



heather b. rensmith, lcsw

Informed Consent for Mental Health Counseling Services
Heather Brooks Rensmith, LCSW, CST

Counseling = Collaboration

Counseling is a collaborative process designed to help you live a more emotionally comfortable life, connected to your full potential, your values, and your environment. We will work together to develop goals on which you want to work and to assess progress together along the way. I am a facilitator to helping you make changes, but I cannot make the actual changes for you. That is your work, and I am committed to helping you through this process.

As we work together, it is helpful for me to know how my approach is working for you. If you are experiencing any problems or difficulties within our counseling relationship, I encourage you to bring these up with me so that we can seek resolution. In some cases, we may decide that it is best for me to refer you to another therapist.

Risks

Counseling can be hard work, as we are likely to explore issues in your life that are painful. This may cause uncomfortable feelings, sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, pain, frustration, loneliness, etc. In some cases major life decisions are made; in others, traumatic events are reflected upon. Because feelings are naturally brought up through the counseling process, things might initially feel harder before they begin to feel better. This process of growth and change can cause significant impacts to employment, lifestyles, and relationships.

Appointments

At the first session, I will gather initial information about the concerns that have led you to seek therapy. If I do not feel I can meet your clinical needs or there is a conflict of interest, I will provide you with referral information for alternate services or therapists.

Sessions take place in my office and are 50 minutes in length.

Your session time is reserved for you, specifically. Please arrive on time, as sessions will also end on time.

Rates are as follows:

50 minute individual/couple session: \$150

70 minute couples/family session: \$210

Some availability for sliding scale.

Telephone consultations are charged at the 50 minute hourly rate.

Payment is due at the time of your appointment. I prefer cash and personal checks, but can accept VISA and Mastercard.

Insurance

I am an out-of-network for all insurance companies. I'm happy to provide billing statements for you to submit to your insurer, though you are ultimately responsible for payment of the therapy session at the time of the session.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellations must be made at least 24 hours in advance to avoid incurring the full session fee (\$150). I will waive the fee if our schedules allow for you to be seen within the current week.

Please know that the cancellation policy is enforced without exception. That way it is fair for everyone, and it is not at all personal when the fee is charged. I understand that emergencies and illness do occur, and as unfortunate as they are, my business is unable to financially sustain the losses of all my clients' personal circumstances.

Why I Enforce the Cancellation and Payment Policy

- * An aspect of engaging in personal development work involves taking responsibility for one's decisions and actions, as well as developing a greater awareness of how we impact one another.
- * It strengthens our working relationship. When we respect each other's time, our working relationship is enhanced and protected.
- * It promotes your personal work. The commitment to your personal work is strengthened and therefore, is incentive toward further progress
- * It allows more people to be served when they need it. When you cancel your appointment with as much advance notice as possible, you potentially allow another person or couple to get in the door on short notice.
- * It protects the health of my counseling business. When my business is functioning well, it enhances my ability to provide you the highest level of care and attention.

My Availability

- I am available for you, fully, at your scheduled appointment time.
- If you have an urgent need, and we are not able to schedule an office appointment, we can schedule an urgent phone appointment which will be

charged to you at the rate of \$150/hour, broken into 15 minute increments and due at the time of our next office appointment.

- Please only use email for routine scheduling. I check my email regularly but cannot reliably respond to a crisis or urgent questions in an urgent time frame.
- **If you are having a mental health crisis, call to the Multnomah County Crisis Line, available 24-7, at 503-988-4888. Clackamas County is 503-655-8585, also available 24-7. You can also call 911 or go to your nearest ER for evaluation.**

Confidentiality

All communications between a mental health professional and a client are protected by law.

The following are exceptions to confidentiality:

1. At your request, I will release information regarding our communications to others with your express written consent. (Release of Information form) If you are under 18, your parents or legal guardian(s) may have access to your records and may authorize release to 3rd parties.
2. Reporting suspected child and elder abuse,
3. Reporting imminent danger to you (the client) or others,
4. Reporting information required in court proceedings by your insurance company, or other relevant agencies;
5. Providing information concerning licensee case consultation or supervision;
6. Defending claims brought by the client against licensee
7. Billing operations through your insurer

Consultation

Occasionally, I may consult with other mental health professionals if I feel it would be helpful to our work together. Every reasonable attempt will be made to avoid revealing your identity to other professionals with whom I consult.

Records

I am required by law to maintain records each time we interact.

You have the right to inspect your record unless I determine that it would hinder progress or otherwise cause undue harm.

Termination

The end of our work together should be as thoughtful and intentional as our decision to work together. Termination may occur in several contexts, such as:

- You have achieved the goals that are made at the outset
- You have realized maximum benefit from the therapy
- We decide that referral to another therapist or specialist is in your best interest for you to reach your goals

To sustain the benefits of therapy over the long-term, termination is a process that we prepare for and discuss as a team. You have a right to terminate therapy at any time, though I request that our last session together be in person as a way to review our work together and identify any outstanding resources that may need to be addressed in the short- or long-term.

By signing below, I consent to be provided mental health services by Heather Brooks Rensmith, LCSW. I understand the potential risks and benefits of treatment and have had an opportunity to ask Heather Brooks Rensmith, LCSW about these services and to have my questions answered. I understand that it is my responsibility to suggest changes for improving my services to my counselor when appropriate, and that I am ultimately the director of my own treatment. I understand that I have the right to be informed of my diagnosis. I understand that I may revoke my consent at any time and refuse services.

Client signature:

_____ Date: _____

Client signature:

_____ Date: _____

If client is a minor, guardian signature:
