

Welcome

Welcome to Silver Linings Counseling, PLLC! Silver Linings Counseling, PLLC (SLC) is composed of a group of caring licensed mental health providers who collaborate with our clients to improve functioning and decrease symptoms. We recognize that for many, the decision to enter into a therapeutic relationship with a mental health provider can be scary. It is normal to have many questions and we encourage you to ask your clinician any questions you may have regarding services about your care or the policies of the agency.

Services Offered

SLC offers individual therapy/counseling, group therapy, family/relationship therapy, and psychological testing/assessment. Medication evaluations and medication management services are not offered and clients are encouraged to consult their primary care physician and/or a psychiatric provider to learn more about psychopharmacological treatment options. Referrals for prescribers are available upon request.

Description of Services/Treatment

Psychotherapy/counseling, commonly referred to as “therapy”, takes many forms, as such it can be difficult to describe therapy in general terms. Nonetheless, it is important that we provide some basic information to help you decide if therapy is right for you. The majority of this information applies to individual therapy, which is the most common service offered at SLC. However, additional information regarding specific services is also included in this section.

Therapists rely on a variety of theoretical approaches, often integrating techniques from different schools of thought to provide individualized treatment. Therapy also occurs in different modalities, such as individual, couples, family, and group settings.

Therapy has benefits and risks. Because therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, therapy has also been shown to have including better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. While SLC clinicians are dedicated to helping people heal and grow, there are no guarantees that you (or your child) will benefit from therapy.

Therapy may involve a large commitment of time, money, and effort outside of sessions. As such, it is important that you carefully consider several factors in deciding if therapy is right for you. We encourage you to consider your own level of motivation, your ability to commit to attending sessions and working between sessions to meet your goals, what type of therapist would be best for you, whether a different form of treatment (e.g., medication management) might better serve your needs, or whether a different agency might better meet your needs (e.g., sliding scale, location, hours of operation, etc.). While we hope that after considering these factors you decide to work with an SLC therapist, we are also happy to discuss alternatives that might better meet your needs.

If, after considering whether therapy is right for you at this time, you will be asked to participate in an intake appointment. During the intake, your therapist will ask questions about your current functioning, your background, and your goals for treatment. Therapists will ask about things such as physical health, substance use, past mental health treatment, family relationships, traumatic experiences, current symptoms, and other aspects of your life to gain a good understanding of you and your life history.

Please feel free to let your therapist know if you are uncomfortable answering a question. While the intake serves as a starting point for understanding your concerns, the evaluation process is ongoing.

After the intake, you may choose to schedule a follow up appointment, request to work with a different therapist, or discontinue services at SLC. If you choose to work with a therapist at SLC, you can expect to collaborate with your therapist to set goals for your treatment (or the treatment of your child). To work toward your goals, most people meet with their therapist on a weekly basis for 45 to 55 minutes, however, session frequency varies depending on client needs. In sessions, your therapist and you (or your child) will likely explore life events, attitudes, relationship styles, and ways of thinking and behaving that cause problems for you (or your child). At times, in consultation with your therapist, you may choose to invite others into therapy sessions. If this occurs, you (or your child) remain the focus of the session – therapists work primarily for the benefit of the identified client.

Child Therapy: SLC therapists may offer services to children. Parental/guardian involvement in therapy will be discussed at the intake and will be re-assessed as needed. In some cases, the parent or guardian may be referred for personal therapy so that the child's session can focus on their needs and growth. Additionally, when a child's parents are divorced/separated, guardians may be required to consent to SLC's *Divorced Parent Policy*.

Family/Relationship Therapy: SLC therapists may offer family or relationship therapy. Please note, that when family/relationship therapy takes place, one person must be identified as the client. While the goal of family/relationship therapy is to benefit all those involved, the primary goal of therapy will be to work toward the benefit of the identified client. Additionally, services will only be documented for and available to the identified client (or, if the identified client is a minor, to a legal guardian).

Group Therapy: SLC therapists may offer group therapy services. Should you be interested in participating in group therapy, please be aware that SLC cannot guarantee that group members will maintain confidentiality. SLC therapists commit to practicing ethically and will maintain your confidentiality. The therapist will also set clear expectations regarding privacy and confidentiality among group members. If a group member is found to have broken confidentiality of another group member, they may be terminated from the therapy group.

