



Terms of Service and Policies

What is therapy?

Therapy is a service provided by a qualified and licensed therapist, or a qualified trainee under the direct supervision of a clinically licensed therapist. Although each session and individual's perception of therapy may be unique, you can expect a few things to be consistent: a nonjudgmental and empathetic environment to openly discuss challenges, fears, hopes, and goals, and appropriate and qualified analysis of relationship and individual wellness. Psychotherapy requires the active participation of both the client and the therapist. In order to receive the greatest benefit from treatment, it is recommended that you take time to reflect on the topics and suggestions given during sessions.

Counseling is not always easy. You may find yourself having to discuss very personal information. You could find those conversations difficult and embarrassing, and you might be very anxious during and after such conversations. Counseling is intended to alleviate problems, but sometimes, especially at first, and as you get to the root of things, you may feel them even more acutely than in the past. Your therapist may suggest for you to do some things that might, initially, make you feel awkward or uncomfortable. Sometimes counseling requires trying new ways of doing things. You will always be free to move at your own pace. Your therapist may challenge you and your old ways of thinking and doing things, but we cannot make any promise about the results you will experience.

How long will therapy last?

Therapy appointments usually last 50-55 minutes. Sessions may last from a few weeks to several months. The course of therapy depends on the presenting concerns, your commitment to change, and may also be impacted by the number of sessions covered by insurance. In general, we consider our job to "work ourselves out of a job." We will be in ongoing dialogue about your needs, progress, and recommended duration of counseling. You are invited at any time to ask questions about your therapist's methods or the direction of your counseling.

Contacting Your Therapist

Graceful Therapy, PLLC and your individual therapist are not emergency providers. In the event of an emergency, please call 988, 911, or go to your local emergency room. For non-emergent needs you may leave a message on our confidential voicemail or send your therapist an email if you choose to communicate in this manner. Please refrain from discussing topics other than scheduling or billing information outside of our face to face interactions.

If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointments, please provide 24-hours-notice. Failure to provide your therapist 24-hours notice of cancellation will result in you being charged a fee equivalent to our out of pocket session fee (\$175 or equivalent to your agreed upon reduced session rate). If you are late by 15 minutes or more and have not contacted your therapist, we will assume you are not coming. Unfortunately, your insurance company does not pay claims for missed appointments, so you will have to pay the fee for a late cancellation or missed appointment yourself prior to your next session. No-show/Late-Cancel Fees are never a fee your clinician hopes to charge; it is a way for us to maintain

our income and recognize the worth of our time and our commitment to you and your treatment. We appreciate your understanding and adherence to this policy.

Confidentiality

In accordance with the standards set forth by the State of Illinois and HIPAA, the information you provide Graceful Therapy will be treated as strictly confidential, meaning that we will not share information relating to your treatment with unauthorized individuals unless required or permitted by law. However, there are exceptions, including those situations which we are required by law to report to state authorities such as the suspected abuse or neglect of a child and/or elderly or dependent adult. Further, your therapist may take appropriate action if they become aware of an imminent threat of serious harm to self or others. While these situations are rare, you should be aware of the possible occurrence as well as the protective actions your therapist may take. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, notifying the police, seeking appropriate hospitalization for the client, and/or contacting family members or others who can help provide protection.

There may be times when your therapist will need to consult with another professional in order to validate, adjust, or improve their therapeutic approach. In these consultations, we make efforts to avoid revealing your identity. The consultant is also legally bound to keep any information shared confidential. We will not necessarily inform you about these informal consultations. All clinicians on staff participate in group consultation, and clinicians that are not yet licensed to work independently receive supervision by a fully licensed clinician.

Counseling and Treatment of a Minor

Graceful Therapy requires this “Terms of Service and Policies” document to be completed by both parents or legal guardians of a minor. A minor is identified as a client under the age of 18. If applicable, custody or guardianship documentation such as a parenting agreement must be provided to your clinician prior to the initial appointment. Additionally, please be aware that a parent or guardian must be present on the premises while a minor client is in session.

Please note that at the age of 12, a minor has certain rights to control who may access their mental health information and clinical file, which may affect what information may be communicated outside of treatment to parents/guardians or other third parties. Further, while parents/guardians may otherwise be entitled to information about their child, some issues must remain confidential in order for your child to receive the most benefit from therapy. By signing below, you assent and agree to respect and maintain the confidential relationship between your child and their therapist. You further assent and agree not to request records, information, or details relating to your child’s confidential treatment. Notwithstanding this agreement, you may still be kept aware of your child’s current physical and mental condition, diagnosis, treatment needs, services provided, and services needed, including medication, if any.

Session Fees & Payment Expectations

The fee for the initial sessions (diagnostic assessments) is \$200, subsequent 45 to 55 minute sessions will be billed at a fee of \$175. 30 minute sessions will be billed at a fee of \$100. If you are being seen by one of our clinical interns and not utilizing your insurance, the fee is \$25 per session.

You will be charged for the full session you have scheduled, even if you are late. It is expected that you pay the fee at the time of service. There is a \$25 service charge for personal checks returned for any reason. Payment plans may be made at the discretion of Graceful Therapy, PLLC on a case by case basis and in light of the individual circumstances. In order to schedule an initial appointment with our clinicians, we require that a credit card be put on file for authorized charges.

