

# **Attainable Solutions: Comprehensive Mental Health Services, LLC**

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## **Outpatient Services Information**

Welcome to our practice. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policy. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that you and your clinician can discuss them at your next meeting. When you sign the Attainable Solutions: Comprehensive Mental Health Services, LLC Client Consent for Treatment Form, it will represent an agreement between you and your clinician.

### **Psychotherapy Services**

Your clinician is Jo-Ann H. Bird, Ph.D., LMHC, NCC. She is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Certified Cognitive-Behavioral Therapist, Board Certified Clinical Sexologist, Hypnotherapist and National Certified Counselor. Dr. Bird tailors services to the specific needs of her client(s) using such treatment methods as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy [Rational Living Therapy (RLT), Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), Cognitive Interpersonal Therapy (CIT)], Sex Therapy, Hypnotherapy or an integrative approach.

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychotherapist and client and the particular problems you bring forward. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things that you and your clinician talk about both during your sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since 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, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have any questions about your clinician's procedures, you should discuss them with your clinician whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, your clinician will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

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## **Meetings**

If psychotherapy is begun, your clinician will usually schedule one session (one appointment hour of 45-50 minutes duration) per week at a time agreed on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent. Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advance notice of cancellation. If it is possible, your clinician will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment.

## **Professional Fees**

Your clinician's hourly fee is \$150.00. In addition to weekly appointments, your clinician will charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though your clinician will break down the hourly cost if your clinician works for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes, 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 your clinician. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require your clinician's participation, you will be expected to pay for your clinician's professional time even if they are called to testify by another party. Your clinician charges \$300.00 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

## **Billing and Payments**

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless you and your clinician agree otherwise. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, your clinician has the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information your clinician will release regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

## **Insurance Reimbursement**

**At this time, Dr. Bird does not accept insurance for her services.** In order for you and your clinician to set realistic goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. Your clinician will provide you with whatever assistance he/she can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of your clinician's fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

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You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have any questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Your clinician will provide you with whatever information he/she can based on his/her experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. Managed health care plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some clients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize your clinician to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes your clinician will have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). 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, your clinician will have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, insurance companies may share the information with a national medical information databank. Your clinician will provide you with a copy of any report he/she submits if you request it. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for services yourself to avoid the problems described above.

## **Contacting Me**

Your clinician is often not immediately available by telephone. Your clinician will not answer the phone when he/she is with a client. When unavailable, your clinician's telephone is answered by voice mail that is monitored frequently. Your clinician will make every effort to return your call within 24 business hours, with the exceptions of evenings, weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform your clinician of the times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach your clinician and feel that you can't wait for him/her to return your call, contact 211 or your physician, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911. If your clinician will be unavailable for an extended time, he/she will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

## **Professional Records**

The laws and standards of our profession require that we keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records unless your clinician believes that seeing them would be emotionally damaging, in which case he/she will be happy to send them to a mental health professional of your choice. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted by and/or upsetting to untrained readers. We recommend that you

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review them in your clinician's presence so that you can discuss the contents. Clients will be charged an appropriate fee for any time spent in preparing information requests.

## **Confidentiality**

In general, the law protects the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychotherapist, and your clinician can release information about your work together to others only with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions.

In most legal proceedings, you have a right to prevent your clinician 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 your clinician's testimony if he or she determines that the issue demand it.

There are some situations in which your clinician is legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if he/she has to reveal some information about a client's treatment. For example, if your clinician believes that a child, elderly person or disabled person is being abused, he/she must file a report with the appropriate state agency.

If your clinician believes that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, he/she is required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm himself or herself, your clinician is obligated to seek hospitalization for him or her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

These situations have rarely occurred in our practice. If a similar situation occurs, your clinician will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action. Your clinician may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, he/she will make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of a client. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, your clinician will not tell you about these consultations unless he/she feels it is important to your work together.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that you and your clinician discuss any questions or concerns that you have at your next meeting. Your clinician will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and your clinician is not an attorney.

**Your signature on the Attainable Solutions: Comprehensive Mental Health Services, LLC Client Consent for Treatment Form indicates that you have received this document and agree to abide by its terms during your professional relationship with your clinician.**