in a therapy session will cause distressing feelings and/or thoughts. At times, you may experience physical symptoms as a result of processing distressing information. If such feelings come up, please share them with me so that we can process them and come up with healthy coping skills together. During the therapeutic process, many people find that they feel worse before they feel better. Therapy requires deep introspection and it is often the case that people discover and/or confront life problems head on for the first time when they come to therapy. Because every person is different, there is no way to predict how you will respond to the process of therapy, or how long the process will take for you.

Fees and Payment

The fee is \$140 for each 50 minute session, unless discussed otherwise before meeting. In some cases, we may decide together to hold sessions beyond 50 minutes. In these cases we will discuss a pro-rated fee. I request that you pay your fee at the time of each session, unless other arrangements have been made ahead of time.

Cancellations

Cancellations or changes in session dates or times must be made 24-hours in advance. If an appointment is cancelled or missed without a 24-hour notice, you will be charged for the session. If your session is covered by an insurance provider, please be aware that I cannot bill for missed sessions and that you will be responsible for the total amount reimbursed by your insurance.

Electronic Communications

Many clients prefer to contact me via text messages and sometimes through email. In these cases it is important to understand that electronic communications pose certain security risks. Clients should understand that although I take every precaution to ensure the confidentiality of electronic messages, there is the possibility that electronic communications can be intercepted. If you choose to communicate with me via text, it is my policy to only text you regarding appointment times. You may choose to text me about other issues but if it appears that we will be discussing confidential information related to your case, I will likely call you.

Therapist availability

You are welcome to call me any time at (530) 448-6602 and leave a voicemail. You may also contact me via electronic communications as discussed above. I will do my best to respond to you as soon as I am able, however, it may take several hours. I may not be available to take calls and return messages in the evening, on weekends, and during holidays. In these cases I may not respond until the next business day.

Email, voicemail, and text message communications are not meant to take the place of therapy sessions. The clients are responsible for payment of my standard hourly rate (on a pro-rated basis) for any communication that is longer than 10 minutes.

In an emergency, it is important for you to get the help you need as soon as possible. If you are experiencing an emergency, please call 911, or, if you are able and safe to do so, go to your nearest emergency room. After that, please give me a call and leave me a voicemail at (530) 448-6602. If you are in crisis, in addition to 911.

Termination of Therapy

Both therapist and the clients reserve the right to terminate therapy at any time. Reasons I might terminate sessions include but are not limited to, untimely payment of fees, failure to comply with treatment recommendations, conflicts of interest, failure to participate in therapy, or your needs are outside of my abilities or scope of practice. Upon either party's decision to end therapy sessions, I will generally recommend that you participate in at least one termination session. These sessions are intended to facilitate a positive termination experience and to give us time to review and process your progress and our work together.

No Secrets Policy

Occasionally in the course of couples therapy, we may choose to have one or more individual sessions in addition to couples sessions, as is common practice in emotionally focused couples therapy (EFT). In these cases, and in the event that one member of the couple communicates with me without the other present, it is important to know that I have a "no secrets policy". This means that I will not keep secrets between the two of you, and that anything we discuss individually is open for discussion with the other person. If something comes up that the other person needs to know about, we will discuss together how best to bring it up to him/her in our couples sessions, and I will use my best judgement as to whether, when, and to what extent I will make disclosures. I hold this policy because it is important for the two of you to feel comfortable with individual interactions with me. I don't want you to be worried that your partner and I are behind your back badmouthing you and talking about an affair or something. Keeping secrets would put the therapeutic relationship in a difficult place for all of us.

Legal Involvement

Please be advised that should the therapist be requested to write a letter on any court related matter, that he will **not** be stipulating in writing or in person as to an opinion. Therapist may only provide observations and feedback. At no time will the therapist make a recommendation in regards to custody or any other court related matter.

If a court order is served and is requesting that the therapist be present in person and/or there is a request for records, the client's consent will be requested before turning over confidential information. When obtaining this consent, the client will be told exactly what has been requested by court and there is no guarantee that the information will be kept confidential. This includes a client's mental health history; current status and inclusive records and may not be in the best interest of the client. The therapist client relationship does not render the therapist as an advocate. The therapist will withhold any opportunity to engage in a dual relationship with the client.

Court Policy & Fee's

Please be advised that should the therapist be ordered by court to write a letter to the court, the time shall be billed at \$200 per hour.

Please be advised that should the therapist be court ordered to appear in court, the fee stipulation is as follows:

- \$2,000 per day plus \$200 per hour for travel to and from the court.
- \$200 per hour for preparation

The therapist will **NOT** be ON-CALL at anytime. Should a case be trailed, or continued, the therapist will be paid in full for each day as well as an additional \$1,000 per day as it hinders the therapist's ability to be available to their other clients.

All court fees must be received by cashier's check 7 days prior to the court date. Should the court, calendar the hearing for another date, the therapist must be re-issued a new subpoena with the new court hearing date.

Should the therapist be on vacation, the party initiating the court order must take reasonable steps to avoid imposing undue burden or expense on a person subject to the subpoena.

Acknowledgement

By signing and dating below, the clients acknowledge that they have reviewed and fully understand the terms and conditions of this agreement including the above stated court policy and stipulation, including but not limited to the fee structure for all related court matters. The clients have discussed such terms and conditions with the therapist, and have had any questions with regard to its terms and conditions answered to the clients' satisfaction. The clients agree to abide by the terms and conditions of this agreement and consent to participate in psychotherapy with the Joe Borders, MFT. Moreover, the clients agree to hold the therapist free and harmless from any claims, demands, suits for damage from any injury or complications whatsoever, save negligence, that may result from such treatment.

signature

date

signature

date