

∞ Newport Counseling Center, LLC ∞

28 West Shortcut Road
Newport, PA 17074

P: (717)567-3524 | F: (717)567-3581

- CLIENT POLICY PACKET -

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SERVICES



Thank you for choosing Newport Counseling Center (NCC). This packet contains our policies and important information pertaining to you and/or your child's treatment. Your therapist should cover some of this information with you during the intake process. Should you read over these pages later and are unsure about something, please ask your therapist to further explain any particular topics that you would like clarification on.



Disagreements and other conflicts should first be discussed with your therapist. We feel that honest and respectful communication is essential to the therapy process. If you do not feel the issue was resolved to your satisfaction, you may contact our Office Manager so that she may assist you further through the conflict resolution process:**

Elise Deasy, Office Manager
(717) 567-3524 x109

officemanager@newportcc.org

**Any billing issues or insurance changes should be brought directly to the attention of the Office Manager. Newport Counseling Center's insurance claims and billing are handled at this level and not by the Providers who facilitate the Outpatient Psychotherapy services.

COPAYMENTS AND DEDUCTIBLES POLICY AT NEWPORT COUNSELING CENTER, LLC.

If you are paying for your sessions with an insurance company we are in network with, this means we have a contract with this company to accept the rate they allow as coverage for your session, in addition to any copayments or deductibles you may owe, as determined by your plan. We cannot legally charge you more than what is stated in your insurance plan.

We will do our best to contact your insurance company to find out if you have a copay or deductible for Outpatient Mental Health services, and if so, how much they may be. However, as the insurance member, it is your responsibility to know and understand your insurance plan and its benefits, including eligibility/ineligibility and any changes to your coverage. Toll free numbers are listed on the back of your insurance card for any inquiries you may have about your benefits, including any out-of-pocket costs for which you are responsible.

A deductible is a set amount you owe out-of-pocket **before** the insurance company will pay towards services. Until your deductible is met, we do offer a *discounted rate* of \$60.00 per session, as this is also the rate we charge to clients without insurance benefits. Legally, we are allowed to bill you the full, "allowed amount" granted by your insurance plan, often ranging significantly higher than \$60.00 for a 1-hour session. Depending on your plan, our offered discount could save you anywhere from \$5.00 to \$20.00 *per session*.

Payments are to be made on the date of service*, preferably before the session. Payment will be accepted in the form of cash, check, or credit/debit cards. Any checks must be made payable to Newport Counseling Center (NCC is acceptable). You can pay either your therapist or the office manager if she at the desk**.

NOTE: A client will not be seen if his or her account is past due on payments at the time of their next scheduled session, and no further appointments will be scheduled until the outstanding balance has been satisfied in full. Failure to pay an amount due will result in termination of services and/or legal proceedings.

*If your child receives services at our school satellite offices, and you are not comfortable sending payment with them to be given to their therapist, an invoice will be mailed to you detailing session dates/costs and amount due, as well as information for remittance. It is asked that these invoices are taken care of within **10 business days unless instructed differently**. You may mail or drop off the amount due to the main office located at 28 West Shortcut Road, Newport, PA 17074. Please note the name of client for which payment is being made, so that credit may be accurately applied. If you would like a receipt for your payment, please indicate this with your payment. (Note: Receipts are only given upon request of client/payer.)

RETURNED CHECKS:

Checks returned to Newport Counseling Center with an inability to be cashed from the associated bank account are subject to a \$25.00 fee per check, in addition to the previous check amount. The total balance due for returned checks (initial amount + fees) **MUST** be paid in full; no installments will be accepted for any amounts associated with returned checks.

NEWPORT COUNSELING CENTER'S FEES FOR SERVICES NOT COVERED BY INSURANCE

At times it is requested that we provide services that are not routinely paid for by insurance companies. Below is a list of additional fees for those services. **Fees for additional services must be paid before being seen again; clients will not receive services if a balance is due—services can resume again when the bill has been paid in full.**

Cancellations & Missed Appointments* (*Separate Cancellation/No-Show Policy attached)

Cancellations should be made 24 hours in advance so that your therapist might be able to schedule someone else in your place. Failure to call 24 hours in advance or show up for your scheduled appointment is a "No Show." Please note that it is within the legal right of the therapist to charge a fee for missed sessions up to the full amount of the session to clients with Private Insurance Plans. If you owe a "no show" fee, it must be mailed in advance or paid at the next session (if agreed upon with your therapist) in order to be seen.

