



NORTHWEST COUNSEL
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Notice of Private Practices and Counselor's Disclosure

License:

Nic Howe, Washington State Licensed Mental Health Counselor Associate #MC60677004

Education/Experience:

I received my MA in Counseling Psychology from The Seattle School and my BA in Biblical Studies from Maranatha Baptist Bible College. I have 5+ years experience in intensive

Therapeutic Philosophy/Methods:

- I firmly believe that we are wounded in relationship and we are healed in relationship, that being said one of the primary ways I “do therapy” is by a relational approach. That means that as you and I talk we will often take a look at what is happening between us in the therapeutic space. How do we make each other feel? What patterns that have happened elsewhere in your relationships are possibly getting enacted here? Through this dialogue old habits and patterns can often be discovered in a safe way. This can lead to exploring new ways of being in our space as well as the rest of your life.
- Along with talking about the relational pattern, I will discuss with you where you might have learned those patterns from your childhood. This involves discussing your family and specifically how your mother and father related to you and you to them. Everyone develops a style of attachment to their caregivers and this often shows up in how we relate to others the rest of our lives in positive and negative ways. We will discuss your story and how the characters in it (family, friends, and you) have led to the chapter you are in.
- A core value in the therapeutic space is that is of sacred space. What do I mean by that? On the one hand my office is just four walls and some furniture. On the other, I believe there is something sacred about the work you and I do together. This means I treat our time together with care and reverence. I commit to you to giving you my attention for the entirety of our time, each and every time we meet and invite you to treat that time and space as equally sacred, set apart. Starting late, or canceling can have a disruption on this sacred space, and while unforeseen interruptions and unexpected events may happen, I encourage you to value this time we set aside to journey through your story together.
- One question you will here often from me will be to ask you what you are aware of in the present moment. This can mean thoughts you are having, emotions you are experience (about the subject matter or about me). I believe awareness leads to understanding, acceptance and action. Through awareness we become more in tune with what is going on in our minds and our hearts. Both the noise of life as well as the patterns we have adopted in life often can shut us out from really knowing or understanding what is going on under the surface. By working together to grow in awareness of your present experience you will become more attuned to yourself, your thoughts, your wants and needs and emotional states.
- While often our therapy will play out as you and I talking to one another, at times it is important to engage the body as well as the mind. Emotions are experienced in the body and at times I may ask you where you feel a particular feeling in your body and we may do an exercise to help anchor you to that experience in that moment. Often in the rationing thinking Western culture of America we have learned to shut off and shut down our emotions and we do not listen to our bodies. In science terms, this is choosing to listen to the limbic parts of your brain. Also to offer new ways of seeing areas of your life, I may invite you to move your body, walk around the room, lay on the floor or hold onto an object to help embody the work we are doing. I find this helps avoid “analysis paralysis” when one can get “stuck” in their head - overthinking a situation.
- While I approach things from a relational approach and prefer to avoid behavior based approaches (behaviors are often just the symptom). I am not against using such methods in a short term approach. I view these methods as wheelchairs, crutches or medicine which can be and are often needed in recovery. I do however, desire to go to the deeper level of doing "physical therapy" with you which involves not just giving supportive aids or quick fixes, but helping you build strength again. This process is harder and often longer running than the "quick fix" methods but in my opinion, the better work.

Rate/Payment:

The rate for treatment is \$110 for individual 52 minute session and \$120 for couples for 52-60 minute session. However, financial difficulties can be taken in to account and a sliding scale could be agreed upon before treatment begins. Sessions typically last for 52 minutes with exception of the initial interview. A free 20 minute consultation during which the client and I will determine if counseling with me is the proper fit is available to the client. The client has the option to continue after the 20 minute consultation as the remainder of the first paid session.

Payment is due at the end of each session by either cash or check. Credit Card is available with a 2.75% fee. Your rate, as agreed upon will be: \$110 per session unless otherwise agreed at \$ _____. If the client needs to cancel or reschedule the appointment, it needs to be done before 48 hours of the appointment otherwise the amount of the session will be charged. There is a \$30 fee for any returned checks. A credit card will be kept on file during intake process for no show/late cancel charges. I do not file insurance claims for you. If your provider is covering any or all of the costs, then you need to make arrangements to be directly reimbursed. You are responsible for filling out any paperwork. My payment should not be affected. I will fill out any necessary parts as indicated by your insurance company and provide you a monthly bill with the required information for reimbursement. If I am required to go to court for any reason I require a \$3000 up front cost for preparation and time in court as well as loss income during this time. If my services are not covered within the \$3000 upfront fee you will be billed upon closure of the court appearance.

