

# Epiphanye Counseling Services

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## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Welcome to Epiphanye Counseling Services. This document (agreement) contains important information about my professional services and business policies. When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between us. We can discuss any questions you have about these policies and procedures when you sign them or at any time in the future. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is very important that you read them carefully. Please read the entire document, sign and initial in the appropriate places.

Counseling is a relationship between people that works in part because of clearly defined rights and responsibilities held by each person. As a client in counseling, you have rights and responsibilities that are important for you to understand. There are also legal limitations to those rights of which you should be aware. I, as your counselor, have corresponding responsibilities to you. These rights and responsibilities are described in the following sections.

### **COUNSELING SERVICES**

Epiphanye Counseling Services' (ECS) mission is to provide quality and comprehensive counseling services inclusive of workshops and seminars to all in need: adults, seniors, children, youth, couples, families, businesses and organizations. My goal is to help you make the most of your life and provide you with the tools to accomplish your goals, increasing your life satisfaction and overall well-being.

ECS provides an array of services to the community. ECS provides individual, couple/marital family therapy and group therapy. Epiphanye Counseling Services also include telemental health (video/telephone) services, on site, group services, personal/professional retreats, crisis debriefing and intervention services, seminars/workshops and consultations to businesses and organizations.

There are many different approaches that may be used to help you explore and resolve your presenting issues such as systemic/familial, developmental, psycho-educational and evidenced based approaches such as, behavioral therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) etc.; as these interventions have been proven most effective with a variety of presenting issues. The interventions employed are based on the client's presenting issue. I believe that the interventions are most beneficial when it correlates with the client's issues.

### **SESSIONS**

An initial intake assessment is conducted for the first session that will last 45-90 minutes. The assessment is used to gain an understanding of your presenting issues and concerns, evaluate your needs and identify your treatment goals. It is at this time that we can agree that ECS is the best place to provide the services that you seek to accomplish your goals. Sessions are 45-50 minutes and are usually scheduled consistently at a time feasible for both parties. The frequency and duration of appointments are held at your discretion and are based on your needs and availability.

The counseling process is collaborative and based on the information gathered from the intake; a treatment plan will be developed. The purpose of a treatment plan is to outline goals and provide steps (objectives) and interventions to aid in accomplishing your goals.

ECS affirms in client- centered planning, wherein you as the client, are an active participant and determiner of your treatment. If you have any questions or concerns regarding treatment, policies and procedures etc. throughout the course of treatment, please ask and it will be answered entirely.

In addition, before each session, clients may be asked to complete an assessment weekly. This measure will be utilized to assess your areas of concern and improvement to help guide treatment and to track progress and effectiveness of treatment.

Also, clients may be asked to complete assignments weekly that will teach new skills, practice skills learned in the session, implement tools discussed and learned in the session as a way to take productive and proactive steps toward your goals. Counseling requires a very active effort on your part. You will have to work on things we discuss outside of sessions to be most successful.

Epiphanye Counseling Services value your feedback regarding the quality and effectiveness of services provided. I will periodically ask you to complete clinical outcome questionnaires and satisfaction surveys. I will also review and/or investigate any complaints or suggestions you may have as your feedback is an important part of your treatment and/or care.

### **BENEFITS AND RISK OF COUNSELING**

Counseling involves delving into personal issues and concerns. Thus, there are both risks and benefits to counseling. Although counseling may increase personal insight and awareness, the process could cause discomfort or pain. Counseling can help you develop coping skills, make behavioral changes, reduce symptoms of mental health disorders and improve the quality of your life.

As your therapist, it is my goal to provide a confidential, safe, trusting, and nonjudgmental environment. These components are essential to building a therapeutic alliance, a relationship wherein we work together collaboratively to ensure your success. ESC entails active contribution, honesty, and transparency to change your thoughts and behavior.

Because Counseling is a powerful personal process, it can bring unpleasant memories or emotions to the surface. I may challenge some of your perspectives, opinions, or assumptions, offer a different perspective and recommend altered or varied ways to perceive and handle situations which can cause feelings of anger, disappointment, distress, and other associated negative feelings.

