

Northwest Behavioral Medicine

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Our Practice Policies and Procedures

Welcome to our practice. We hope the following information is helpful in understanding our professional services and business policies. Please discuss any questions or concerns you have with your physician or counselor.

Behavioral Health Services

This is a multidisciplinary behavioral healthcare practice. We provide a variety of services ranging from individual, couples, and group counseling (or psychotherapy) to medication assessment and treatment. The providers in this practice are all licensed and board certified in their respective fields, actively engaged in ongoing continuing education and follow the highest professional and ethical standards.

Psychiatrists are medical doctors who have completed medical school and a residency in this field. They are able to prescribe medications, assess medical conditions and provide counseling and therapy as well. Psychologists have obtained a doctorate from graduate school in psychology and have completed post-doctoral internships in clinical care. Licensed professional counselors and licensed clinical social workers have completed masters level degrees in counseling and have more than two years of supervised clinical work before receiving their license. All of the professionals in our group have been in practice for a number of years with a wide variety of clinical experiences.

Each physician and counselor is skilled in a number of therapeutic approaches. These may include crisis intervention, short-term counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy, long term psychotherapy, and/or medication intervention. After your initial evaluation, the professional you see will make recommendations on the best available treatment for you.

Counseling/psychotherapy can greatly enhance the quality of your life but does involve a commitment of time, energy and effort. Some people can experience frustration, anger, anxiety or sadness at times during the treatment. While there are no guarantees, these therapies have been proven to benefit many people by reducing uncomfortable feelings, resolving problems, and enhancing relationships.

Our policy is for each person to partner with the physician or therapist in determining his or her treatment goals and plan. You should feel comfortable with your behavioral health professional and confident that you are receiving the appropriate help. Please discuss with your therapist if you feel there is conflict or if you feel you are not benefiting from treatment. Sometimes the most significant change occurs when these problems can be openly discussed. If you continue to feel you are not moving in the right direction, we would be happy to arrange a consultation with another behavioral health professional.

Confidentiality

All communication in session is confidential and protected by law. You (or your legal guardian) can only release information with written permission. If you are using insurance, you must sign a release of information for the insurance company. The information usually released to them includes diagnosis dates of service, charges, symptoms, (i.e., anxiety, depression) and treatment recommendations. We would avoid providing confidential information without your prior consent. We do not release medical records directly to our patients. This exception is allowed under Georgia Code 31-33-2. We will be happy to forward your medical records to your physician or attorney with proper written permission from you.

Federal HIPAA law does require that confidentiality be waived if one's personal safety or the safety of someone else is in question. Additionally, if there is abuse of a child, elderly person, or disabled person, we are required by law to report this to the appropriate state agency.

Financial Arrangements

Professional fees are based on the level of training of the physician or therapist. Please discuss with the office staff or the health care professional providing the service as to the specific fees. Payment is expected at the time of service unless insurance coverage requires another arrangement or there is a prior agreement with the provider or administration staff. There may also be fees associated with report preparation, letter writing, and extended telephone consultations. Please discuss specific fees or other details with your individual physician or therapist prior to having these services performed.

Due to the ever-changing insurance environment and wide variety of plans, we cannot be responsible for knowing the filing requirements of each insurance company. In order for us to continue to file some insurance, we must enforce that *it is your responsibility to know or find out the filing requirements and limitations of your own plan*. We are familiar with many insurance plans and managed care companies and are happy to assist in any way we can to help you find that information. ***Please note: we do not file secondary insurances unless required to do so by Federal Law. We are required by law to collect all copays at the time of service.***

Additional Charges

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Returned Check \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Copay not paid at time of service \$18.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call in Prescription Refill \$12.00 & | <input type="checkbox"/> Refile to Insurance Company \$8.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Records Fee \$25.00-\$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Report with/without Letter \$25.00-\$250.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Form \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Missed Appointment with MD \$85.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Missed Appointment with Therapist \$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Missed Appointment with PhD \$120.00 |

Appointments

Initial evaluations may take anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour and a half depending on the nature of the assessment. Individual therapy sessions are usually 45 to 50 minutes though longer or shorter sessions may be prearranged with the provider. Medication management sessions may take from ten to thirty minutes unless otherwise arranged with the physician.

Appointments will be charged in full if missed or not cancelled within 24 hours of the scheduled appointment. Law does not allow us to bill insurance for missed appointments.

When insurance or managed care is involved, they will often authorize only certain types of visits such as medication management with a psychiatrist. As a result, a psychiatrist may not be able to provide other series such as psychotherapy if insurance is used.