

Informed Consent

Welcome to Twin Lakes Counseling! I appreciate the opportunity to help to you. This form includes information about therapy and ensures that everyone is on the same page as to what to expect in our work together. Please only sign the acknowledgement form when you understand each part and have asked any questions you may have.

About Therapy

At Twin Lakes Counseling, we are mental health professionals who meet the qualifications in our state to practice therapy. Although we can diagnose and treat mental health conditions, we are not able to prescribe medication. If we decide during your treatment that medication may be helpful, I will refer you to a psychiatrist. Also, if I find that your needs fall outside the scope of my practice, I will refer you to an appropriate provider. If at any time you have questions about your diagnosis or my clinical assessment of our work together, please do not hesitate to ask.

As with any powerful treatment, therapy includes risks and benefits, and the success of therapy depends to a large degree on your dedication to the process and your willingness to endure discomfort. The main risk is that things may change in your life. This may seem obvious, but it is important to consider the discomfort even positive change may cause in your life, relationships, and work. Things that were hidden may be discussed. Relationships may feel like they are getting worse before they get better. All this is part of the change process. As this change occurs, please discuss with me your reaction to it with me in session.

The benefits of therapy include growth in areas of your life in which you feel stuck. Relationships you are dissatisfied with may take on new life and your sense of yourself as a person may become stronger. You may experience and process emotions that previously have been pushed aside. You may become aware of why you make the choices you make and why those closest to you react the way they do. You may experience a broadening of options as you consider doing things you didn't previously think possible.

Confidentiality

Maintaining trust is important in any therapeutic relationship. I will keep the information you share confidential, including the fact that you are my client. If we see each other outside of the therapy office, I will not acknowledge you first. However, if you acknowledge me first, I will follow your lead regarding the length and nature of our interaction. There are several limits to confidentiality and I ask for your agreement to these before we proceed.

First, I am a mandated reporter, so if you disclose any information about the possible physical or sexual abuse or neglect of any person under the age of 18 or an adult vulnerable because of age or disability, I am required by law to report that information to the appropriate legal authorities.

Second, I am required to take steps to safeguard your safety and the safety of others if you reveal any suicidal or homicidal thoughts or intent. This may include contacting a family member, taking you to a hospital, calling 911, or calling the police to warn the person you are threatening. If you are pregnant and taking controlled substances that are potentially harmful to your baby, I am required to report that as well.

Third, I am required, if ordered by a judge, to release information about you and your treatment that may be relevant to a court case. Under any other circumstance, I must have your authorization to speak to anyone about you. If you are seeing me for couple therapy, I must have both partners' signatures to release **any** part of your file.

At times I may consult with colleagues or a supervisor regarding your case. These professionals are bound by the same rules of confidentiality as I am. If you have any questions about who is being consulted with about your case, please don't hesitate to ask.

Appointments and Cancellations

My fee is the same whether the session occurs in-person, online, or via telephone. I accept cash, credit card, and checks made payable to Twin Lakes Counseling, PLLC, and require a credit card on file to hold your session slot. **Please remember to cancel or reschedule 48 hours in advance by contacting me directly.** You are responsible for my entire fee if cancellation is less than 48 hours, and I cannot bill insurance for any part of that fee.

The standard meeting time for psychotherapy is 50 minutes. It is up to you, however, to determine the length of your sessions. Requests to change the 50-minute session needs to be discussed with me in advance in order for time to be scheduled. I charge my full fee even if you are late to session and I may not be able to extend the session due to other appointments.

If you need to speak with me on the phone between sessions, I will make my best effort to return phone calls by the next business day. However, if the conversation lasts longer than 10 minutes, I will have to bill for an entire **50-minute session**, regardless of how long we actually talk. Please keep this in mind and schedule a full phone session for any conversation you think may last longer than 10 minutes. **If you are calling about a safety issue, please do not wait to hear back from me – visit your hospital or call 911.**

Releasing Information

If you need me to speak to anyone (family members, attorneys, medication providers, etc.) about your case for any reason, please complete a release of information before I share or receive any information with or from them. If any part of your treatment will be paid for by another person or organization (including a family member, church, or workplace), please complete a release of information form allowing me to provide that person with the information needed to accept payment including dates of treatment, attendance information, and duration of sessions.

Children & Adolescents

All clients under the age of 18 must have parental consent to receive treatment. If there is a custody agreement, I must have a copy of it and receive any updates. Any child under the age of 12 must have a parent or guardian on the premises at all times during sessions. If you are a minor, your parents may be legally entitled to some information about your therapy. Please ask me if you have any questions about this.

If you are bringing your child to therapy, please understand that there are some things I may not be able to share with you about your child. These include substance abuse, sexual activity, and self-harm behavior, unless your child is in immediate physical danger. You have access at any time to your child's medical records (although not to their session notes). If you have questions about the limits of confidentiality with a minor and your rights as a parent, please discuss them with me.

Technology and HIPAA

Twin Lakes Counseling is committed to providing a safe and confidential therapeutic environment for you and your family. All the technology we use—including email, document storage, internet, and online messaging—is HIPAA compliant and protected using encryption. Despite these steps, there is always a risk that information shared over technology may not be secure. Please keep this in mind and only share information you are comfortable entrusting to these procedures. For more information about TLC's Privacy & HIPAA Policies, please see our Notice of Privacy Practices, effective as of July 1, 2018, available in our office and on our website at www.TwinLakesCounseling.com.

Ending Therapy

You can choose to end therapy at any point, for any reason. Therapy, like any relationship, has the best effects if there is closure at the end. Therefore, I'd like you to agree that when you decide to stop therapy, you will inform me of your decision to terminate and then come for one final session. This allows us both to be intentional about ending therapy and to review the progress you've made.