

Individual Psychotherapy Information and Agreement

Please read the following information carefully. If you have any questions or concerns about any of the information provided, please do not hesitate to discuss these matters at any time. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Services

Richard B. Pazol, Psy.D. provides individual & group counseling for adolescents and adults and both general psychological evaluation & comprehensive cognitive evaluation services for children, adolescents and adults.

Individual Psychotherapy Services

The process of psychotherapy varies depending on a number of factors, including (but not limited to) the relationship between the psychologist and client and the particular issues that you present. I may employ a variety of approaches during our work together, including psychodynamic, interpersonal, cognitive-behavioral, and solution-focused therapies, among others.

Psychotherapy is different from a medical appointment in that it requires a very active effort on your part, both during and in between sessions. It can be a difficult process that can lead to improved relationships, solutions to specific problems, and reduced distress and discomfort. Despite the hard work involved, however, there is no guaranteed outcome and it is quite possible that you may experience uncomfortable feelings at times, such as anger, sadness, guilt, frustration and anxiety, as we explore unpleasant aspects of your life and experiences.

Our first few sessions typically involve an evaluation of your needs, at the end of which I will provide you with my impression of your situation and a proposed plan for how to best move forward in therapy. I ask that you evaluate this information, as well as your level of comfort with working with me. Psychotherapy involves a significant investment of time, energy and money, so you should be deliberate in selecting your therapist. If you have any questions about my approach or your treatment, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If at any point you find it necessary, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

Meetings

I am happy to address any initial questions that you have during a free, 30-minute initial phone consultation.

I typically conduct an evaluation over the course of the initial two to three sessions, during which time we can mutually decide if I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. Once we agree to begin psychotherapy, we will usually schedule one 45-minute session per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or held more frequently, depending on your specific needs and preferences. Regular weekly appointment times are reserved for clients who maintain consistent attendance.

Fees and Payment

My hourly fee per 45 minute individual psychotherapy session is \$200. My fee per 60 minute individual psychotherapy session is \$250. Please note that payment is due and accepted at the time of each session, unless otherwise agreed upon by both parties in writing. If you would like to make a different arrangement please let me know. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan. Payment is accepted via credit, debit, FSA/HSA card, cash, check or cash app (i.e. Zelle, Venmo). All payments for the exact amount due payable to Richard B. Pazol, Psy.D. A 3% additional fee applies to all card payments. A fee of \$15 is charged for returned checks.

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Individual psychotherapy is provided on a private-pay basis, although you can submit documentation to most insurance panels for partial reimbursement for services rendered by an out-of-network provider. I am happy to provide you with a form for you to submit to your insurance carrier on a monthly basis.

In addition to weekly appointments, I charge at the rate of \$250 per hour for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations totaling more than 15 minutes in a week, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me.

If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$500 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

If fees are not paid, the account will be turned over for collection and legal action may be taken. If the account is referred for collection, the client agrees to pay all reasonable collection and attorney fees. These measures will be taken as a last resort and after all other collection efforts have been exhausted.

Late Arrivals

Please call and let me know if you are running more than 10 minutes late for an appointment. If you are more than 15 minutes late for an appointment and I have not heard from you, I will assume that you are not keeping the appointment and I may or may not be available for the remainder of your session time. Missed appointments are charged at full fee for a 60-minute session. These are not reimbursable by insurance.

Cancellation and No Show Policy

Attendance at all scheduled sessions is expected.

If you are unable to keep a scheduled appointment, I can be reached at 216/536-3926 and a confidential message may be left on my voice mail.

Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide at least **two full business days (including over weekends and national holidays) of advance notice of cancellation.** For example, a 2pm Thursday appointment needs to be cancelled by 2pm Tuesday, and a 2pm Monday appointment needs to be cancelled by the 2pm on the previous Thursday. If I am able to find another time to reschedule an appointment during the same week, there will not be a fee for a cancellation with less than two full business days of advance notice.