Making an effort to resolve issues that caused you to seek help may result in changes not initially expected, for example, a family member or significant other may experience your change negatively. Lastly, the counseling process can yield quick positive outcomes, but progress may also be gradual and slow. There is no guarantee that these services will yield positive or intended results nor swift and easy results. This can be frustrating and/or disappointing. If you begin to feel this way, please discuss this with me so that we can explore and alleviate these naturally occurring feelings.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

As your therapist, I will make every effort to keep your personal information private. The law protects the privacy of all communications between a client and a therapist. The information disclosed by you are confidential and will not be shared with anyone without your consent. However, confidentiality has the following exceptions as required by law.

- Suspect of child or elder abuse or neglect: The law requires that I file a report with the Family Independence Agency.
- Suspect of “criminal abuse” of an adult client: I must report it to the police.

- Threat of physical violence against an identifiable third person and the client has intent and ability to carry out the threat: I may have to disclose information in order to take protective action. These actions may include notifying the potential victim (or, if the victim is a minor, his/her parents and the county Department of Social Services), contacting the police, and/or seeking hospitalization for the client.

Although this is a written summary of exceptions to your confidentiality, it is crucial that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have now or in the future. The laws governing confidentiality can be multifaceted. If such a situation arise, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action and will limit disclosure to what is necessary by law.

### **Confidentiality and Group Therapy**

The nature of group counseling makes it difficult to maintain confidentiality. If you or your child (children) choose to participate in group therapy, the therapist cannot guarantee that other group members will maintain your confidentiality. However, as your therapist, I will make every effort to maintain your confidentiality by reminding group members frequently of the importance of keeping what is discussed in group confidential. The therapist has the right to remove any group member from the group should it be revealed that a group member has violated the confidentiality rule.

### **Confidentiality and Couple and Family Therapy**

When providing couple, family or group treatment, I cannot disclose information outside the treatment context without a written authorization from everyone competent to execute a waiver. In the context of couple, family or group treatment, the therapist may not reveal any individual's confidences to others in the client unit without the prior written permission of that individual.

Within family and couple therapy, I have a no "secret" policy regarding withholding any information pertaining to or directly related to other family members or significant other/spouse. As your therapist, we can discuss how and when the information can be disclosed and/or per your request, I can disclose the information in the session with the specific family member(s) and/or significant other/spouse.

### **Confidentiality and Technology**

Some clients may choose to use technology to communicate throughout their counseling sessions. This includes but is not limited to email and text. Due to technology online, there is always the possibility that unauthorized persons may attempt to discover your personal information. As your therapist, I will take every precaution to safeguard your information but cannot guarantee that unauthorized access to electronic communications could not occur. Please be advised to take precautions regarding authorized and unauthorized access to any technology used in counseling sessions. Please be cautious of any friends, family members, significant others or co-workers who may have access to your computer, phone or other technology used in your counseling sessions.

To safeguard potential threats, I will use encrypted email service for clients who would like to communicate and receive electronic receipts through such avenues. You have the right to receive unencrypted emails and texts. Please review the consent for non-secure communication policy carefully and sign the document. As a reminder, there is always the possibility that unauthorized persons may attempt to discover your personal information. For those clients who prefer to communicate through non-secure email and texts, the response will be broad and concise. Furthermore, for your continued protection, email and texts that identify you in any way will be responded by phone or secure email.

### **Confidentiality and Minors**

Parents are allowed to examine their child's treatment records for clients under 18 years of age who are not emancipated. Privacy in psychotherapy is very important, particularly with teenagers; parental involvement is critical to successful treatment. Therefore, Epiphanye Counseling Services' policy is to request parents to allow us to share general information with parents about the participation and progress of treatment. As much as possible, before giving parents any information, I will discuss the topic or information with the child. The child can choose to inform parents themselves or instruct the therapist to inform their parents.

Children under the age of 18 receiving services are asked NOT to be unattended for safety concerns. Parents/legal guardians are asked to stay in the office for the entire duration of the child (children) are in session.

For children whose parent/legal guardian is unable to bring them to sessions or whose parent/legal guardian would like someone to participate in the sessions, an authorization for release is required for safety concerns and confidentiality.