Specialized Therapies: Some SLC therapists may offer specialized therapy services, such as EMDR for trauma, play therapy for children, sex therapy. In such instances, it is important that you review possible benefits and risks with the therapist to determine whether you would like to proceed with treatment; additional consent processes may be necessary.

Psychological/Neuropsychological Testing & Assessment: Testing and assessment includes three main phases. In the first phase, you will meet with a qualified health provider to complete an intake. During the intake, the assessor will obtain background information about you (or your child), including the reason testing is being sought, information about development, physical health concerns, family relationships, substance use/exposure, legal background, trauma history, and more. In some situations, more than one session is needed to complete the intake phase. Following this first phase of assessment, your assessor will select tests appropriate to answer the referral question(s) that led to the request for psychological testing/assessment. In the second phase, the assessor will work with the client and others as necessary to complete administration of various psychological tests. Please note that for adults, it is common to ask for input from significant others or professionals involved in the client's life (e.g., probation officers, physicians, etc.). For children, it is best practice to include others in the assessment process, including parents/guardians, teachers, others who have close relationships with the child, and other professionals (e.g., pediatricians, neurologists, speech and language pathologists, etc.) who may have specialized knowledge concerning the child's functioning. Once all interviews, tests, and evaluation

methods have been completed, the assessor will prepare a written report. In the third phase of assessment, the assessor will schedule a feedback session with the client (or the client's guardians if the client is a child) to review findings and discuss recommendations based on the results of the assessment.

Like therapy, testing and assessment includes a significant commitment of time and financial resources. Results of assessments cannot be guaranteed. While the assessor will work diligently to address the referral question or reason for seeking testing and to provide evidence-based treatment recommendations, in some cases, testing does not allow the examiner to make a conclusive diagnosis or determination. Additionally, in some cases, the assessor may offer a diagnosis that is difficult to receive. For example, SLC assessors routinely include measures of intellectual ability and academic achievement. Learning that your (or your child's) intellectual ability or academic achievement falls in the below average, average, or above average range can cause unanticipated shifts in how you see yourself (or your child). Clients (or their guardians) are urged to carefully consider whether the benefits of completing the assessment process are worth the investment and whether they are prepared to learn more about their (or their child's) functioning. While risks exist, identifying underlying concerns for poor academic, employment, and/or relational performance can serve as a crucial first step in determining intervention strategies. Testing can help clarify diagnosis, which may lead to better informed therapy strategies, medication management strategies, or development of educational intervention plans (i.e., IEP or 504b plans).

Please note that in most cases, the client (or the client's guardians) is responsible for costs associated with assessment and retains confidentiality rights to the results. In some cases, however, assessment services may be covered by a school, court, or other agency. In those cases, the assessor will be sure to clarify with the person being evaluated the limits to confidentiality and who will be obtaining a copy of the assessment results.

Client Rights

- You have the right to receive services from qualified professionals who are appropriately licensed in the state of Michigan, who adhere to their respective ethical codes, and who comply with state and federal laws.
- You have the right to privacy and confidentiality regarding the service you receive. All information about you and your treatment, whether written or verbal, is protected under federal and state laws, including the HIPAA Privacy Rule.
- You have the right to informed consent (see above) regarding services and a right to ask questions and receive honest responses to help you make decisions regarding your care.
- You have a right to receive treatment recommendations and to have those recommendations explained to you, including possible outcomes of participating in and refusing treatment.
- You have a right and a responsibility to actively collaborate with your clinician(s) regarding coordination of care and treatment planning at every stage.
- You have a right to refuse services at any time. You have a right to withdraw your consent to receive services and discontinue treatment at any time.
- You have the right to express any concerns or complaints regarding the services you receive.
- You have the right to know that your clinician may terminate services in the event that you repeatedly cancel or fail to attend scheduled sessions.
- You have the right to know we may contact law enforcement should an individual, client or otherwise, come to SLC under the influence of drugs or alcohol and attempts to leave SLC by driving a motor vehicle.
- You have a right to know that SLC is a non-smoking environment. Illicit drugs, alcohol, vaporizers, and weapons are not allowed on the premises. Persons in possession of any of these will be asked to leave immediately.