NOTE: If a client misses a session with one therapist, they may NOT set up an appointment with another therapist at NCC until communication has been made with the provider whose appointment they missed, and any unpaid fees have been paid in full.

Court Costs

Timeliness:

Court testimonies will require a minimum of seven (7) days' notice via a subpoena with appropriate payment attached (see below). Fees will be **non-refundable** if there are any changes or cancellations with less than seven (7) days' notice, regardless of whether testimony actually occurred.

Physical Testimony:

For civil court, Pennsylvania law states that payment for a full day of testimony plus mileage is to accompany a subpoena or it can be refused. We charge \$600.00 per day plus travel expenses. Subpoenas that do not have the check attached for the full amount will be refused as invalid. This is regardless of the amount of time we actually spend testifying as there is no guarantee what time we will be actually be called, how long it will take, and if the hearing would be rescheduled. If rescheduled, we will charge for another full day of testimony and mileage at 53.5 cents per mile.

Phone Testimony:

Phone testimony is paid by the hour. The fee will be \$75.00 per hour of phone testimony with a **minimum \$75.00 fee paid in advance, with a subpoena.** Even if the testimony only takes 20 minutes we have lost 1 hour of client time in our office.

Other Services/Fees:

- Letters from therapists will be billed at \$25.00 per letter, with the exception of the Guardian ad Litem, in which no fee will be charged.
- Copies of records are \$25.00 total, to be paid by the requestor.
- Phone time with an attorney will be billed in 15 min units at \$30.00 per unit, with a \$30.00 minimum fee per call, to be **paid in advance.** Calls with a Guardian Ad Litem will be free of charge.

Please note that *only phone time and letters* are free services we provide for a child's Guardian Ad Litem, and testimony fees still apply.



COMMUNICATION OUTSIDE OF A SCHEDULED SESSION AT NEWPORT COUNSELING CENTER, LLC. AND ADDITIONAL FEES

Each therapist schedules themselves based on client appointments that have been made in advance, and generally any time spent at the office has them engaged in private, focused sessions with clients every hour or half hour, back-to-back. Since sessions last between 45 to 55 minutes, there is little or no time for phone conversations in between clients. On average, we may be able to listen to messages, but do not have the time to return the call until later. Phone calls, with the exception of true emergencies, will not be taken while in sessions as that time is reserved for a client who has scheduled in advance. We pride ourselves in being able to see you at the time of your appointment and not making you wait long past your scheduled time. Newport Counseling Center uses a *voicemail system (see note below) in our office so that clients may leave a detailed message to the privacy of their own therapist. You may also update us via fax (717-567-3581), addressed to the attention of your therapist.

“Phone Therapy”: Insurance companies do not reimburse us for phone calls and time is very limited, so we can only allow 5-10 minutes *max* for phone conversations. After this, the call will be considered “phone therapy” and will be billed accordingly, as outlined below. **Therapists are not required to provide clients with an email address or cell phone #. If your therapist does provide you with these means of communication, there are guidelines as per our policy:**

- ✓ Emails are for brief communication and/or to schedule face to face sessions. **Emails longer than two (2) short paragraphs will be billed at \$5.00 a paragraph for the therapist’s time in reading them.**
- ✓ Text messages are for the same purpose and will **carry the same fee as emails.**
- ✓ Phone messages left on cell phones or our business phone should also be brief and to the point. **Messages that are longer than 2 minutes will be billed at \$2.00 a minute to listen to.**
- ✓ **Phone calls with the therapist lasting longer than 10 minutes will be billed at \$2.00 per minute after 10 minutes.**
- ✓ Fees for the above time will be required to be paid in order for you or your child to continue in treatment.
- ✓ **If you need to discuss something important, use the above methods of communication to set up face to face time to meet with your/your child’s therapist.**

Emergency calls: Newport Counseling Center is not a crisis center. In the event of an emergency, call 1-866-350-4357 for Crisis Intervention or 9-1-1 for the immediate service you may need. If you and your therapist have worked out a crisis plan with regard to phone time, it will supersede this policy –your therapist will explain this to you. Crisis plans are meant to be short in duration.