If an authorization of release is not on file for persons other than the child's parent/legal guardian to bring the child to sessions, the child would not be able to be provided service until written consent is provided nor will persons other than the child's parent/legal guardian be able to participate in sessions.

### **PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

Records of your counseling sessions, documentation, billing/accounting, and all aspects of counseling are kept to ensure direction to your sessions and continuity in service. They will not be shared except regarding the limits to confidentiality discussed in the confidentiality section. Should you wish to have your records released, you are required to sign a release of information which specifies what information is released and to whom. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. For this reason, it is recommended that you and I review them or have another mental health professional to review them to discuss the contents. There is a copying fee charge of \$1 per page. The exceptions to this policy are contained in the attached Notice of Privacy Practices. Please review the electronic records disclosure notice which outlines how the records are securely stored.

### **Couple and Families**

Marriage and family therapists provide clients with reasonable access to records. When providing couple, family, or group therapy, I will not provide access to records without a written authorization from each individual competent to execute a waiver. As your Marriage and Family therapist, I will take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified in your client record.

### **PROFESSIONAL FEES AND POLICIES**

ECS accepts all with and without insurance coverage. ECS may be considered out-of-network with insurance companies. ECS can provide client's the document to submit to their insurance company for possible service reimbursement, but ECS cannot guarantee reimbursement. ECS recommends the following procedure: 1) Verify your mental health services and out-of-network coverage. 2) If benefits are covered, the necessary documents for reimbursement is provided to clients. Clients are required to pay the fee upfront and are responsible for all service fees that is not covered by their insurance (copays, late cancellations/No show fees etc).

At this time Epiphanye Counseling Services (ECS) only accepts cash, credit, debit card & Health Savings Account (HSA) payments. Although ECS does not accept insurance, we do option a sliding fee scale rate. The scale fee is based upon client's need and annual income. Proof of income (recent pay stub, tax return) MUST be provided to receive sliding fee scale rate. The sliding fee scale does not apply to group services

because group services are provided at a lower cost. For the sliding fee scale rate inquiries, please ask me and it will be discussed at the session. The below prices are based on standard session rates.

**The prices for services are listed below:**

Initial Assessment-\$140

Individual/Couple/ Family-\$125

Group-starts at \$30/person per session (price varies based on group. Clients who prefer group only services, fee starts at \$80)

Behavioral/School Consultations-Price varies on size, needs and accommodations. ECS offers a no cost initial needs assessment.

On Site Business Services-Price varies on size, needs and accommodations. ECS offers the initial needs assessment at no cost.

**Sliding Fee Scale Fees:**

**Intake Assessment**

\$30,000 (Yearly) and below	\$75
\$30,001 (Yearly) to \$50,000	\$95
\$50,001 (Yearly) to \$70,000	\$115
\$70,001 (Yearly) and above	\$140

**45-50 minute Sessions**

\$30,000 (Yearly) and below	\$60
\$30,001 (Yearly) to \$50,000	\$80
\$50,001 (Yearly) to \$70,000	\$100
\$70,001 (Yearly) and above	\$125

**PAYMENT METHOD**

Payment is required at the beginning of each session. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a payment installment plan as discussed prior to the session. Please discuss with me should this be needed. All clients will be informed of payment fee schedules before rendering services. For those under payment plans, due to unusual financial hardship, the payment plan is temporary and will be reviewed periodically (every month). Clients are responsible for notifying me when their circumstances have changed.

For clients under arranged payment plans and clients who have a balance, if there have been no payments made to your account for more than 15 days or by your next scheduled session whichever is sooner (including any charges made to the account) and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option to close the case and/or of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court which will require ECS to disclose otherwise confidential information. In most collection situations, the only information that will be released regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, services provided, and the amount due (costs will be included in the claim should legal action be taken). Accounts sent to collections will incur a \$50 collection fee.

Scheduling for sessions will be postponed until the balance has been paid or a payment has been made according to the arranged payment plan. If after 30 days, the account has not been paid, a late fee of \$30 will incur and the case will be closed. As a reminder, it is the client's responsibility to inform the therapist of financial difficulty/hardship and arrange payments. ECS holds the right to close the case prior to the 30 days if there has been no contact or no attempt of payment. Please refer to the case closing policy.