- You have the right to know that no clinician or member of our staff is allowed to date or have a personal relationship with current or former clients of the practice.
- You have the right to know that staff and therapists are typically not allowed to accept gifts from clients of the practice, nor are they permitted to enter into any business relationships with past or current clients.
- You have a right to know that when a minor is identified as the client, guardians are typically encouraged to participate in the treatment process.

Client Responsibilities

- You have the responsibility to be present and timely to your appointments. Arriving more than 10 minutes late may result in your therapy appointment being cancelled and rescheduled. You may be charged up to \$125 for therapy appointments that are cancelled due to late arrival. You may cancel any appointment but must do so at least 24 hours in advance. With the exception of emergency situations, **you may be charged a practice fee of up to \$125 for each cancellation that occurs with less than a 24-hour notice and up to \$125 for each scheduled appointment that you fail to attend. For psychological testing and assessment, you may be charged up to \$125 per scheduled hour of testing** (i.e., if you are scheduled for a four-hour testing session, you may be charged up to \$500 for a cancelled or missed testing session. Because insurance companies and other third-party payers do not cover missed appointments, you will be personally responsible for costs incurred due to late cancellation of or failure to attend scheduled appointments.
- **You are responsible for knowing and understanding your insurance benefits.** While insurance benefits may be checked as a courtesy, you are ultimately responsible for knowing your insurance benefits and SLC cannot guarantee benefits or coverage of services. In the event that your insurance company declines to pay for care, you as the client are responsible for any charges related to provision of care. You are encouraged to contact your insurance provider to learn more about your benefits.
- You are responsible for maintaining contact with your clinician. Your file will be closed following 60 days of inactivity, unless other arrangements have been made. You may resume treatment at any time; however, you may be required to complete a new initial appointment depending on how long it has been since your last appointment.
- You have the responsibility to conduct yourself in a non-disruptive and non-aggressive manner while on the premises. Emergency responders will be contacted if necessary.

Confidentiality

Federal and State laws protect the privacy of communications between a client and a clinician. In most situations, a signed *Authorization to Release* form is required before your information will be shared. However, there are limits to confidentiality. Confidentiality will be broken in the event that your therapist believes you intend to harm yourself or others, if your therapist becomes concerned about possible harm/abuse/neglect of a dependent person, if your therapist is legally compelled to provide information, or if an insurance company audits your records. Additional standards and practices regarding your confidentiality are set forth in the *Notice of Privacy Practices*. **State law requires therapists to report SUSPECTED abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable/elderly adults.**

Treatment of Minors

Parents or guardians of minor clients who are not emancipated may be allowed by law to examine the minor's treatment records. Clients over the age of 14 may consent to and may control access to information pertaining to their mental health treatment; however, this treatment may not extend beyond 12 sessions or 4 months without the consent of a guardian. The same limits to confidentiality, as described above, apply to minors.

Coordination of Care

The best care is typically achieved by collaboration by you, your mental health provider(s), and your medical provider(s) working together. As such, we routinely request your permission to inform your Primary Care Physician and/or Psychiatrist that you are receiving services at SLC. Unless otherwise required by your insurance company, you have the right to decline coordination of your care in part or whole.

Record Keeping

In compliance with state law, your therapist(s) will keep records of each service provided. Records will not be shared except with respect to the limits discussed in the *Confidentiality* section. Should you wish to have your or your child's records released, an *Authorization to Release Information* must be completed. Records will be maintained for at least 7 years.

Identifying Information

SLC complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other federal and state guidelines. It is important for you to know that your identifying information will be shared with certain companies that provide services for SLC. Specifically, to facilitate receipt of payment from third party payers and aid in account management, your contact information, insurance information, diagnosis, etc. will be provided to a billing company who also complies with HIPAA. Only information necessary for submitting for financial purposes will be made available to the billing company. Identifying information or client records may also be reviewed in the case of an insurance audit or as part of a credentialing process, or be made accessible to companies with which SLC is affiliated for specific purposes (e.g., electronic medical record maintenance). Additional standards and practices regarding your identifying information are set forth in the *Notice of Privacy Practices*.