If a written statement needs to be written on behalf of the client the cost is \$25 per fifteen minutes and will be paid before the document is sent.

Scheduling Appointments

Appointments are generally made on a regular, weekly basis. Appointment times are not automatically held open for you from week to week. It is your responsibility to reschedule at the end of a session.

An important element of counseling with Nic is thoroughness in treatment. Nic may follow-up with you either via email or phone to give additional insights or work items throughout the week. By signing this agreement you understand and agree to this level of care. This may be reflected in the billing of sessions. If you wish for less contact please inform Nic.

Confidentiality

There is a legal privilege in this state protecting the confidentiality of the information that you share with me. As a professional, I assure you that I strive to maintain the strictest ethical standards of confidentiality.

There are legal exceptions to confidentiality. The following situations are those in which the information you have shared with me may be shared with others.

- 1) The client gives written permission to share confidential information.
- 2) Anything that suggests a crime or harmful act towards yourself or to others.
- 3) If the client is a minor, and there is indication that she/he was the victim or subject of a crime.
- 4) The client brings charges against the counselor.
- 5) In response to a subpoena.
- 6) As required under chapter 26.44 RCW.

When it is possible, we will discuss any exceptions to confidentiality as they arise.

Consultations

I regularly consult with other professionals regarding clients with whom I am working. This allows me to gain other perspectives and ideas as to how to best help you reach your goals. These consultations are obtained in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

Legal Disclaimer

Counselors practicing for a fee must be registered or licensed with Department of Licensing for protection of the public health and safety. Registration of an individual does not include recognition of any practice standards, nor necessarily implies effectiveness of treatment. (WAC 246-810-030, WAC 246-810-031). The Counselor Credential Act is to provide protection for public health and safety and to empower the citizens of the state of Washington by providing a complaint process against those counselors who commit acts of unprofessional conduct.

Unprofessional Conduct

The brochure called "Counseling or Hypnotherapy Clients" lists ways in which counselors may work in an unprofessional manner. If you suspect that my conduct has been unprofessional in any way, please contact the Department of Health at the following address and phone number:

Department of Health, Counselor Programs
P.O. Box 47869
Olympia, WA 98504-7869
360.664.9098

Contact by Phone, Text or Email

You may send an email to nhowe@northwestcounsel.com, leave me a voicemail or send a text message at 253-245-9068 at any time. I will check those messages on a regular basis. You will not be charged for brief phone calls; however, after 10 minutes, you will be charged my normal rate in 20 minute increments if you want to continue. Please note that these forms of communication are not fully protected and if you do communicate by phone, text or email that you do so at the risk of your confidentiality. I will do my best to

respond to your communication in a prompt manner. Please do not use these avenues to deliver important therapeutic information as your session is the best place to deal with personal issues.

Media: Facebook, Twitter, Blogging and other means of media

Media may be used by Northwest Counsel to connect with potential clientele. Clientele may access me via these channels with the understanding that they may not be secure and are not forms of communication that are fully protected.

Emergencies

If you are in an emergency and cannot reach me, please call one of the following numbers for help:

General Emergencies: 911

Crisis Service Line: 253-922-4035

Pierce County Crisis Line at 800-576-7764

I have received and understand my rights as a client. I have received and understand this Disclosure Statement and have been provided an opportunity to review and ask questions.

Client Name (Please Print): _____

Client Signature: _____

Date: _____

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

Introduction to Clients

This notice will tell you about how I handle information about you and your child. It tells how I use this information in my office, how I share it with other professionals and organizations, and how you can see it. I am required to tell you about this because of a federal law, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

In most situations I can only release information about your treatment to others if you sign a written authorization form that meets certain legal requirements imposed by state law or HIPAA. Clients who are 13 or older must sign the written authorization form.

