

Pathways to Wellness

A Southern California Relationship Center

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Office Policies and Procedures

This form provides you (client) with information that is additional to that detailed in the Notice of Privacy Practices and it is subject to HIPAA pre-emptive analysis.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your (client's) written permission, except where disclosure is required by law. Most of the provisions explaining when the law requires disclosure were described to you in the Notice of Privacy Practices that you received with this form.

When Disclosure Is Required By Law: Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required by the law are: where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder, abuse or neglect; and where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled (for more details see also Notice of Privacy Practices form).

When Disclosure May Be Required: Disclosure may be required pursuant to a legal proceeding. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by Nancy D. Young, Ph.D. In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. Your clinician will use her/his clinical judgment when revealing such information. Your clinician will not release records to any outside party unless s/he is authorized to do so by **all** adult family members who were part of the treatment.

Emergencies: If there is an emergency during our work together, or in the future after termination, where the doctors or staff become concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper psychiatric care, s/he will do whatever s/he can within the limits of the law, to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive the proper medical care. For this purpose, s/he may also contact the police, hospital or the person whose name you have provided on the biographical sheet.

Health Insurance & Confidentiality of Records: Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO/PPO/MCO/EAP in order to process the claims. If you so instruct, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Unless authorized by you explicitly, the Psychotherapy Notes will not be disclosed to your insurance carrier. Your clinician has no control or knowledge over what insurance companies do with the information s/he submits or who has access to this information. You must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk to confidentiality, privacy, or to future eligibility to obtain health or life insurance. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is entered into insurance companies' computers and soon will also be reported to the, congress-approved, National Medical Data Bank. Accessibility to companies' computers or to the National Medical Data Bank database is always in question, as computers are inherently vulnerable to break-ins and unauthorized access. Medical data has been reported to have been sold, stolen, or accessed by enforcement agencies; therefore, you are in a vulnerable position.

Confidentiality of E-mail, Cell Phone and Faxes Communication: It is very important to be aware that e-mail and cell phone (also cordless phones) communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence, the privacy and confidentiality of such communication can be easily compromised. E-mails, in particular, are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers have unlimited and direct access to all e-mails that go through them. Faxes can be sent erroneously to the wrong address. Please notify your clinician at the beginning of treatment if you decide to avoid or limit in any way the use of any or all of the above-mentioned communication devices. Please do not use e-mail or faxes in emergency situations.

Litigation Limitation: Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters which may be of a confidential nature, it is agreed that should there be legal

proceedings (such as, but not limited to **divorce and custody disputes**, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you (client) nor your attorney, nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on our clinicians to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested.

Consultation: Our clinicians consult regularly with other professionals regarding their clients; however, the client's name or other identifying information is never mentioned. The client's identity remains completely anonymous, and confidentiality is fully maintained.

**Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, upon your request, we will release information to any agency/person you specify unless your clinician concludes that releasing such information might be harmful in any way.*

TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: If you need to contact your clinician between sessions, please leave a message on her/his confidential Voice Mail:

Nancy D. Young, Ph.D.	(714) 432-9857 Ext. 103
Stephenie Champlin, LCSW	(714) 432-9857 Ext. 104
Adrienne Clements, LMFT	(714) 432-9857 Ext. 111
Jessica Hassen, LMFT	(714) 432-9857 Ext. 113
Rupa Ward, LMFT	(714) 432-9857 Ext. 105
Reza Ghaboosi, AMFT	(714) 432-9857 Ext. 110
Michelle Pando	(714) 432-9857 Ext. 116
Lisa Strawn	(714) 432-9857 Ext. 114

Clinicians check their messages a few times a day (but never after business hours), unless they are out of town. Clinicians check messages less frequently on weekends and holidays. If an emergency arises, please indicate it clearly in your message.

If you need to talk to someone right away, you can call one of the following 24-hr crisis lines: (877)727-4747; (800)784-2433; (800)333-4444; (800)233-4357; or the Police (911).

PAYMENTS:

Individual Therapy: General session fees are \$175 for 50-55-minutes.*

Couples Therapy: Initial intake sessions are \$350 (which includes the session, questionnaire administration and clinician review of completed questionnaires); subsequent sessions are \$185 for up to 60 minutes.*

Dr. Nancy's fees: Initial intake sessions are 75-80 minutes at \$500 (which includes the session, questionnaire administration and clinician review of completed questionnaires). General session fees are 75-80 minutes at \$300.

****Sessions lasting longer than 60 minutes will be charged at the appropriate fraction of time at \$175.00 per hour (\$185 for couples). It is important to note that additional time and phone therapy is often NOT covered by insurance and is the sole responsibility of the client.***

Communication outside of sessions, site visits, report writing and reading, consultation with other professionals, release of information, reading records, travel time, etc. will be charged at the same rate, unless indicated and agreed upon otherwise.