Please note that if a late cancellation is re-scheduled and that appointment is also missed or cancelled with less than two full business days' notice, **you will charged for both session times.**

Missed appointments not cancelled as described above are subject to full charges with you (i.e., the client) being responsible for the entire amount. Your insurance company will not cover cancelled or missed appointment fees.

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Insurance

I am not a member of any health care panel. For all insurance plans that specify network providers, I will be considered “out of network.” I recommend that you contact your insurance company to find out what portion of the fees they will cover for an out of network provider if you would like to seek partial reimbursement for the services. A list of questions to ask your insurance company to ascertain the amount they may be willing to cover is available on my website: richardpazol.com.

Upon request, I can provide you with a form for you to submit for your direct reimbursement by your insurance company for the portion of my services they might cover for an “out of network provider.”

You are responsible for maintaining your own records regarding insurance practices. This includes, but is not limited to, dates for filing panel reviews, pre-certifications and number of visits allowed.

You should be aware that your insurance company may require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis, and they may ask that I provide additional clinical information, such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases) for reimbursement. This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer.

Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information data bank. I will provide you with a copy of any report I submit, if you request it.

Contacting Dr. Pazol

Calls, emails and texts are monitored from 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday. I make every effort to return all messages on the same business day you contact me, but sometimes I may respond after 5:00PM or the next day. On weekends and holidays, I check voicemail once per day.

Please note that **only emergency calls are answered outside of business hours. Text messages and emails are not checked outside of business hours and should not be used for emergencies.** If you will be difficult to reach, please inform me of times when you will be available.

If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can’t safely wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician, contact the nearest emergency room and ask for the mental health professional on call, or call 9-1-1. The Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board and National Suicide Prevention Hotline also provide 24-hour suicide and crisis hotlines. There is also the nationwide Trevor Lifeline (for LGBTQIA+ individuals). In addition, there is a 24 hour nationwide Crisis Text Line:

Cleveland Area:	(216) 623-6888
National Suicide Hotline:	(800) 273-8255
Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ)	(866) 488-7386
Crisis Text Line:	text HOME to 741741

IF YOU ARE HAVING A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

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Emails, Cell Phones, and Computers

It is very important to be aware that computers and unencrypted email and texts can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. Emails and texts in particular, are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers or communication companies may have unlimited and direct access to all emails and texts that go through them. While data on my computer is protected, emails that you send probably are not. It is always a possibility that texts and email can be sent erroneously to the wrong address and computers. Please notify me if you decide to avoid or limit, in any way, the use of email, texts, cell phones calls, or phone messages.

If you communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted email, texts or via phone messages, I will assume that you have made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and will honor your desire to communicate on such matters. Please do not use texts, email, or voice mail for emergencies.

Confidentiality

In general, the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist is protected by law, and I will only release information about your work to others with your written permission. However, there are a few exceptions.

- If I know or suspect that a child, or developmentally disabled or physically impaired person under 21 years of age, is being abused or neglected, I am required to immediately report to the appropriate authorities.
- If I have reasonable cause to believe that a dependent or elderly adult is being abused, neglected or exploited, I must immediately report to the appropriate authorities.
- If a patient threatens to harm himself/herself/themselves, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her/them or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.
- If a patient presents a threat of bodily harm to another, I am required to take steps to protect/warn potential victims. This can include notifying the potential victim(s) and contacting the police. I also may need to seek hospitalization for the patient.

These situations have rarely occurred in my practice, but they do occur. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you do not object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together. While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that you discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at your next meeting with me. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you.

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Access to Records

As outlined in the accompanying HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices, you have certain rights to your Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) – defined Protected Health Information. In addition, you are entitled to review or receive any other of your records that I keep, unless I believe that seeing them would be emotionally damaging.

I generally recommend that records are reviewed together so that any questions about them can be answered. Alternately, I may be able to prepare a summary for you or to send them to a mental health professional of your choice who can review them with you.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during your professional relationship with Dr. Pazol.

Name (please print)

Date

Signature