Your Medical Information

Each time you or your child visit me information is collected about you or your child's physical or mental health. It may be information about you or your child's past, present or future health or condition, the treatment or services received, or about payment for health care. This information is called PHI, which stands for Protected Health Information. The information I obtain from you or your child goes into your or your child's medical record at my office. It is likely to include the following:

- Your or your child's personal history
- Reasons you or your child came for treatment: problems, symptoms, needs, goals
- Diagnoses: medical terms for you or your child's problems, symptoms, disabilities
- Treatment Plan: services that I think will help you or your child
- Progress Notes
- Records from others who treated or evaluated you or your child
- Psychological test scores, school records, and the like
- Information about medications you or your child are taking
- Legal matters
- Billing and insurance information

Medical information is used for many purposes. For example I may use it to:

- Plan your child's care
- Decide how well my treatment is working for you
- Talk with other health care professionals who are also treating you or your child, such as your family doctor or the professional who referred you to me
- Show that you actually received the services from me that I billed to you or your health insurance company

How Protected Health Information Can Be Used and Shared

When you or your child's information is read by me or others, it is called "use." If the information is shared with or sent to others outside this office, it is called "disclosure." Except in some special circumstances, when I use you or your child's PHI or disclose it to others, I share only the minimum necessary PHI needed for the purpose. The law gives you rights to know about your PHI, how it is used, and to have a say in how it is disclosed.

Use or disclosure of the following protected health information does not require your consent of authorization:

1. Uses and disclosures required by law-like *files court-ordered by a Judge*
2. Uses and disclosures about victims of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence-like *the duties to warn explained in the Disclosure Statement*
3. Uses and disclosures for health and oversight activities-like *correcting records or correcting records already disclosed*
4. Uses and disclosures for judicial and administrative proceedings-like *a case where you are claiming malpractice or breach of ethics*
5. Uses and disclosures of law enforcement purposes-like *if you intend to harm someone else*
6. Uses and disclosures to avert a serious threat to health or safety-like *calling Probate Court for a commitment hearing*
7. Uses and disclosures for Worker's Compensation-like *the basic information obtained in therapy/counseling as a result of your Worker's Compensation claim*

Your Rights as a Patient under HIPAA

1. As a client, you have the right to see your file, unless it would endanger your health or another person's health or safety. *Psychotherapy notes are afforded special privacy protection under HIPAA regulations and are excluded from this right.*
2. As a client, you may obtain a copy of your treatment, or a summary of your treatment. There is a standard administrative fee for copies a fee for a treatment summary may apply.
3. As a client, you have the right to request amendments to your counseling/therapy file
4. As a client, you have the right to receive a history of all disclosures of protected health information. You will be required to pay any copying fees @ \$.20 a page as well as a fee for my time.
5. As a client, you have the right to restrict the use and disclosure of your PHI for the purpose of treatment, payment, and operations. If you choose to release any protected health information, you will be required to sign a Release of Information form detailing exactly to whom and what information you wish disclosed.
6. As a client, you have the right to register a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you feel your rights, herein explained, have been violated. Prior to your treatment, you will receive an exact duplicate of these pages and the Professional Disclosure Statement. It will be necessary for you to sign a certificate indicating that you have received, read and understood both documents. This certificate will be placed in your file. Please do not sign the certificate if you do not understand any part of the HIPAA Client's Rights of the Professional Disclosure Statement. I will be happy to explain these documents further. In summary, HIPAA and Washington State law provide you with certain rights regarding your clinical record and disclosure of protected health information about you. These rights include:

- requesting that I amend your record
- requesting restrictions on what information from your clinical record is disclosed to others
- requesting an accounting of most disclosures of protected health information that you have neither consented to nor authorized
- determining the location to which protected information disclosures are sent
- having any complaints you make about my policies and procedures recorded in your records
- receipt of a copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices form

I acknowledge that I have received and read the ***Professional Disclosure Statement*** and the ***HIPAA Client's Rights***. I further acknowledge that I seek and consent to treatment with my therapist. My signature below confirms that I understand and accept all the information contained in the ***Professional Disclosure Statement*** and the ***HIPAA Client's Rights***.

Printed name of Client

Signed name of Client

Date