INSURANCE DISCLAIMER & REIMBURSEMENT: Clients who carry insurance should remember that professional services are rendered and charged to the clients and not to the insurance companies. Clients should also remember that Pathways to Wellness and its Clinicians are OUT-OF-NETWORK for all insurance providers; however, Pathways to Wellness does accept Medicare with supplemental insurance. Clients should be aware that only the following Clinicians accept Medicare with supplemental insurance: Stephenie Champlin, LCSW. Pathways to Wellness can only accept PPO or POS Plans; we are unable to accept HMO plans. Should clients have a PPO/POS plan with OUT-OF-NETWORK coverage, we will bill your insurance company as a courtesy, but it is not a guarantee of payment; you are ultimately responsible for all charges.

Note: It is the client's responsibility to verify the specifics of his/her insurance coverage.

Please notify our office if any problem arises during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. As was indicated in the section, *Health Insurance & Confidentiality of Records*, you must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk. Not all issues/conditions/problems, which are the focus of psychotherapy, are reimbursed by insurance companies.

MEDIATION & ARBITRATION: All disputes arising out of or in relation to this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediation, before, and as a pre-condition of, the initiation of arbitration. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Pathways to Wellness and client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in Orange County, California in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association, which are in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, Pathways to Wellness can use legal means (court, collection agency, etc.) to obtain payment. The prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceedings shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum for attorneys' fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum.

THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION: Participation in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improving interpersonal relationships and resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy. Working toward these benefits; however, requires effort on your part. Psychotherapy requires your very active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings and/or behavior. Your clinician will ask for your feedback and views on your therapy, its progress, and other aspects of the therapy and will expect you to respond openly and honestly. Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful in dealing with a certain situation. During evaluation or therapy, remembering or talking about unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts can result in your experiencing considerable discomfort or strong feelings of anger, sadness, worry, fear, etc. or experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. Your clinician may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations that can cause you to feel very upset, angry, depressed, challenged, or disappointed. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to therapy in the first place, such as personal or interpersonal relationships, may result in changes that were not originally intended. Psychotherapy may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing, or relationships. Sometimes a decision that is positive for one family member is viewed quite negatively by another family member. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and even frustrating. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results. During the course of therapy, the doctors are likely to draw on various psychological approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and her/his assessment of what will best benefit you. Some of these approaches include behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, Psychology of Selves, Gottman Marital Therapy, EMDR, Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT), or psycho-educational.

Discussion of Treatment Plan: Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, your clinician will discuss with you (client) her/his working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and her/his view of the possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your therapy, the possible risks, the therapists' expertise in employing them, or about the treatment plan, please ask and you will be answered fully. You also have the right to ask about other treatments for your condition and their risks and benefits. If you could benefit from any treatment Pathways to Wellness does not provide, we have an ethical obligation to assist you in obtaining those treatments.

Termination: As set forth above, after the first couple of meetings, your clinician will assess if s/he can be of benefit to you. Pathways to Wellness does not accept clients who, in our opinion, we cannot help. In such a case, we will give you a number of referrals that you can contact. If at any point during psychotherapy your clinician assesses that s/he is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals, s/he is obliged to discuss it with you and, if appropriate, to terminate treatment. In such a case, s/he would give you a number of referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, your clinician will talk to the psychotherapist of your choice in order to help with the transition. If at any time you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another therapist, your clinician will assist you in finding someone qualified, and, if s/he has your written consent, s/he will provide her or him with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate therapy at any time. If you choose to do so, your clinician will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

Dual Relationships: Not all dual relationships are unethical or avoidable. *Therapy never involves sexual or any other dual relationship that impairs your clinicians' objectivity, clinical judgment, or therapeutic effectiveness or can be exploitative in nature.* Your clinician will assess carefully before entering into non-sexual and non-exploitative dual relationships with clients. Orange County is a relatively small community and many clients know each other and your clinician from the community. Consequently, you may bump into someone you know in the waiting room or into your clinician out in the community. Your clinician will never acknowledge working therapeutically with anyone without his/

her written permission. Pathways to Wellness is often chosen by clients due to previous contact with our clinicians; while others become clients through referral from other clients. Nevertheless, your clinician will discuss with you, the client/s, the often-existing complexities, potential benefits, and difficulties that may be involved in such relationships. Dual or multiple relationships can enhance therapeutic effectiveness but can also detract from it and often it is impossible to know that ahead of time. It is your, the client's, responsibility to communicate to your clinician if the dual relationship becomes uncomfortable for you in any way. Your clinician will always listen carefully and respond accordingly to your feedback. Your clinician will discontinue the dual relationship if s/he finds it interfering with the effectiveness of the therapeutic process or the welfare of the client and, of course, you can do the same at any time.

Cancellation: Since scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a **minimum of 48-hours notice** is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless we reach a different agreement, **the full fee will be charged for sessions missed** without such notification. **Insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions.**