Clients may pay fees electronically using a payment card through PayPal Here or through the PayPal Send Money option. ECS has a duty to uphold your confidentiality, and thus I wish to make sure that your use of the above payment services is done as securely and privately as possible.

After using any of the above services to pay your fees, that service may send you receipts for payment by email or text message. These receipts will include the business name, and would indicate that you have paid for a therapy session. It is possible the receipt may be sent automatically, without first asking if you wish to receive the receipt. I am unable to control this in many cases (PayPal clients who already elected to receive), and I may not be able to control which email address or phone number to which your receipt is sent.

Before using one of the above services to pay for your session(s), please think about these questions:

- At which email address or phone numbers have I received these kinds of receipts before?
- Are any of those addresses or phone numbers provided by your employer or school? If so, the employer or school will most likely be able to view the receipts that are sent to you.
- Are there any other parties with access to these addresses or phone numbers that should not be seeing these receipts? Would there be any danger to you if such a person discovered them?

### **Appointments and Cancellations**

ECS has moved to a new location! The location is not handicap or wheelchair accessible. Any clients who have concerns or would need accommodations, we can explore and discuss options at any time.

Also, at this location there is no waiting room. For appointments, if the office door is shut, clients can wait in the conference room at the top of the stairs (if available and open). If it is five minutes after your appointment time, please call.

Clients can schedule appointments at the end of the session or by phone. Clients who would like repeating appointments can be arranged in session. You have the responsibility to be timely for your appointments. Late arrivals *may* result in rescheduled appointments at ECS discretion. If clients are late and choose to keep their appointment, clients will still be responsible to pay the full session rate.

If you are unable to keep a scheduled appointment, please contact ECS immediately. Should you need to cancel or change your appointment, a 24-hour (or no later than 5pm on the business day prior to your appt.) notice by phone or email is required. Cancellations or scheduling changes without 24-hour notice will be billed at the full rate. ECS may choose to waive this charge in case of dire and legitimate emergencies. Clients may call after hours to leave a message notifying me that you will be unable to keep your appointment.

Late cancellations and appointments missed (No shows) without notice will be subject to an immediate no show/cancellation fee charge of the full session rate agreed upon in this agreement. If you have a repeating appointment time and miss or cancel an appointment on short notice, your appointment time may be offered to another client. In this event, another appointment will be offered to you as it is or becomes available. In addition, clients with repeating appointments who miss (cancel, no show, reschedule) more than one time, forfeit their standing appointment and the no show/cancellation fee at the full rate will be charged as discussed above.

After the second missed appointment, a full session fee **must** be paid to secure the appointment. If the appointment is kept the money will be used as payment for the session or credited to the account (if applicable). If the appointment is not kept, then the amount will be kept as a no show fee. ECS may choose to waive this policy based on the circumstances.

Clients who use the cash payment method are expected to pay their full balance by the next scheduled session due to charges to the account. If payment is not received, services will not be rendered and

scheduling for sessions will be postponed until the balance has been paid or a payment plan has been arranged with an immediate 75% deposit toward the balance. As a reminder, it is the client's responsibility to inform the therapist of financial difficulty/hardship and arrange payments.

### **Appointment Reminders**

ECS offer email reminders 24 hours prior to appointments for clients who are interested and sign up. The reminders are sent automatically via *Theranest, LLC* (refer to the electronic disclosure). At this time, text reminders are not available; although, ECS may provide courtesy text reminders. Although reminders are provided, clients are fully responsible for remembering and maintaining appointments. ECS is not held responsible if reminders are not received or are not sent in error. Please be certain to keep record of appointments as the late cancel and/or no-show policy will be charged.

### **Miscellaneous Charges**

ECS **does not** participate in legal court proceedings nor perform court evaluations or appearances in court for clients. ECS records are professional records and are not written for the purpose of court involvement; thus, they cause more harm and can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. The information disclosed may not produce the expected results.

If ECS becomes involved in legal proceedings, clients will be charged \$250/hour for all professional time needed including documentation preparation and transportation costs. This includes if ECS is requested to testify by another party. ECS also **does not** participate or perform evaluations for eligibility for any type of disability. ECS services are developed to help you ameliorate your problems and provide you with tools to accomplish your goals.