***Voicemail:** When calling the office, you may be prompted to use a voicemail extension rather than reaching someone directly as we have limited office staff. Our office manager does check messages throughout the day for extensions 1 (General Mailbox) and 9 (Personal) and *may* be able to return your call in a more timely manner. If you leave a message for your therapist, please allow 48 hours for them to return the call.

DEFINITION OF OUR ROLE AS YOUR CHILD OR ADOLESCENT'S THERAPIST AT
NEWPORT COUNSELING CENTER, LLC



The role of the therapist is to help the child process and explore feelings, thoughts, learn new behaviors and have better relationships. We may also conduct assessments in order to treat your child most appropriately. In this role, it is a conflict of interest for us to act as either custody or forensic evaluator as to do so would place us in a "dual role" with the child. The child/teen therapist can conduct joint sessions with either one or both parents /step-parents/paramours as deemed appropriate by the therapist. These sessions are billed as part of the child's therapy as their purpose revolves around helping the child with these relationships. Should there be a need for parent(s) to process their own personal issues, they will be referred to another therapist. The child's therapist does not provide Co-parenting Counseling and will not get involved in parenting disputes between the child's parents. If Co-parent Counseling is indicated as a need, we do have a separate therapist designated to provide that service in addition to, or in place of, individual therapy.

Games will not be tolerated, and we are not here to "pick sides." The therapist will not listen to communication that involves "bashing" or extensive negativity towards the other parent. Issues between parents are best addressed in Co-parenting sessions. Your child's therapist is only interested in how the child is doing and any communication relevant to your child's wellbeing. A therapist listening to or acknowledging a parent's concerns does not imply agreement. Parents are expected to refrain from misconstruing therapist's feedback, suggestions, recommendations, etc. as a way of trying to influence or manipulate their custody case. If this occurs, termination may be considered.

Newport Counseling Center **will not** be the mediator or messenger between parents for any reason, including letting the other parent know when sessions are scheduled with the child. It is the responsibility of the parents or the parent's attorneys to communicate with each other.

We are not Custody Evaluators: Your child's therapist is not in a position to determine who the better parent is, regardless of which parent brought the child in for services. We will refer you to Reigler, Shienvold & Associates at 717-540-1313, as they are specially trained in this area.

We are not Forensic Evaluators: However, we are mandated reporters. If your child discloses abuse to us, we are **required** to call Child Line and they will determine how to proceed. The person conducting any abuse investigations will determine the need for Forensic Evaluation.

CONDITIONS FOR TREATMENT TERMINATION AT NCC

Newport Counseling Center affirms the client's right to choose providers and enter into services of his/her own free will. We feel strongly that successful therapy begins with mutual respect. Accordingly, the client has the right to terminate services when treatment goals have been met, when he or she no longer receives a benefit from treatment, or if he or she is in some way dissatisfied with services. Likewise, Newport Counseling Center reserves the right to terminate services with a client when one or more of the following conditions are met:

1. Clients and family members are expected to be respectful while in our office. Raising voices to a level that disrupts others in the building, swearing at others, threats and otherwise rudeness WILL NOT be tolerated. In the event that any such disrespect occurs, the offender will be warned and asked to correct the behavior. However, if the behavior continues, he or she will be asked to leave the premises. Failure to leave will result in a call to the local or State Police to escort the offender from the building, with any and all appropriate charges being filed by this agency.
2. The client continues a pattern of chronic no-shows or cancellations, despite the therapist's attempts to work with the client to correct the problem. If you can't keep an appointment, please call as soon as you know you cannot attend or as soon as you realize the appointment was missed.
3. Failure to establish treatment goals or failure to make minimal progress in treatment after the passage of a reasonable amount of time required for most clients with similar issues to achieve improvement. **
Your therapist will discuss this with you in more detail.
4. The client threatens to or perpetrates an act of physical abuse, violence, verbal abuse or seduction against NCC staff.
5. The client destroys NCC property on purpose.
6. The client attends the session under the influence of alcohol or other substances.
7. The client fails to pay his/her required fees for service after an invoice has been sent.
8. The client enters into litigation against NCC.
9. The client bares false witness against any therapist employed at Newport Counseling Center. Unfounded reports of any type of abuse against any of our therapists will result in termination of services by anyone at this agency.

