

## Practice Policies

### Scheduling

Typically I meet with people every week for a 50 minute session at first, and then sometimes cut back to less often. I have some evening hours, but it is much easier to schedule if you have time during the day. Hours are on the half hour from 10:30 AM through the 8:30 PM hour, Monday through Friday.

### Fees

- 75 minute • Initial Evaluation (first meeting) • \$180
- 50 minute • Individual Psychotherapy • \$120
- 50 minute • Couples Therapy • \$120
- 25 minute • Individual Therapy • \$60
- 25 minute • Coaching (in-person or by phone) • \$60

An adjusted fee may be possible, if you cannot afford therapy without it. Please ask.

I do not have a fixed fee for reports that you may ask me to write for a third party. Generally, I discourage it, because it influences what we will talk about: it puts me in the position of being an evaluator for a third party. However, there are some situations where it is appropriate, and we can discuss those. If you need a report for accommodations at work or school, ask me about a referral to a psychologist.

Fees are billed at the end of the month and due in 30 days, except that a check is appreciated at the first meeting.

Payments can be made:

- By cash or check,
- Online with a credit card through PayPal.com using the address "LewMills@millsconsulting.com".

If you write a check that is returned by the bank, I will pass on the bank fees to you, generally \$5. Your bank will probably charge you a substantial fee as well.

### Cancellation Policy Explanation

I do not maintain the typical policy of full payment for cancellation with less than 24 hours notice. However, I do charge a cancellation fee.

This is not a punitive charge and is thus not dependent on whether there is a good reason for missing an appointment. I understand that there may be very good reasons for a cancellation, but the fee will nonetheless be due. The cancellation fee is in order to cover costs.

### Cancellation Fees

- Cancellation (with less than 24 hours notice) • \$20
- "No Show" cancellation (or not arriving by 15 minutes after session start) • \$30
- Rescheduling with less than 24 hours notice is a cancellation
- Cancellation fees are generally not billable to insurance
- If you are more than 15 minutes late to a session, the session may not be billable to insurance.

### Insurance

I am no longer on any "preferred provider panel" insurance contracts. However, I produce a bill that is acceptable for most insurance and managed care organizations as an "out of plan" provider. You remain responsible for payments regardless of what and when your insurance pays you.

Some diagnoses are considered "non-parity" diagnoses. They may be reimbursed at a rate lower than your general medical insurance, or on less favorable terms. You may want to ask your benefits manager about your coverage.

You may want to consider whether or not it even makes sense to utilize your insurance for psychotherapy. Often treatment planning is more restricted, the number of visits allowed is fewer and not all of your costs are covered anyway. You also have less privacy when you use a third party payer. Claims against your insurance may be reported to the MIB and can impact your ability to acquire new individual life, health, disability, or long term care insurance.

## **E-Mail**

Because of the nature of the Internet, confidentiality cannot be assured in un-encrypted e-mail messages. Furthermore, many employers archive and have access to employees' e-mail messages. I generally try to be as non-specific as possible in e-mail. It would, however, be obvious to someone reading your e-mail that you were receiving e-mail from a psychotherapist.

Please consider where the trade off between privacy and convenience is for you. If you do not wish to be contacted by e-mail, please call and let me know.

Sometimes I do receive a lengthy e-mail that is not about practical scheduling issues and so on but is about things that we could be discussing in therapy. I do generally read these e-mails, but I would much prefer to respond to them in our sessions, directly with you. I will not e-mail a lengthy reply.

## **Emergencies and My Availability**

I am generally not available for emergency visits or calls. You should not come to the office without an appointment. I am sometimes available for a crisis call, but this cannot be relied upon.

In an emergency, you should call 911, a telephone crisis line, or proceed to a psychiatric emergency facility.

In San Diego, call 800-479-3339 for emergency services.

There are other crisis services that may be closer to you, and these can generally be found in the front pages of the telephone book.

If you anticipate needing to call a crisis hotline, you may want to write down that number *now* somewhere where you will be able to find it when you are upset. I *do not* have a notice to remind you of this arrangement on my phone-answering message.

Please try to remember that I may not be able to return your call for up to 24 hours. Non-urgent calls and e-mail may take up to 48 hours to return, so please be patient.

## **Please also look at the Notice of Privacy Practices**

Acknowledgment of receipt of the Notice of Privacy Policies is mandated and required. It is not an agreement you make with me. It is only an acknowledgement that you take responsibility for understanding my privacy policies, which remain in effect even if you do not acknowledge them.

## **Consent to Treatment**

Please, sign the form acknowledging having reviewed and agreed to these Practice Policies.

## **Policies are a bore**

Policies are by their nature a bore. Despite the impression these policies create when all written down, the vast majority of situations can be worked out in a discussion between you and me. I hope that having to review these does not sour your enthusiasm for doing therapy. And I hope that you will feel free to discuss any concerns that you may have before they can become a misunderstanding.

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