

Cherie Baetz-Davis, Ph.D., LLC  
*Compassionate Psychological Care*

**OFFICE POLICIES**

Welcome! If this is your first time coming for therapy, it can be a bit daunting. So, what follows is some general information about how therapy works and what you can do to get the most out of this experience. Even if you've been in therapy before, the information below should be helpful.

Most people entering therapy will get positive growth out of the experience, and there are strategies mentioned below that can improve the outcome. However, there is also the risk that you may experience feelings that you have been hoping to avoid. The news is that even if these feelings have been buried, they are still there and actually by focusing on them a little at a time, you can move past them. Some people worry about the pace of therapy, but you should remember that **you are in control of how your sessions go** and you can regulate how quickly material is revealed. Adults are encouraged to talk with the therapist about what they want or don't want in therapy. Children are often able to tolerate the emotions in therapy because play or games are often used while they are doing the therapy work.

**WHAT IS THERAPY?** Therapy is not something that is done to you. To get the most progress and the quickest results involves **you taking an active role**. This means:

- ✧ You should **seek clarification** if you don't understand something.
- ✧ You may **take notes** in sessions if you find this helpful.
- ✧ **Questions to ask yourself** after each session include:
  - *What issues do I want to work on today?*
  - *How have I been feeling this week compared to other weeks?*
  - *What happened this week that my therapist should know about?*
  - *What did we cover during the last session?*
  - *Is there anything that bothered me about last session? Any unfinished business?*
  - *Is there anything I am reluctant to tell my therapist?*
  - *What did I do for homework?*
- ✧ You should commit to doing **homework assignments** and do them **in a timely fashion**. This way you will be focusing on your behaviors or feelings throughout the week, where you can actually put new behaviors into practice.

**SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS**

- ✧ When calling my office, you can **leave a message** if it is okay for me to respond within a couple of business days. If your call requires immediate attention, call my cell number (314-603-0292) or press #911 after your message, so I can be paged.
- ✧ It is best to **meet weekly** for the first several sessions because it takes some time to let the therapist know about you and what works best for you. Then sessions may be stretched to two weeks or so, as you make progress and allow you time to address issues outside of therapy. If you are experiencing a crisis it may be important to meet more than once in the same week.
- ✧ Some people find it more convenient to **schedule their appointments for the same time each week or to schedule sessions a month in advance**. That way you know there is time set aside for you and it can be put into your schedule easier.
- ✧ You can **request that your name be put on a waitlist** in case there is a cancellation or time that opens up that you would prefer.
- ✧ For **confirming or changing your appointments**, Patient Ally is an efficient resource because you have **access to my calendar showing available times**, and your requested time is then confirmed by email. You will initially receive a security code and be asked to go to [www.patientally.com](http://www.patientally.com) to sign

up to create a new account **within 48 hours**. Then return to your email to set your password. Then **log in to Patient Ally**, click “Manage Providers”, “Add Provider”, choose the state, type in my first name, and then click “Search”. Then click “Select” and enter the security code. Once I confirm you can have access, you can log back in and **click “Healthcare Requests”, “Appointment”** and by clicking my name and address you can see the calendar to confirm your scheduled appt, to schedule, to reschedule, or to cancel. Through the **“Profile” tab you can also update contact and insurance info or add family members**.

### HOW DOES PAYMENT WORK?

- ✧ Rates are \$210 for initial diagnostic sessions, \$160 for family or couple therapy, \$160 for psychological testing session, and \$140 for individual therapy. Some prefer to **private pay** for sessions as this affords greater privacy and control in dictating your treatment. Others may choose to **use insurance**. Insurance often covers the cost, except for a copay, coinsurance, or sometimes a deductible.
- ✧ Some people **pay as they go** or others find it more convenient to **make one monthly payment in advance**.
- ✧ **Checks, cash, and credit/debit cards** are accepted. Card payments may be made online through PayPal on my website (www.mydrcherie.com) or in the office. There is a nominal processing fee of 5% for credit/debit cards. Automatic bank payments can also be set up, typically at no charge.
- ✧ Sessions are **45-minutes**. This also allows time to complete necessary paperwork or phone calls, plus if there is a crisis and the appointment runs over there is some time to allow for this and additional appointments should be close to schedule.
- ✧ Your appointment time is set aside for you. If you miss an appointment and **do not cancel within 24-48 hours, your time can not be offered to another client and you will be expected to pay a \$65 missed appointment fee**. If a bill enters **collection, there will be an additional recovery fee charged**.

**WHAT ABOUT ADDITIONAL SERVICES?** Sometimes there are other services not covered by insurance that are requested, so the client is responsible for this charge:

- a) Completion of any **forms or written reports** are billed at \$140/hour.
- b) Some insurance plans cover a **full psychological evaluation** (which includes scoring and writing) though others do not or only pay partial. Whatever is not covered by insurance is billed \$160/hour.
- c) **Unscheduled client calls outside of therapy** are not charged for, unless the calls last **over 15 minutes**. In that case a phone consultation is billed in ½ hour increments of the \$140/hour rate.
- d) There is no **return check** fee, just the bank charge for the returned check of \$10.00. **Legal proceedings** entail more liability and are billed at \$250/hr (including travel, record review, and testifying).

**HOW DOES THERAPY END?** Usually as you make progress in therapy, sessions will be scheduled less frequently. You can **always call to request an earlier appointment** if you feel this is necessary. When you feel you are ready to end therapy, you should bring this up with the therapist so that we can **plan for at least one final session** in which we **review progress made and strategies for maintaining success**. If I feel we are not making progress, need to be referred to someone else, or are coming to the close of therapy, I will bring that up also. Any further contact after ending sessions is left up to the client, and always maintains the therapist/client boundaries.

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Client/Guardian Signature

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Date

9/12