You will be notified of a non-voluntary discharge by letter. Receipt of a letter of non-voluntary discharge means you MAY NOT schedule an appointment with another therapist at Newport Counseling Center. Depending on the infraction, you may also be banned from services with our office at any time in the future.

WEAPONS POLICY AT NCC

1. All clients and visitors coming onto Newport Counseling Center premises are prohibited from carrying any dangerous weapon of any sort, concealed or otherwise, except for official purposes. Dangerous weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, sharp objects, knives, heavy wooden or metal objects, explosives, or other items that could be used to harass, intimidate, or injure another individual.
2. Newport Counseling Center reserves the right to grant exemptions from this policy if the circumstances warrant an exemption.
For example, on-duty officers of the law will be allowed to carry their weapons when on the premises.
3. Any individual found in violation of this policy will be required to leave the premises and may be banned from Newport Counseling Center premises.

PRIVACY OF INFORMATION POLICIES & CLIENT RIGHTS

► Our Legal Duties

State and Federal laws require that we keep your medical records private. The contents of material disclosed to us in an evaluation, intake, or counseling session are covered by the law as private information.

► Use of Information

Information about you may be used by the personnel associated within this office for diagnosis, treatment planning, treatment, and continuity of care. We may consult with other therapists in this practice about your care in order to best serve your needs. We may disclose it to other providers affiliated with this office, such as billing, quality enhancement, training, and audits. Verbal information and written records about a client cannot be shared with an OUTSIDE party without the written consent of the client, or the client's legal guardian/personal representative. It is the policy of this office not to release any information about a client without a signed release of information, except in certain emergency situations or exceptions (some of these exceptions are outlined and described in the paragraphs to follow).

► Duty to Warn and Protect

When a client discloses intentions to **harm another person**, the health care professional is required to warn the intended victim and report this information to legal authorities. Cases in which the client **discloses or implies a plan for suicide**, the health care professional is required to notify legal authorities and make reasonable attempts to notify the family of the client.

► Abuse

If a client states or suggests that he or she is abusing, or has recently abused, a child or vulnerable adult, or if it is believed that the aforementioned is in danger of abuse, the health care professional is required to report this information to the appropriate social services and/or legal authorities. If a client is the victim of abuse, neglect, crime, or violence and their safety appears to be at risk, we may share this information with law enforcement officials for the safety of the client, to help prevent future occurrences and capture the perpetrator. If we feel that a minor is being abused, mistreated, neglected, being exposed to inappropriate materials or situations, or if we have any other concerns, we may report to the appropriate agency without the consent of the minor child or his or her parents.

► Professional Misconduct

Professional misconduct by professionals must be reported by other health care professionals. Cases in which a professional or legal disciplinary meeting is held regarding a health care professional's actions, related records may be released in order to substantiate disciplinary concerns.

► Judicial or Administrative Proceedings

Health care professionals are required to release records of clients when a court order has been placed.

► Other Provisions

- Phone communications may be required for various purposes throughout your treatment. In this event, we make all efforts to preserve client confidentiality. In order to help us maintain these efforts, please notify us of contact guidelines, such as:
 - Appropriate contact phone numbers --How you would like us to identify ourselves when calling --If leaving phone messages is acceptable, and on which numbers --Any other specific information in regards to the protection of your confidentiality.
- Collection agencies may be utilized in collecting unpaid debts. The specific content of the services (e.g., diagnosis, treatment plan, progress notes, testing) is not disclosed.
- Insurance companies, managed care, and other third-party payers are given information that they request regarding services to the client. Information which may be requested includes type of services, dates/times of services, diagnosis, treatment plan, description of impairment, progress of therapy, and summaries.
- Information about clients may be disclosed in consultations with other professionals in order to provide the best possible treatment. In such cases the name of the client, or any identifying information, is not disclosed.

