Journey Counseling Services, PLLC

OFFICE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Welcome to Journey Counseling Services, PLLC. This document contains important information about the professional services and business policies. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is important that you understand them. When you sign the acknowledgement and acceptance form, it will also represent an agreement between us. We can discuss any questions you have when you sign them or at any time in the future.

1. Clinician's Qualifications and Scope of Practice

We are Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers and Masters Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors in the State of New Hampshire. We are governed by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers as well as National Association of Alcohol and Drug Counselors. Our license and professional code of ethics are available for you to review upon request.

Julia Gamache and James Gamache received their Master's Degrees in Social Work from Boston University. The scope of services they provided include outpatient individual therapy, couples therapy, and family therapy. Treatment is based on a model which draws on client strengths and is solution-focused, these include but are not limited to, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Solution Focused Therapy, Trauma Informed Therapy, and other evidence based practiced. Julia is also certified to administer the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs I (GAIN) Evaluation, an evidence based mental health and substance abuse assessment tool, as well as being trained in Accelerated Resolution Therapy.

2. Confidentiality

Under New Hampshire law, communication between client and a therapist are privileged (confidential) and may not be disclosed without the specific authorization of the client except under specific, limited circumstances. Client information may be shared with others only with written permission, through a court order, or when otherwise required by law to be disclosed. Records may also be subject to audit by regulatory authorities.

Records and information pertaining to your alcohol and/or drug treatment are protected under the Federal Regulations governing Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records, C.F.R. Part 2 and cannot be disclosed without your written consent unless otherwise provided for in the regulations. This applies to any person in the State of New Hampshire 12 years of age and older.

Within the course of treatment, a client's case may need to be reviewed with a colleague. Our colleagues, of course, are legally bound to confidentiality as well. By signing the acknowledgement and acceptance form, you are acknowledging that you understand that we may discuss your case in consultation and/or supervision and do not object to our doing so.

3. Reporting Requirements

Among the exceptions to confidentiality is New Hampshire reporting laws which require therapists to report to the appropriate authorities certain types of conduct. For example, any person who suspects a child or incapacitated adult has been abused, neglected or exploited must report too state authorities. Therapists are required to warn police or likely victims of a client's "serious threat of physical violence" to a person or property. In the event that a therapist is concerned about a client's suicidality the emergency contact listed on the clients billing form will be contacted. Under certain circumstances the police may be contacted to conduct a wellness check.

4. Minors

The treatment of a minor must be authorized by a parent or guardian (with limited exceptions). It is this practice's preference to undertake treatment with consent of both parents, if possible. Although communications with adult clients are confidential as described above, in the treatment of minors, parents (including non-custodial parents) have a right to access and authorize the release of information. If I determine that it is appropriate or necessary to proceed with therapy with only one parent providing consent, the non-signing parent still has the legal right to a copy of the minor's records if requested, unless their parental rights have been terminated. This does not apply to substance use cases when a minor is age 12 and older. In these cases, the minor must authorize release of information.

When your child is receiving services from Journey Counseling Services, PLLC, you understand that the minor is the client of the practice. Information revealed to a parent may be limited to information necessary to assist in being helpful to the minor and the family relationship and client safety in order to preserve the therapeutic relationship. Specific content from sessions with the minor will be revealed at our discretion.

5. Couples/Families

Treatment records of couples and families sessions contain information about each person. It is the policy of Journey Counseling Services, PLLC to release treatment records only by joint consent. In the event of a disagreement, the records will not be released without a court order.

6. Conflicts of Interest

New Hampshire is a small state. From time to time, actual or potential conflicts of interest may arise. In the event that we become aware of a conflict of interest in providing treatment to you, we may be required to refer you to another therapist. Regardless of the existence of a conflict of interest, you can be confident that any information that you shared will remain confidential.

7. Professional Boundaries

As therapist, we are obligated to establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries (relationships) with present or past clients (and in some cases, client's family members). For example, a therapist should not socialize or become friends with clients and should never become sexually involved with a client. New Hampshire law states that "sexual relations with a client or former client should be considered misconduct…and shall be subject to disciplinary action". Reports of any such misconduct should be filed with the Board of Mental Health Practice, 40 Donovan Street, Concord, NH 03031, telephone number (603) 271-6762.

8. Electronic Communications

Some vendors require that we send billing and other information electronically (e.g. facsimile or e-mail). We cannot guarantee the confidentiality of such communications. If you do not consent to electronic communications, please let us know immediately, before beginning treatment so that we can determine whether and how to proceed.