Acceptance of Insurance and Client Responsibility

If you have insurance coverage, we will submit claims to receive payment directly from your insurance plan if we are in-network and/or have a contract with your carrier or third-party payer. In that case, Graceful Therapy will submit claims according to the terms of your insurance. Please be aware that insurance claims are submitted based upon the clinical services that are provided. If additional or more complex services are provided, that will be reflected in the claims submitted to your insurance. Accordingly, the amount paid by insurance and/or the amount of coinsurance you are individually responsible for may vary from session to session.

Your copay or co-insurance 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 fee. If we have not received payment from your insurance or other third party payer within eight weeks of any counseling session, we may bill you directly for past and for ongoing visits. If your carrier does not pay, you will be responsible and failure to pay may necessitate termination of counseling and a referral to another provider. We do not submit claims to insurance companies that we are not in network with, nor do we submit to secondary insurance payers. We will be happy to provide a superbill in these cases to aid in your own submission for reimbursement.

It is in your best interest to verify the details of your health insurance policy and share that information with Graceful Therapy staff. Your therapist may assist you in verifying your coverage and submitting your claims to the insurance company. However, you remain responsible for knowing your insurance benefits. You also remain personally responsible for all deductibles, co-payments, co-insurance, non-covered, or non-approved services. It is recommended that you verify your coverage 24-hours prior to the first appointment to be sure that your therapist is a covered provider and these services will be covered.

If you experience any changes in your insurance coverage, it is your responsibility to notify your clinician or our administrative staff prior to your session.

Some insurance companies require advance authorization before they will provide reimbursement for mental health services. It is your responsibility to make sure you are taking the proper steps to obtain your benefits from your insurer; this includes keeping track of your authorized visits. If your insurance company limits the number of sessions you are allowed per calendar year/contract year/lifetime or limits the dollar amount paid out, you are expected to maintain documentation, as payment may become your responsibility if you exceed this number. *Please note: maximum visits or dollar amounts may include all mental health services, not just for those rendered at Graceful Therapy, PLLC.

You should also be aware that most insurance agreements require your therapist to provide a clinical diagnosis. This information will become part of your records with the insurance company. If you choose, you have the right to pay for services directly and avoid the sharing of information and complexities associated with insurance coverage.

Telehealth

Graceful Therapy, PLLC provides services via telehealth as an option for some clients. Telehealth appointments are voluntary, and you should talk to your therapist about whether telehealth is a good fit for you. Below are guidelines and best practices which you agree to abide by when participating in services via telehealth at Graceful Therapy, PLLC:

- Confirm your physical location at the beginning of each session. In most circumstances, you cannot be outside of Illinois and still engage in telehealth.

- Do not allow any other person in the same room during your session without the express permission of your clinician.
- Do not participate in telehealth while you are driving, or otherwise engaged in any other activity where you cannot give your full and complete attention to the session.
- Maintain appropriate lighting, visibility, device stability, and camera angle.
- Maintain appropriate physical and technical security functions on your personal devices.
- Ensure internet access and bandwidth. A wired internet connection is recommended when possible.
- Do not record any audio or video of your session.
- Standards of conduct and behavior shall be the same as for in-person services.

Suspension or Termination of Services

Occasionally, a therapist may deem it necessary to discontinue treatment services provided. This may happen when your therapist observes no substantial progress is being made or other factors are interfering with their ability to help you or your ability to benefit from treatment. Additionally, if you do not keep a scheduled appointment and do not call within one week, your therapist will presume you have chosen to terminate counseling at that time, and will initiate the termination process. Failure to comply with this services contract may also lead to termination of services.

If your account shows a balance of \$250 or more, services will be suspended until the balance is paid or a payment plan is established. If you are unable to afford services your therapist will make a referral to an outside agency for continuity of care. At Graceful Therapy, we believe that it is in your best interest to discontinue services if they become a financial burden.

You always have the right to voice your needs as a client. If for any reason you are dissatisfied with your therapist's services, please let them know, or you may also contact Kate Fish, LMFT, owner of Graceful Therapy, and she will address your concerns. If we are unable to resolve your concerns, we will assist you in finding qualified help elsewhere.

Medical Records Requests and Requests for Additional Services

If you have a request for your therapist to prepare a report, sign a document, or write a letter, please be advised that you may be charged a fee of \$25 per 15-minutes for the time required to complete the request. If you have a request for your therapist to attend a case management meeting/consultation with an outside provider, IEP meeting, or similar request, you may be charged a fee of \$50 per 15-minute increment. Your therapist will make reasonable efforts to limit the information shared to the minimum necessary to accomplish the intended purpose of the request. Your therapist reserves the right to decline these requests. Please note these charges do not apply to usual and customary administrative functions relating to insurance billing and reimbursement procedures.

If you request your own individual medical records, they will be provided to you upon request and payment of a \$6.50 fee. If a third-party requests your records, they will be provided in accordance with applicable law upon your authorization and payment of a \$25 dollar fee.

It is our practice not to become involved in any custody, visitation, or legal disputes. It is not the role of your therapist to make recommendations or otherwise be involved in any divorce or other legal proceeding. It is important that you seek appropriate and qualified legal advice regarding divorce or custody arrangements.

[signature page to follow]

Signature of Client or Legal Guardian 1

Date

Printed Name of Client or Legal Guardian 1

Signature of Client or Legal Guardian 2

Date

Printed Name of Client or Legal Guardian 2