► Client Rights

You have the right to request to review or receive copies your medical files. You have the right to disagree with the medical records in our files and you may *request* that this information be changed. Although we might deny changing the record, you have the right to make a written statement of disagreement, which will be placed in your file. You have the right to cancel a release of information by providing us verbal notice. You have the right to restrict which information might be disclosed to others. However, if we do not agree with these restrictions, we are not bound to abide by them. You have the right to know what information in your record has been provided to whom.

NO-SHOW AND LATE CANCELLATION POLICY

NEWPORT COUNSELING CENTER, LLC.

Updated 07/01/2016

We appreciate that you chose this practice for your emotional health and wellbeing. Our goal is to provide quality mental health care in a timely manner to all our clients, and in an effort to do so, a cancellation policy must be implemented. Such a policy determines one's dedication to their own treatment, and allows us to better utilize available appointments for those in need. When we schedule appointments, we set aside time and professional resources to meet the individual needs of our clients, including time for a one-on-one session. When a client fails to show up for an appointment, our valuable resources are idle and a care opportunity is missed.

In respect to your therapist and the needs of other clients, **we ask that you call 24 hours in advance if you are unable to attend an appointment.** We often have a waiting list of people in need of services, making appointment times in high demand. In these times of limited appointment availability, there are clients being placed on a cancellation list so that they may be seen in another's absence; your early cancellation may give another person the possibility of having an appointment that week.

Appointments that are cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice will be considered and recorded as a "late cancellation," while appointments missed without notification will be considered and recorded as a "no show." The client will be sent a letter alerting them to the fact that they have failed to show up for an appointment or did not cancel the appointment 24 hours in advance. A copy of the letter will be placed in their file.

Three delinquent missed and/or late cancelled sessions in a 90-day period MAY* result in termination of your services with Newport Counseling Center. We fully understand that occurrences (i.e. sickness, flat tires, emergencies, etc.) come up with less than the allotted 24-hr notice, and that is why we have created an allowance for these scenarios before considering termination. Likewise, after going 90 days without a no-show or late cancellation, your record will be expunged and any future delinquencies will be considered new.

***TERMINATION WILL BE DETERMINED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS, IN WHICH THE CLIENT'S REASON/NEED FOR LATE CANCELLING/MISSING A SESSION WILL BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION.**

Private Insurance and Fees

For clients with private insurance (non-medical assistance, Medicaid/Medicare), we do have a fee policy for no shows and late cancellations. However, in keeping with our understanding that emergencies and things beyond our control can arise in less than 24-hours' notice, we do not charge any fee for your first missed/late cancelled session within 90 days. **The second and subsequent sessions missed/late cancelled within 90 days will have a fee of \$30.00/session attached. Note: Private insurance companies allow us to bill the member up to the full amount of the session for no-shows, so our fees are very generous. Any fees applied to a client's no show/late cancellation must be paid before the client can be seen again, in addition to any previous outstanding balance a client may have.**

We appreciate your understanding our need to develop this policy in effort to respect other clients and ourselves. If you feel you have reached a point in which you are in need of less services, please talk to your therapist about this; many of our clients are seen monthly, bi-monthly, or on an "as needed" basis. We have an office manager who can give reminder calls 1 day in advance if you find that this would be helpful in avoiding missed sessions; please discuss this with your therapist, as reminder calls are not automatically provided. We will make every effort to work with you if you are willing to show your effort and commitment as well.

****NOTE:** Snow and bad weather will not count as late cancellations, but we do ask that notification be made. If you feel the roads are too bad to venture out on, call your therapist at his/her extension and leave a message. **If Newport School District is closed for the day due to weather or has an early dismissal, we will be closed that day and evening as well (unless otherwise contacted by your therapist).**