9. Professional Records

Journey Counseling Services, PLLC maintains a file for each client or set of clients. These files include intakes, diagnosis, treatment plan, billing, consent to treatment, treatment notes, and any other written or electronic information received from or about the client. Treatment notes include the date of each session and a brief summary of key facts and issues discussed. The client(s) (or parent) is entitled to a copy of the records for a fee that covers the copying and administrative costs. If you wish to see a copy of your records, we recommend that you review them with us so that we can discuss the contents. You

also have the right to request that a copy of your file be made available to any other health care provider at your written request. All records for adults are maintained for a minimum of seven years following the last day of activity. For records of minors, the records are maintained for a minimum of seven years after they turn 18 years of age.

You should also be aware that we am required to have a plan in place for how our clinical records will be managed in the event of illness, disability or death. We have made such arrangements in order to ensure that you will still have access to your records and to protect the confidentiality of your file.

10. Cost and Payment for Services

Journey Counseling Services, PLLC is a contracted provider for many insurance companies, some of which are: Aetna, Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Carelon, Cigna, Harvard Pilgrim, Optimum, United Behavioral Health, Value Options, and Point32Health.

If you have an insurance plan for which we are not a contracted provider, you may be eligible for out of network benefits through your insurance company. Please call them directly to determine if this is a benefit under your plan.

If you do not have insurance or prefer to self-pay, please discuss this with option with us. Based on your financial circumstances, you may qualify for a reduced fee.

Intake/initial appointments are billed at $150.00. Additional therapy sessions are billed at $150.00 each. In addition to weekly appointments, it is my practice to charge this amount on a prorated basis (we will breakdown the hourly cost into 15 minute segments) for other professional services that you may require, such as report writing, telephone conversations that last longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings or consultations which you have requested, or time required to perform any other service which you may request of me and is not covered by insurance.

GAIN I Assessments cost $450.00; however they are often covered by insurance companies.

Each insurance plan that we are contracted with reimburses at a different rate, which we have agreed to accept. The client is responsible ***only*** for their deductible and co-pays.

In an effort to help keep the cost of providing services low, co-pays are expected at the time of service. Acceptable forms of payment are cash, check, and credit card. Receipt for services can be provided upon request. Should a check be returned, we require reimbursement (along with any return check fee) be paid in cash or money order before another appointment be scheduled.

If invoices have been sent and no attempt has been made to honor this financial obligation, we reserve the right to submit your invoice to a collection agency.

Journey Counseling Services, PLLC requires a 24 hour advanced notice for any cancellation. Failure to provide 24 hour notice will result in a missed session fee charge of $85.00. Insurance companies do not pay for missed session fee charges, this is the sole responsibility of the client. Exceptions may be made for emergencies or extenuating circumstances.

11. Managed Care

Most managed care companies limit the number of sessions which will be fully or partially reimbursed. Clients are encouraged to communicate directly with the managed care company about such limitations before starting treatment. Any concerns about the confidentiality of managed care records should also be directed to the managed care company. You should also be aware of potential risks associated with any written diagnosis being submitted to your managed care company, we can discuss private payments.

12. Court Ordered Treatment

If you are seeing us due to a court order requiring you to seek counseling, it is this practices policy that we not proceed with treatment until a copy of the court order has been received and reviewed. Because you have been ordered by the court to obtain treatment, there are limits on confidentiality in addition to the ones described in paragraph 1 entitled Confidentiality. For example, we may be obligated to file a report with the court that ordered you to seek treatment or with someone else.

13. Limits of Availability

Journey Counseling Services, PLLC will make every effort to return your phone call promptly, however due to the nature of this practice, it may take up to 24 hours to return phone calls. Should you need a more immediate response, please reach out via e-mail. However if you are experiencing an emergency, such as thinking of harming yourself or others, you should not wait for a return phone call or e-mail from this therapist and should instead proceed to your local emergency room or call 911.

14. Limits of Services

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have significant benefits. Psychotherapy requires an active effort on your part. In order to be most successful, you will need to work on things we discuss outside of sessions.

Journey Counseling Services, PLLC does not provide medication evaluations or medications management. If you or your child are in need of a medication evaluation, you will need to arrange for this through a psychiatrist, private physician or ARNP.

Please be advised our role is to provide therapy services. We will not assess fitness for custody, serve as an advocate on other issues or act as an expert witness. Please be aware that if we are subpoenaed to court, you will be charged a fee of $150.00 per hour for any time spent in the court plus travel time.

15. Concerns or Complaints

Journey Counseling Services, PLLC is committed to providing high quality services. If you have any complaints about treatment that you have received or about billing, please do not hesitate to address them with us. You also may contact the Office of Professional Licensing and Credentialing Practice at 40 Donovan St., Concord, NH at 603-271-2152 or by website at www.state.nh.us.