



Northwest Neurobehavioral Institute

OUTPATIENT SERVICES CONTRACT and DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Welcome to Northwest Neurobehavioral Institute (NNI). This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. It also contains references to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law that provides privacy protections and patient rights with regard to the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) used for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations (TPO). You will be provided with separate documents specifically addressing HIPAA. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and NNI. You may revoke this contract in writing at any time. That revocation will be binding on your provider unless he/she has taken action in reliance on it; if there are obligations imposed on your provider by your health insurer in order to process or substantiate claims made under your policy; or, if you have not satisfied any financial obligations you have incurred.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods your therapist may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things discussed both during therapy sessions and at home. Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience. The first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, your therapist will be able to offer you some first impressions of what your work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with the therapist. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, we will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion. You always have a right to refuse treatment and to request a change in the therapeutic approach.

Neuropsychological Assessment

Neuropsychological assessment involves administration of neuropsychological and psychological tests to examine numerous domains of cognitive and emotional/psychological functioning. Testing may take from 4 to 8 hours; some cases may require more extensive testing. With few exceptions (e.g., legal evaluations) a one-hour meeting will be scheduled with the patient or parent/legal guardian/representative to discuss test findings, impressions, and recommendations based on the neuropsychological evaluation. A written report will be provided to you that outlines the results, impressions, and recommendations resulting from the testing. Our clinicians are also available to provide additional services related to the assessment, such as attendance at school meetings.

OUR PROVIDERS

Heather Dazell, MSW, LICSW: Ms. Dazell holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology (2000) and a Master's of Social Work (2002). She also holds the designations of Child Mental Health Specialist (2003) and Mental Health Professional (2003). Her Washington State license number is LW00008611. Ms. Dazell uses individual, family, and group modalities of therapy and also provides consultation. Her theoretical orientations include psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, psychoanalytic, brief therapy, narrative therapy, motivational interviewing, attachment therapy, and family systems. The course of treatment varies in duration and frequency as guided by Ms. Dazell's ongoing assessment of therapeutic needs.

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Jennifer Van Wey, Psy.D.: Dr. Van Wey holds a Psy.D. degree in Clinical Psychology from George Fox University. She completed her predoctoral internship at the Salt Lake City Veterans Administration. She completed postdoctoral training with Thomas McKnight, Ph.D. Her Washington State license number is PY00003323. Dr. Van Wey uses a psychodynamic conceptualization with cognitive behavior therapy, behavioral therapy, and person-centered interventions. For therapy, she usually conducts 6-12 sessions of cognitive behavioral oriented therapy. Sessions may continue indefinitely depending on stressors, symptoms, and response to interventions.

Christine Guzzardo, Ph.D.: Dr. Guzzardo holds a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Southern California. She completed her predoctoral intership at the Sepulveda Veterans Administration. She completed a 2-year post doctoral fellowship in Clinical Neuropsychology at the UCLA School of Medicine. Dr. Guzzardo is a board-eligible Clinical Neuropsychologist. Her Washington state license number is PY00002557.

Should you wish to file a complaint against one of our providers, you may contact the Health Systems Quality Assurance Complaint Intake at PO Box 47857, Olympia, WA 98504-7857 or call 360-236-4700.

MEETINGS

Providers normally conduct an initial evaluation. During this time, you and the provider can both decide if there is a good fit between you in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, you will usually be asked to schedule one 50-minute session (one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration) per week at an agreed upon time, although some sessions may be longer, or less or more frequent. Neuropsychological testing hours are also scheduled in 50-minute sessions but may be scheduled in blocks of 1- to 8-hours. It is important to note that insurance companies do not provide reimbursement for cancelled sessions. **Please be aware that we may bill you for sessions for which you do not show up or for which you provide less than 24 hours advance notice of cancellation** [unless agreed that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control]. **If your appointment is for psychological or neuropsychological testing and you do not show up, you may be billed for each hour of testing that was set aside for you.** If it is possible, we will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment. Please initial here _____ to indicate your understanding and acceptance of this policy.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Initial consultation meeting with psychologist: \$225.

Initial consultation meeting with master's level therapist: \$180

Hourly fee for neuropsychological/cognitive and/or psychological evaluation with psychologist: \$180.

Hourly fee for psychotherapy services with psychologist: \$150.

Hourly fee for psychotherapy services with master's level therapist: \$120.

In addition to weekly appointments, we charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though we may break down the hourly cost if we work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include scoring and interpreting test data, report and letter writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings (e.g., IEP meetings) or consulting with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of us. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require your provider's participation, you will be expected to pay for professional time even if your provider is called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, we charge \$360.00 per hour for preparation, travel time, and attendance at any legal proceeding.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held, unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage that requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, we may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan. Should an overpayment occur, we will refund your money as soon as is reasonable after we become aware of the overpayment.

