

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/01/24

PRACTICE POLICIES

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:

If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide or any other medical emergency dial 911 or visit your local emergency room.

The information contained on MeridianCLE.com and any affiliated websites is provided for informational purposes and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment of any disease or disability.

CLINICAL SERVICES

Clinical services vary depending on the particular problems a client brings and the orientation and approach of the therapist. Possible psychological services include psychotherapy, psychological consultation, diagnostic evaluation/assessment, psychological testing, individual, group and/or family psychological treatment, nutritional counseling, telephone skills-coaching, and/or home/school/community consultation. Clients should feel free to bring up any questions they have about our work together as they arise.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Discussions with a health care provider are confidential and protected by law. Meridian Counseling & Wellness Center will not disclose confidential information, including testing reports and session documentation, about a client without consent from the client and/or parents/guardians. There are situations, however, in which our healthcare providers are required to break confidentiality. These include the following circumstances: if a client is in danger of harming him/herself or another person; if the client is unable to care for him/herself; if there is suspected neglect or abuse of a child, older adult (65 or older), or dependent adult; if our healthcare providers are court-ordered to release information as part of a legal proceeding; or as otherwise required by law (Please see the Notice of Practice Policies).

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of mental health require that our healthcare providers keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or we can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these are professional clinical records, they can be misinterpreted by untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, we recommend that you review them in the presence of your healthcare provider so you can discuss the contents. Clients will be charged a prorated amount of my hourly clinical fee for any professional time spent responding to information requests. In the case of an unexpected absence/death of your healthcare provider, Meridian Counseling & Wellness Center will retain your records for the appropriate period of time.

MINORS

If the client is a minor, the parents/guardians may be legally entitled to some information about therapy. It is our policy for individual psychotherapy with a minor to request that parents agree to give up access to their child's records in the spirit of promoting a trusting and privileged therapeutic relationship. If parents/guardians agree, your healthcare provider will provide parents/guardians with general information about his/her/their work with the child. However, if your healthcare provider feels there is a high risk a child will seriously harm him/herself or someone else, parents/guardians will be notified of the concern. Before giving parents/guardians information, your healthcare provider will discuss the matter with the child, if possible, and do his/her/their best to address any objections the child may have with what he/she/they are prepared to discuss. Parents/guardians will be provided regular updates on treatment status and goals. If a minor should become an adult during the course of treatment, all paperwork will be required to be updated as an adult. A release of information will be signed for discussion of finances, payment, treatment goals, sessions, etc. per client's choice.

In the case of divorce or guardianship, proof of all parties will be required for services to be provided. This may include divorce decrees, documentation from the non-custodial parent, guardianship papers.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

The fee for the initial evaluation, which includes a diagnostic assessment, scoring of appropriate tests, coordination of care with other providers and treatment-planning services ranges from \$150-\$200 (varies by service). The fee for a 50-55 minute session of individual or family therapy ranges from \$150-\$200 (varies by service). Fees for longer or shorter sessions will be prorated from this amount. If a client's treatment plan includes between-session telephone skills coaching calls, the fee is \$1 for every minute of coaching, and coaching calls will last no longer than 15 minutes. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require your healthcare provider's participation, you will be expected to pay for the time spent engaged in court activities.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

Payment for diagnostic evaluations, individual, family, group therapy and counseling sessions is due at time of service. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. We accept payment by check, cash, or credit card. Credit cards payment may be made securely through the client portal. There is a \$20 fee for returned checks. If your account has not been paid for more than 30 days and/or a payment plan has not been arranged, we will hold on to scheduling future appointments. If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days, we may use legal means to secure payment. If such legal action is necessary, its cost will be included in the claim. In collection situations, the only information we release regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

Meridian Counseling & Wellness Center is currently contracted with the following insurance companies:

- Medical Mutual
- Anthem
- Aetna

If you have other health insurance providers, all services are considered “out-of-network.” If you are hoping to use your health insurance to cover or defray the cost of her services, it is recommended that you check your policy’s provision for out-of-network providers. Clients are required to pay for services directly if using out-of-network benefits; however, you may consider attempting to get reimbursement from your insurance

company. This may be done in the following way:

You may submit claim forms to your insurance company directly for reimbursement.

It is your responsibility to manage the insurance claim process. Meridian Counseling & Wellness Center will not accept direct payments from insurance carriers. We will, however, provide any reasonable assistance possible to help you get reimbursement.

We can supply you monthly with a HCFA (universal) health insurance claim form or a “Superbill” completed with all necessary clinical information and codes for you to submit.

We will do our best to provide assistance with the insurance reimbursement process. Since policies differ, most issues are best addressed by directly contacting your insurance company. Meridian Counseling & Wellness Center therefore requests you first reach out to your carrier with insurance-related questions. If your company requests additional clinical or business information to review a submitted claim, you may be charged a fee (prorated amount of hourly session cost) for time spent in preparing the additional documentation.

Please remember management of collecting from health insurance companies is your responsibility.

APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Please remember to cancel or reschedule appointments **24 hours in advance**. You will be responsible for the entire fee if cancellation is less than 24 hours. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time. The standard meeting time for psychotherapy is 50-55 minutes. Requests to change the 50-55 minute session needs to be discussed and scheduled in advance. If (on rare occasion) your clinician begins a session late, he/she/they will make up the missed time in some mutually agreeable fashion (e.g. by extending the session).

The therapist will wait for 15 minutes for you to show for your scheduled appointment. If 15 minutes has passed for your allotted appointment without previous communication, it will be considered a **NO SHOW** and you will be responsible for the entire fee.

ACCESSIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

If you need to contact your clinician between sessions, please send a message through the Client Portal or leave a message or text on our main number (**440-210-1815**). Clinicians are often not immediately available; however, we will attempt to return your call within 24 hours. We do not offer emergency coverage and we are often not available for emergency sessions. If a client has a clinical emergency, he/she should not wait for a returned call. Instead, the client

should be taken to the nearest emergency room. We cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages. If you prefer to communicate via email or text messaging for issues regarding scheduling or cancellations, please discuss directly with your clinician. While we try to return messages in a timely manner, we cannot guarantee immediate response and request that you do not use these methods of communication to discuss therapeutic content and/or request assistance for emergencies. Please note that we can be contacted confidentially and securely through the Client Portal <https://amanda-lehner.clientsecure.me>.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, our clinicians do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, TikTok, Instagram etc). We believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when you meet with your clinician.

TERMINATION

It is important to have a termination process in order to achieve some closure of the therapeutic relationship. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the treatment. Your clinician may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you, if it is determined that the clinical service is not being effectively used, or if you are in default on payment. Your clinician will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the reasons and purpose of terminating. If treatment is terminated for any reason or you request another clinician, we will provide you with a list of qualified healthcare providers to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source. Should you fail to schedule an appointment for three consecutive weeks, unless other arrangements have been made in advance, for legal and ethical reasons, we must consider the professional relationship discontinued.

You will receive a letter/ email 30 days after your last appointment or last communication with you checking in with your desire to continue services. At that time, you may express your desire to continue sessions by making an appointment. If you do not respond or express otherwise, your chart will be closed.

INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES

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