



# BOSTON NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, LLC.

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Welcome to Boston Neuropsychological Services (BNS). This document contains important information about our professional services and policies. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask questions. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement to the terms below between you and your clinician or between your child and his/her clinician.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

Psychotherapy varies depending on the theoretical approach taken by the clinician, the client's unique needs, and the therapeutic goals developed. Psychotherapy requires that the client work on goals during sessions and at home. Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy may involve discussing difficult topics, you may experience uncomfortable feelings, such as sadness and frustration. On the other hand, psychotherapy can have many benefits. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and a decrease in negative emotions. There is variability in each individual's therapy experience.

The first few sessions of therapy will involve an evaluation of your needs and the development of goals for therapy. Your clinician will discuss goals based on this evaluation and explain how you will work toward these goals, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information and decide if you feel comfortable working with the clinician. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so if you have questions or concerns about therapy, you should discuss them with your clinician as soon as they arise. If you decide not to continue therapy, your clinician can assist you in finding another mental health professional.

## **THERAPY SESSIONS**

During the initial visits, you and your clinician will decide if your clinician is an appropriate match, given your treatment goals. If you decide to begin the treatment process, you and your clinician will discuss and agree upon an appropriate schedule for meeting based on your needs and treatment goals. Appointments are typically scheduled once per week (approximately 45 minutes in duration), but your clinician may recommend longer or more/less frequent sessions.

## **INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

Your health insurance policy often provides some coverage for mental health treatment. Our administrative staff will assist you in determining your benefits and review your insurance coverage with you. If you choose not to use your insurance, you may pay privately for services. You are responsible for payment of services if your insurance provider does not reimburse BNS for performed services. If you have questions about

your coverage, you should call your plan administrator. Managed Health Care plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are sometimes limited to short-term treatment designed to treat specific problems that interfere with a person's daily functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for additional therapy after a designated number of sessions.

You should be aware that most insurance companies require that a clinician provide a clinical diagnosis for treatment purposes. Sometimes additional clinical information is requested by the insurance company, such as treatment plans/summaries or in rare cases copies of the entire record. If requested, this information will become part of the insurance company files. In some cases, they may share this information with a national medical information databank. Your clinician can provide you with a copy of any information submitted to the insurance company upon written request.

### **PROFESSIONAL FEES/CANCELLATIONS**

Please refer to the BNS Service Contract for a comprehensive list of services and their associated fees. Once an appointment is scheduled, you will be expected to pay the associated fee unless you provide 24 hours advanced notice of cancellation. If you cancel with less than 24 hours notice, there will be a charge equivalent to the private pay fee for a session. Please note, missed appointments cannot be billed to your insurance company. This fee can be paid by phone or at your next appointment, but it must be paid prior to your next therapy session. There is an exception for contagious illness under the following circumstances:

- You provide a doctor's note confirming the illness
- There was no opportunity to inform BNS with adequate notice (i.e., the illness happened the day of the appointment and the doctor's note is dated that day).

If possible, your clinician will try to reschedule your missed appointment. It should be noted that frequent cancellations may result in a discussion with your clinician about your commitment to therapy and your continuation of treatment.

### **BILLING**

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangement for payment has not been agreed upon, BNS has the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, the cost will be included in the claim. In these cases, your name, the nature of the services, and the amount due may be released for legal purposes. However, all personal information not needed to substantiate the case will remain protected by HIPAA.

### **CONTACTING YOUR CLINICIAN**

The best way to contact your clinician is via telephone rather than text messaging or email. Email should only be used to arrange or modify appointments. You should not email your clinician content related to therapy sessions or other personal identifying information because email is not secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate

via email, please be aware that all emails are retained in the Internet service provider logs. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they can be reviewed by the system administrator of the Internet service provider. You should also know that any emails that you send to your clinician may become a part of your legal medical record.

Your clinician may not always be immediately available by telephone. In case of an emergency, you should contact your physician or go to the nearest emergency room. If it is not an emergency, you should leave a message for your clinician on his/her voicemail or with the administrative staff. Your clinician will return your call as soon as possible. If your clinician will be unavailable for an extended time, he/she will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

### **PROFESSIONAL RECORDS**

The laws and standards for psychological services require that your clinician keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or your clinician can prepare a summary for you, upon written request. Since professional records can be misinterpreted, it is recommended that you review all records in the presence of your clinician, so information can be explained and you can ask questions. You will be charged an appropriate fee for copies made and/or any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

### **MINORS**

Parents have the right to review treatment records for children and adolescents under eighteen years of age. However, the clinician, parents, and minor can develop an agreement for therapy that feels comfortable to everyone. Once an agreement is made, the clinician will explain to the minor what information will be shared with the minor's parents. For example, the parents may choose to have the clinician only share general information about the minor's progress in therapy. It should be noted that if at any time, the minor is at risk of harming him/herself or others, parents will be notified immediately.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Your clinician will not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) due to concerns regarding your confidentiality and the privacy of you and your clinician. These sites are not secure and it is possible for these exchanges to become part of your legal medical record.

It is not a regular part of your clinician's practice to search for you on social media websites or Internet search engines. However, extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis, such as your clinician suspects that you are in danger and is unable to contact you via telephone. If your clinician needs to search for you via the Internet, he or she will document this and discuss it with you during your next session.

BNS does have a Facebook page. You are welcome to view this page and read information that is posted on this site; however, this page is managed by the business manager at BNS, not your clinician.

**LIMITS TO CONFIDENTIALITY**

In general, the privacy of all communication between a client and a therapist is protected by law, and your clinician can only release information about your treatment with your written permission. However, there are a few exceptions. Your clinician is legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if some information about you or your treatment needs to be released. For example, if your clinician believes that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is being abused, they are mandated by law to file a report with the appropriate state agency. If your clinician believes that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another person, they are required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for you. If you threaten to harm yourself, your clinician may be obligated to seek hospitalization for you or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. Furthermore, in most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent your clinician from providing any information about your treatment, unless your clinician is court ordered to release such information. If your clinician is providing treatment to a child or family unit, your clinician cannot testify in cases related to parental fitness or custodial issues. Lastly, your clinician may find it helpful to occasionally consult with other professionals. During a consultation, your clinician will make every effort to keep your identity confidential, only releasing information that is relevant to the consultation. The professional that your clinician consults with is also legally bound to keep all information shared confidential.

If any of these exceptions to confidentiality occur, your clinician will make every effort to discuss it with you before taking action. It is important that you discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about these limitations of confidentiality with your clinician right away.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during the professional relationship between you and your clinician or you and your child's clinician.

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Signature of client or legal guardian

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Date

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Signature of minor (if applicable)

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Date