

## **Psychological Associates** of Clear Lake

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### **WELCOME**

We are pleased that you have chosen Psychological Associates for your mental health needs. Dr. Jones and Dr. Zinn are Licensed Clinical Psychologists. We hope to provide you with the best possible services and that you will feel secure with the treatment you receive. This booklet will give you with a better understanding of how we work so that we can establish a successful and comfortable relationship. You can expect warm, professional, and courteous treatment at all times. We welcome suggestions that will help us improve the services you receive. A copy of this handout is also available on our website.

### **Appointment Times and Frequency**

The office is open during regular business hours, usually 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily Monday through Friday. We offer appointment times during early morning and evening hours on a limited basis. After office hours or on days when the office is closed, you can still reach us by calling 281-554-6100. Obviously, emergency or urgent calls are accepted at all hours. If your call is urgent, when you leave a message in our voicemail system, the message will be immediately paged out to the doctor. This system is reliable, but it is not perfect. We cannot guarantee that your message will be received immediately. Sometimes the message will be paged but not noticed until some time has elapsed.

If we are in session, please leave a voice mail message and your call will be returned later that day. All appointments are made by you directly with your doctor. This allows for arranging the most convenient appointment times. We have found that most people prefer the voice mail system because of the privacy and message accuracy it ensures.

You may also reach us by email at [doctor@4psych.com](mailto:doctor@4psych.com) Email is not usually checked as often as voicemail. For that reason, if you have to cancel an appointment it would be better to leave a voicemail rather than an email if you would like the doctor to get the message in the next few hours.

### **Cancellation Policy**

We try to be as flexible as possible with the appointment times we offer. To help us maintain this flexibility we want to inform you about canceling and forgetting scheduled appointments.

To cancel or reschedule an appointment please call as soon as you know you will be unable to make the appointment. Your time is reserved for you when you make the appointment with your

doctor. You can think of this as though you are “buying” the time reserved for you when you make the appointment. Cancellations, other than for illness, unfairly deprive someone else of being able to use the time that you reserved. This is especially true for times scheduled during evening hours. You *will not* be charged for appointments canceled 24 hours in advance. You *will* be charged our full fee if you fail to show up for a scheduled appointment or cancel without sufficient notice.

## **Insurance**

We accept a variety of insurance plans. However, please note that when you provide insurance information you are presenting your insurance as your promise to pay. It is like writing a check as a promise to pay. When the check is cashed the transaction is complete. Just as a check can sometimes bounce, sometimes insurance does not pay as expected. It is important that you understand that you agree to pay for the services you used, even if insurance does not pay as expected. If taking on this responsibility is more than you feel comfortable with, services can be delayed until a guarantee in writing is obtained from your insurance carrier. If we are not in your insurance network, you may still be entitled to an out-of-network benefit. Be sure and ask what your out-of-network benefit is. We will still be happy to file your claim electronically for you and have your insurance reimburse you at their out-of-network rate.

Some insurance companies require that your services be preauthorized. It is important that you call and obtain your initial authorization if your insurance requires it. We expect that you will notify us if your authorizations are about to lapse, if there are any changes in preauthorization requirements, or if your plan requires some form of preauthorization. It is understood that if you accept a service you agree to pay for the service regardless of your insurance company’s ultimate decision.

## **Confidentiality**

All of your records are confidential. Confidentiality allows for the privacy and safety to explore sensitive issues. In general, confidentiality means that no one will be told about you or the services you receive. Your conversations and records are legally protected by state law and professional ethical principles. Any part of your record will be released only if you give written authorization. No matter what the circumstance, we will not release these records unless you notify us that you wish to do so. Information will not be shared with family members unless you have okayed this in advance. If we need to call you we will tend to leave a message with a first name only. We also want to ensure your privacy if we should run into each other in a public place. If this should occur, we will not approach you unless you acknowledge us first to let us know that this would be alright with you. If you are attending couple counseling, both partners must sign a consent form before any information can be released to a third party.

Texas State law allows for certain exceptions to privileged communication. Some general exceptions to the rule of confidentiality are if your doctor believes you are a danger to yourself or someone else. Then he or she may take steps to make sure everyone is kept safe. The law also

compels reporting of situations where a child is being abused or neglected. If you have any special concerns in this area be sure to discuss these in detail with your doctor. You have a right to have all legal issues regarding confidentiality fully explained to you prior to disclosing information. If you have any concerns about confidentiality, be sure to ask any questions you may have before disclosing questionable information.

### **Ethical Guidelines**

We abide by the Ethical Guidelines of the American Psychological Association. This code of ethics provides guidance for conducting therapy and other psychological services in a manner that provides maximum respect and safety for those taking this important step in their lives. We request that you communicate any dissatisfaction whatsoever directly to your therapist. One important part of good ethical practice is to avoid what are called dual relationships. A dual relationship is when a therapist interacts with a patient in more than this one role such as being a business partner or social friend. Dual relationships impair the therapist's objective judgment - which is essential to providing good service. For this reason, engaging in business deals, attending social activities, working on special nontherapy-related projects, or engaging in any role other than therapist is not allowed by ethical guidelines. If you have had a past treatment experience with a therapist who engaged in questionable practices, please discuss this with your doctor. The effects of unethical conduct often intrude on the treatment process, even with another professional later on.

We look forward to working with you.