Informed Consent and Personal Disclosure Statement

Julie A. Reed

WELCOME!

I am pleased you have chosen me for your counselor! This document is designed to answer some frequently asked questions about myself and the practice, the counseling process, our professional relationship, confidentiality and site policies.

ABOUT ME

I am a licensed professional counselor (LPC), as well as a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC). Recently I earned my Certified Clinical Trauma Professional certification (CCTP). I received my Master’s Degree in Mental Health Counseling from Wake Forest University and am working towards a PhD from Regent University in trauma and crisis treatment. I have experience in both a private practice setting as well as a community mental health agency. Prior to this, I was an elementary and middle school teacher for over 10 years.

WHAT TO EXPECT

***The Definition of Counseling: According to the American Counseling Association, counseling is defined as, "a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals." Counseling involves helping people make needed changes in ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving, and is a goal-based collaborative process, involving a non-judgmental, supportive counselor who works with a client in telling his or her story, setting viable goals, and developing strategies and plans necessary to accomplish these goals. For some people this process takes a small amount of time, in some cases as little as one or two sessions; for others, the process may last longer.***

The goal of counseling is EMPOWERING the client. This is done by gaining self-awareness about what is troublesome in your life; exploring and understanding your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; seeking a greater sense of happiness and contentment; and for you to choose and maintain behavioral changes. To achieve this, some clients need only a few sessions, whereas others may require months or even years. Each therapy session will be about an hour in length, unless other arrangements are made. While counseling can be very beneficial, there are some risks. These may include the experience of intense and unwanted feelings including sadness, anger, fear, guilt, or anxiety. These feelings may be natural and normal and can be an important part of the counseling process. This is a *collaborative relationship*, which means it is necessary for you to make an active effort both in our sessions and between our sessions. There are no instant, painless, or passive cures. A diagnosis will be made for treatment planning as well insurance purposes.

MY APPROACH & THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

My approach is integrative, but the foundation of therapy lies in the strengths of my clients. This means that we will be working on things in counseling which you feel need to be improved, while drawing on the strengths you already possess. I feel a holistic approach is most beneficial, which means we explore all areas of life: mind, body, and spirit. As a former teacher, I firmly believe that knowledge is power. When appropriate, I use psychoeducation to help clients to be informed about their own mental health. At times I give homework between counseling sessions. Lastly, I utilize *mindfulness-based* techniques that are simple, practical, and offer many benefits. My theories of choice are *cognitive behavioral therapy* (CBT), which focuses on how our thoughts affect our feelings and how our feelings affect our behaviors, and *rational/emotive behavioral therapy (REBT)*, which focuses on revising cognitive distortions. Together we will formulate goals for therapy and work together to tailor a plan that is best suited to your specific issues. I COMMEND YOU FOR TAKING THE FIRST STEP!

If you are dissatisfied with me for any reason, I would greatly appreciate you discussing your feelings and thoughts with me. You are free, at any time, to consult with another therapist or get another opinion. I do not take on a client whom, in my professional opinion, I cannot help using the knowledge and techniques I have available. If I do not feel that I can be of help, I will refer you to others or agencies which would be better able to serve your needs. If necessary, I will make these referrals at our initial meeting. In some cases, it takes multiple meetings to assess one’s needs or we may come to a point where I feel that I can no longer meet your needs.

CONTACTING ME

If you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment, please call me @ **440.742.4425** or email me at, **jareedcounseling@gmail.com.** In the case of an emergency please go to the nearest emergency room or call 911. My supervisor is Janet Dickerson, LPCC-S. You may request to meet with her at any time while you are my client.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I regard the information and feelings you have expressed to me, with the greatest respect. In general, I will tell no one what you tell me. The privacy and confidentially of our conversations and records are a privilege of yours and is legally protected by state law and my ethical principles. However, Insurance companies may ask for my progress notes for more detailed information on your symptoms, diagnosis, issue, my treatment plan, or methods, to approve future sessions. You will always have the choice of using or not using your insurance.

***There are instances where, by law, I am required to break confidentiality.***  These are listed below.

**1)** By law, I am required to report any evidence of child abuse or strong suspicions of child abuse or neglect. I am also mandated to report abuse of handicapped or elderly persons.

**2)** If subpoenaed to provide information in a court of law, I will first assert client-therapist privilege, if it applies. However, I can be ordered by a judge to disclose that information.

**3)** Parents have the right to any, and all information regarding their child. Because the presence of trust is important in the therapeutic relationship between your child and myself it is generally best that we do not share specifics of individual sessions with you. However, you have the right and responsibility to question and understand the nature of your child’s treatment and the progress being made. If your child is able to understand the issues of confidentiality, I will discuss with him/her the type of information that will be shared with you. If you have any objections to the manner in which information is shared with you regarding your child, we will need to resolve those differences before therapy begins.

**4)** Finally, if in my judgement, I feel any person is a serious and immediate risk of harming him/herself or another person, or will engage in criminal behavior, I will break confidentially. I will notify other family members, the person to whom harm is intended or the police, in order to maintain safety.

TERMINATION

Termination is inevitable, and it should not be done casually. Either of us may terminate our work together if we believe it is in your best interest. You can terminate at any time. I ask that we discuss the termination before we discontinue therapy, in order to review goals and accomplishments and any future issues to resolve later. Finally, termination means we have met our goals, but we can always work together again in the future.

PATIENT RIGHTS

HIPPA provides you with several rights with regards to your clinical record and disclosure of protected health information. These rights include requesting that I amend your record; requesting restrictions on what information in your clinical record is disclosed to others; having any complaints you make about my policies and procedures recorded in your records; and the right to a paper copy of the complete HIPPA Guidelines. I am happy to discuss any of these rights with you and/or provide you with a hardcopy per your request.

BILLING AND CANCELLATION POLICIES

We ask that you please give 24 business hours’ notice when cancelling an appointment.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In an effort to maintain and protect your confidentiality our practice does not engage with clients through social media. I will not accept your friend request on Facebook, follow you on Twitter, or communicate through Instagram, Snapchat, etc. Our practice only engages in social media from a professional platform, which gives no identifying information about our clients.

Signing below is stating that you agree to the terms outlined in this document and will abide by its guidelines.

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(Signature of Client)

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(Signature of Counselor)