Financial Responsibility

Payment for services is expected at the time it is rendered, unless otherwise agreed or if covered by insurance. Payment for other professional or administrative services may be required; see *Fee Schedule* below. A fee adjustment or a payment installment plan may be negotiated with your therapist in circumstances of unusual financial hardship. Although a benefit summary may be provided, the responsible party is ultimately responsible for knowing benefit information and for paying for service in full. If your client balance exceeds \$200.00, service may be suspended, and a referral may be offered.

If your account has not been paid for more than 90 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, legal action may be used to secure payment. **This may involve hiring a collection agency** or going through small claims court, which will require disclosure of otherwise confidential information. In most collection situations, the only information released regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due. If such legal action is necessary, costs charged by the collection agency, courts, and other legal or associated fees will be the responsibility of the client.

Upon request, you will be provided with the name and contact information of the current billing company and/or collections agency utilized by SLC. SLC may, without notice, opt to end its agreement with the current billing and/or collections company and enter into an agreement with an alternative company. In such situations, clients will be provided with the name and contact information for the new company upon request.

Fee Schedule

The following table outlines the standard rates charged to insurance companies (when applicable) and clients for various services. SLC reserves the right to contract with insurance companies to provide services at different rates.

Initial/Intake Appointment	\$200.00
Psychotherapy (53+ min.)	\$165.00
Psychotherapy (37-52 min.)	\$125.00
Psychotherapy (16-36 min.)	\$100.00
Family therapy session (with or without client present)	\$165.00
Group therapy session	\$55.00
Psychological Testing, first hour	\$180.00
Psychological Testing, each additional hour	\$150.00
Neuropsychological Testing, first hour	\$200.00
Neuropsychological Testing, each additional hour	\$160.00
Test administration and scoring, first 30 min.	\$75.00
Test administration and scoring, each additional 30 min.	\$75.00
No show / Late cancellation fee	Up to \$125.00
Phone Consultation with Therapist, not related to scheduling, 1-15 min. (if available)	\$20.00
Text messaging with Therapist, not related to scheduling, per message received/sent (if available)	\$1.00
Probation letter	\$35.00
Completion of forms	Up to \$50.00
Returned check	\$50.00
Court appearance, each 30 min., inc. travel, waiting, preparation, and testimony	\$100.00
Attending IEP, WRAT Around, or other meeting on behalf of client, inc. travel, waiting, preparation, and meeting time, each 30 min.	\$50.00 to \$100.00
Medical record copy/transmittal	Starts at \$35.00
Other services; Discuss with Therapist/Assessor	Varies

Operations: Contacting Clinicians, Scheduling, and Making Payments

SLC's office team is generally available to answer calls, take messages, reschedule appointments, and take payments over the phone from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Thursday and from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Fridays. If calling after hours, clients may leave messages regarding cancelling sessions on the SLC voicemail; however, payments cannot be made via voicemail. SLC's office team may contact clients regarding outstanding balances, cancellation of appointments, or other matters to support the treatment process. Contact may be made via phone call, text message, or email.

In the event of an emergency, you can contact or go (if able) to the nearest crisis center (Macomb County: 586-307-9100; Oakland County: 248-456-0909; National Suicide Hotline 1800-273-TALK or text 741741). You may also contact the nearest emergency room.

SLC therapists are generally not available for consultation outside of scheduled sessions. In the event that a clinician accepts phone calls or text messages between appointments, a fee for service may be assessed. Please ask your clinician(s) about how they would prefer to handle communication between sessions if this is a service you feel would be beneficial/necessary for your treatment.

Confirmation of Terms and Consent to Treat:

Please read and initial each of the statements to indicate your understanding and agreement.

_____ I have read and understand the Silver Linings Counseling policies described in this contract. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

_____ I have read and understand that there are risks and benefits to receiving therapy and/or psychological testing and assessment services.

_____ I understand my rights and responsibilities as a client of Silver Linings Counseling, including attendance, financial, and otherwise.

_____ I have received a copy of Silver Linings Counseling *Notice of Privacy Practices*, which were most recently revised on January 31, 2020.

_____ **I consent to treatment for myself/my child at Silver Linings Counseling.**

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

Client Printed: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness Printed: _____

If applicable:

Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Guardian Printed: _____

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