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## **OFFICE POLICIES**

Welcome to my practice. I am pleased to have the opportunity to share in the parts of your life that concern you now. I am a licensed professional counselor and licensed marriage and family therapist, and am certified in clinical hypnosis. I also have specialized training in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). I have extensive experience working with children, adolescents, and adults, having been in practice since 1981, and having taught and counseled school children through graduate students. I am licensed by the Texas State Boards of Professional Counselors and of Marriage and Family Therapists. I adhere to the rules of both Boards and to the codes of ethics of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, and the EMDR International Association, where I hold clinical memberships.

During your treatment, I will make every effort to inform you about the benefits, consequences, or risks of any proposed treatment (or of no treatment at all), alternatives to treatment, and the process of your treatment. If you have questions about any issues concerning your treatment, please raise these to discuss with me.

Due to my own and others' chemical sensitivities, please come to sessions free of all perfume, cologne, scented lotions or hand creams, and strongly scented hairsprays, etc.

### APPOINTMENTS, FEES AND PAYMENTS

Office hours are by appointment only, Monday through Friday. Because your appointment is reserved for you, appointments must be cancelled 24 hours in advance to avoid fees. Missed appointments or late cancellations are subject to a fee of \$50.00. Please note that insurance cannot be billed for missed appointments or late cancellations.

With the exception of the initial session (the fee for which is \$150.00), fees for individual, marital and family sessions, hypnosis, EMDR and other consultations are \$125.00 for a 45-50 minute session. Extended session time is pro-rated. Fees for consultations outside the office are \$150.00 per hour, including travel time, with a minimum one-hour charge. Fees for court appearance, testimony, deposition, attorney consultation, and case preparation are \$250.00 per hour, including travel time, plus any attorney fees incurred by me. These fees are the separate responsibility of the patient/parent/guardian, are not reimbursable by insurance, and must be secured by a prepaid retainer.

Telephone consultations, telephone counseling, and treatment coordination with other professionals will be charged at the normal pro-rated fees. Patients may contact me by telephone for routine questions, scheduling issues, etc, without incurring a fee. Communication by email should be limited to brief messages and the patient should be aware that email is not secured, and therefore not confidential. Depending on my schedule, emails may not be answered daily. Lengthy correspondences are available with prior arrangements and are also charged at the normal fee.

Each patient/responsible party is responsible for fees incurred, including those denied by insurance, except under certain managed care conditions or unless arranged previously with me. Payment is due at the time of service. In order to utilize your time in session more fruitfully, please have your payment ready at the start of the session. Documentation needed for you to file and be reimbursed by an insurance carrier will be provided. Personal check, cash, VISA or MasterCard are accepted for payment.

Each patient should verify benefits and PPO information with your insurance carrier. Remember, any statement of coverage is not a guarantee of payment by your insurer, and you will be responsible for any unpaid and undiscounted balances.

Special billing arrangements may be granted on an individual basis, but do not cancel your obligation to pay for services received. A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for any checks returned for insufficient funds. A monthly fee of 1% of the unpaid balance will be charged each month an account is overdue

### EMERGENCIES

For all mental health emergencies, call 911, the police, or go directly to any emergency room. An additional resource is the Dallas Suicide and Crisis Center hotline (214) 828-1000. You may notify me via my emergency number (972-836-7559). **HOWEVER, DO NOT RELY ON MY IMMEDIATE AVAILABILITY IN AN EMERGENCY.** Take charge of your own or the patient's safety first and foremost. If you or the patient is hospitalized due to a mental health emergency, please notify me as soon as feasible.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Patient records and communications are confidential under provisions of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 611, and other state and federal statutes and rules such as HIPAA. In general, limitations to confidentiality include: child or elder abuse, neglect or exploitation; instance or risk of suicide or homicide; court appointed services; other professionals involved in the patient's treatment; legal proceedings brought by the patient or affecting the parent-child relationship; any criminal proceeding or mental health proceeding; a judicial or administrative proceeding where the court or agency has issued an order. Patients should realize that in order for me to file your insurance or treat you within your managed care provisions, you must sign a waiver of your rights to confidentiality. Information required by insurance and managed care organizations varies, but at the very least includes your diagnosis and type of service received, and will be considered a part of your medical record, falling under HIPAA guidelines. Please feel free to discuss with me the type of information I will be required to release to your insurer or managed care organization should you elect to use those benefits.

### VACATION OR ILLNESS OF THERAPIST

Arrangements will be made for coverage by a licensed therapist in the event of my prolonged absence. My voice mail will carry this information. Every effort will be made to notify patients in advance of such an absence and before their scheduled appointment.

### TREATMENT RISKS

As with any treatment there are risks inherent in psychotherapy. Often therapy exacerbates an emotional state or behavior and a patient can "feel worse before feeling better." Additionally, treatment and a patient's resulting growth may have unexpected effects on another person or a relationship. During treatment I will make every effort to provide for your well-being through such measures as increasing the frequency of sessions, being available by telephone, providing professional coverage if I am unavailable, referring you to another professional as needed, seeking consultation with other professionals, and recommending and helping to arrange for hospitalization if needed. You are urged to contact me and speak openly about adverse effects of your treatment at any time.

*Thank you for your attention to the issues raised herein. I look forward to the work that we will accomplish together.*

*Dr. Maurer*

Revised October 2010

Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors  
Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists  
1100 West 49<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78756