

OFFICE POLICY

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the mental health provider and the patient, as well as the particular problems you are experiencing. There are a number of different methods that may be used to deal with the problems you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor's visit in that it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on the things we talk about not only during our sessions, but also at home. Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and even helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and a significant reduction in feelings of distress. However, *there are no guarantees of what you will experience.*

MEETINGS

We normally conduct an evaluation that will last from four to seven sessions. By the end of the initial session, we will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include, along with a treatment plan to follow if you decide to continue with therapy. You should consider this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with us to decide if you would like to continue. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about our procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, we will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion. If psychotherapy is begun, we will usually schedule one 45-55 minute session per week at an agreed time. However, session length and frequency may vary depending on the case. **Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 24 hours advanced notice of cancelation.** It is also important to note that insurance companies **do not** provide reimbursement of canceled or missed sessions.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Our hourly fees are between \$125 and \$175 with the exceptions of legal/forensic services. In addition to weekly appointments, we charge for other professional services you may need. These services may include report writing, consultation with other professionals (with your permission), preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other services you may request of us. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require our participation, you will be expected to pay for all professional time, including preparation and transportation costs, even if we are called to testify by another party. Please see our Financial Policy for more information.

CONTACTING US

Due to our work schedules, we are often not immediately available by telephone. The office is typically available by phone between 9:30am and 4:00pm Monday through Thursday and between 9:30am and 3:00pm on Fridays. **When we are unavailable, you may leave a message on our machine (to be returned during our next business hours) or contact our answering service at 844-224-9724 for issues requiring urgent attention. If at any time you are unable to reach us and feel you cannot wait for a return call, contact your primary care physician, the nearest emergency room, or Crisis Services of Buffalo at 716-834-3131.** If we will be unavailable for an extended time, we will have a colleague for you to contact, if necessary.

PATIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We at East Amherst Psychology Group want you to be aware of your rights and responsibilities as a patient with our practice in order to ensure satisfaction with our services.

PATIENT RIGHTS

As a patient, you have the right:

1. To receive prompt evaluation, care, and treatment regardless of your race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, religion, or age and to be treated with dignity and respect and addressed in a respectful, age-appropriate manner, regardless of ability to pay.
2. To have services explained to you in a language and in a way you can understand.
3. To receive information about the qualifications of the staff that provides services to you.
4. To receive mental health treatment that is within the accepted standards and to an explanation of the risks, effects, and benefits of all medications and treatments provided.
5. To refuse specific medications or treatment procedures to the extent permitted by law.
6. To participate in the planning of your care, including discharge planning and follow up care.
7. To have your records kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and to know where and to whom your records have been disclosed.
8. To have access to and an explanation of your health records, unless deemed therapeutically inadvisable.
9. To receive, at admission, a written description of services, costs, and rules and a written statement and explanation of patient rights and responsibilities and grievance without fear of recrimination.

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a patient, you have the following responsibilities:

1. Take time to read, understand, and sign forms necessary for treatment.
2. Give complete and accurate information to the professional staff and participate actively in the treatment planning and review process.
3. Discuss and ask questions regarding any aspect of treatment which may be unclear.
4. Keep scheduled appointments. Cancel appointments only when necessary and try to give at least 24 hours' notice.
5. Respect other clients and staff and their right to privacy and dignity.
6. Support the efforts of staff to keep the facilities clean and attractive.
7. Voice any concerns to your service provider and/or office staff.