If your account has not been paid for more than **60 days** and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, NNI 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, its costs will be included in the claim.

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INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. NNI will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance we can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled; however, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Of course, we will provide you with whatever information we can based on our experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, we will be willing to call the company on your behalf.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. "Managed Health Care" plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While much can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end. Some managed-care plans will not allow us to provide services to you once your benefits end. If this is the case, we will do our best to find another provider who will help you continue your psychotherapy.

You should also be aware that most health insurance companies require you to authorize your provider to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes we have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of your entire record. In such situations, we will make every effort to release only the minimum information about you that is necessary for the purpose requested. This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though insurance companies may claim to keep such information confidential, we have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank.

Once we have all of the information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to end your sessions. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for services yourself, unless prohibited by contract.

CONTACTING YOUR PROVIDER

The providers at NNI are often not immediately available by telephone. Office staff answers the telephone between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. While we are usually in the office between 8 AM and 6 PM, we probably will not answer the phone when we are with patients. When office staff and providers are both unavailable, the telephone is answered by voice mail that we monitor frequently. Office staff or your provider will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please inform us of some times when you will be available. If you are unable to reach us and feel that you can't wait for a return call from us, contact the nearest emergency room and ask for the mental health professional on call. In the event that you feel you might harm yourself or someone else, call 911. If your provider 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 of our profession require that we keep Protected Health Information (PHI) about your treatment in your clinical record. You are entitled to receive a copy of the records unless we believe that seeing them would be emotionally damaging or cause danger to the life or safety of you or another. In this case, at our professional discretion, we may provide you with a treatment summary at your written request. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, we recommend that you review them in the presence of your provider so that you and your provider can discuss the contents. We will also be happy to send the records to a mental health professional of your choice. However, this is not true in legal evaluations or evaluations requested by a third party. In these cases, you will not be allowed access to the records without the consent and authorization of the party requiring the evaluation. With limited exception, you do have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of your PHI as it pertains to relevant medical and billing records maintained by NNI. Patients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests. We may withhold your records until the fees are paid. If we refuse your request for access to your records, you have a right of review, which we will discuss with you upon request.

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MINORS & PARENTS

Patients under 18 years of age, who are not emancipated, and their parents should be aware that the law may provide parents the right to examine their child’s treatment records. Since confidentiality in psychotherapy is often crucial to successful progress, particularly with teenagers, it is NNI’s policy to request an agreement from the parents that they consent to give up access to their child’s records. If they agree, HIPAA stipulates that the child maintains the exclusive ability to exercise his or her rights under HIPAA to preserve the confidentiality of his/her PHI. With the child’s consent, we will provide parents only with general information about the progress of the child’s treatment, unless your provider feels there is a high risk that the child will seriously harm him/her-self or someone else. In this case, your provider will notify parents of their concern.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The law protects the privacy of all communications between a patient and a psychologist. In most situations, we 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 and/or HIPAA. In most legal proceedings you have the right to prevent your provider from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional or cognitive condition is an important issue, a judge may order your provider’s testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations where your provider is permitted or required to disclose information without either your consent or authorization. Please refer to the Notice of Privacy Practices for more information on limits of confidentiality:

- If your provider believes that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, the law requires that they file a report with the appropriate state agency, usually the Department of Social and Health Services.
- If your provider believes that abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, or neglect of a vulnerable adult has occurred, the law requires that they file a report with the appropriate state agency, usually the Department of Social and Health Services.
- If your provider believes that there is an imminent danger to the health or safety of the patient or any other individual, they are required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If the patient threatens to harm himself/herself, your provider may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can provide protection.
- A recently enacted Washington State law requires that license holders report other license holders to the Department of Health if they have *actual knowledge* that a license holder is unable to safely provide care to their patients.

Northwest Neurobehavioral Institute is a group of licensed mental health providers. Members of our group provide coverage for each other when one clinician is on vacation or unavailable for an extended period of time; in such a situation, a member of the group might need to access to your records in order to provide care to you if your primary provider is unavailable. All members of this group are bound by the same confidentiality ethics and laws. Therefore, if another member does see any of your health information it will be held at the same level of confidence. We may occasionally find it helpful to consult with other professionals about a case. During a consultation, we make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of our patients. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don’t object, we will not tell you about these consultations unless we feel that it is important to our work together.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

| | | |
|--|------------|------|
| Signature of patient (age 13 or older) | Print Name | Date |
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| Signature of parent/legal guardian | Print Name | Date |
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|-----------------------|------|
| Signature of provider | Date |
|-----------------------|------|

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