### **Credit Card /ACH Authorizations**

A reoccurring payment form is provided for clients who prefer to pay for sessions by debit/credit card. This form is clients' agreement and acknowledgement that ECS has the permission to charge your debit/credit card and **must** be signed and on file to use this payment method. As outlined in the electronic disclosure form, client information is stored in a record-keeping system produced and maintained by *TheraNest, LLC*. *TheraNest, LLC* is obligated by federal law to protect these records from unauthorized use or disclosure. Clients will only be charged for services outlined above: sessions per your request, late cancellations, no shows, miscellaneous charges and services requested by you. For clients who prefer the cash payment method, any charges to the account, will be due before or at the next session unless payment arrangements have been made and at least a half down payment (if applicable) is due at the time of arrangement. Please refer to the payment and closing policy sections.

### **Paperwork**

ECS completes intakes annually to review and update any information from the prior year including completing forms. The intake initial fee could apply as outlined under fees for intake sessions. The intake is used to reassess and reevaluate any needs, presenting issues and concerns. The treatment plan is also renewed each year to identify new treatment goals. The treatment plan is reviewed six months from the effective date to discuss progress of accomplishing your goals and to add any new goals. Clients can inform me of any changes and add or identify new goals anytime throughout the course of treatment.

### **Case closing policy**

Your case will be closed following 14 days of inactivity (no calls, missed/no-show appointments, unscheduled and cancelled appointments, etc.), unless other arrangements have been made. Your case can also be closed if it is in the best interest of the client for any circumstance to transfer to another agency, this can be determined based on clinical, ethical or professional reasons.

For clients who have accomplished their goals and/or who have decided to terminate services, a discharge summary will be completed outlining goals developed, progress of goals, and after counseling

recommendations. A satisfaction survey will also be provided for continuity and improvement of quality services. ECS follow-ups with clients after at least one-three months of termination of services for outreach and/or re-engagement in services if needed. Clients can also call the center if interested in restarting services. An initial intake assessment will still be conducted for clients restarting services at the fee outlined above to gain an understanding of current presenting issues and concerns, re-evaluate needs and identify new treatment goals.

### **Termination**

Termination is the withdrawal of services due to the following reasons:

1. The client has accomplished goals and want to discontinue services.
2. The client is not making any progress towards goals or if it may be in the best interest of the client to transfer to another facility.
3. The client has presented or is perceived to be a threat to self, the therapist, staff or facility property.
4. The client has not been in contact with the clinic for 14 or more days.
5. The client's account has not been paid in 15-30 days and/or the terms of payment has not been followed.

ESC practices in a non-smoking environment. Illicit drugs and weapons are not allowed on the premises. Persons in possession of either and belligerent or intoxicated clients will be asked to leave immediately. Services could be terminated at ECS' discretion as it is counterproductive to therapy.

### **CONTACTING ECS**

ECS is a part-time private practice. Office hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00am-5:00 pm & Saturday 9:00am-3:00pm. In office (face to face) appointment hours are on Saturdays. Other appointments during the week can be arranged for video/telephone sessions. Clients will be notified of additional appointment availability including evenings. Due to the work schedule, I am not immediately available by telephone during sessions. When unavailable, calls will be routed to voice mail that is checked frequently, and I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you called (no later than the following business day), excluding Sundays, holidays and when out of the office. Please inform me of times when you will be available if you are difficult to reach.

If you are unable to reach me and feel that your situation is life threatening, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room. You may also contact the nearest crisis center; Oakland County Crisis Center at 248-456-0909; Macomb County Crisis Center at 586-307-9100.

If I will be unavailable for an extended period, I will notify you at least a week in advance. In the case of an emergency or unexpected circumstance, all clients would be contacted by ECS to cancel and/or reschedule an appointment as soon as I am aware.

The above outline is not an exhaustive list of ECS policies and procedures. ESC reserves the right to change our policies and procedures. Revised informed consents and/or privacy notices will be made available to you via website and/or via e- mail.

Thank you for Choosing ECS!