

Notice of Business Practices

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES MY BUSINESS PRACTICES, INCLUDING APPOINTMENT POLICIES, EMERGENCY PROCEDURES, AND FEES. PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.

This Notice of Business Practices describes the office policies and procedures used to conduct the practice of Betsy Giduz, LCSW in accordance with applicable law and the *NASW Code of Ethics*. Included are my policies regarding appointments, telephone calls, emergencies, professional fees, insurance reimbursement and e-mail confidentiality.

I make every attempt to abide by the terms of this Notice of Business Practices. I reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice of Business Practices at any time. Any new Notice of Business Practices will be effective as of the date of that Notice. I will provide you with a copy of the revised Notice of Business Practices by posting a copy on my website, sending a copy to you in the mail upon request or providing one to you at your next appointment.

APPOINTMENT & CANCELLATION POLICIES

Once your appointment is made, you have committed yourself to that time and space and I have also committed to it in order to help you. Cancellations are accepted without charge up to 48 hours in advance. Cancellations after that time/date will be charged the full fee. Unlike a physician in a large group practice, I cannot fill an hour-long space of time with very short notice. I realize medical or other emergencies (sick children, transportation problems and the like) do happen. I try to offer grace and understanding in these situations and would like it to be offered in return. However, if you have three rescheduled, late canceled or no show sessions, then you will be removed from my schedule. In that situation, we may need to discuss other options for you. I often have a wait list and don't want to disappoint others who have been patiently waiting for a spot to open.

TELEPHONE CALLS, E-MAIL GUIDELINES AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Due to my work schedule, I am often not immediately available by telephone. I do not answer the phone when I am with a client. When I am unavailable, please leave a message on my answering machine. I frequently monitor my messages and will make every effort to return your call promptly, with the exception of evenings, weekends and holidays, when I will return the call as soon as possible until 10:00 PM. (Note: I charge my hourly rate for phone calls lasting more than 10 minutes.) If you are unable to reach me and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychiatrist on call. If you need immediate emergency attention, call 911. If I will be unavailable for an extended period of time, I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact if necessary.

I use e-mail to schedule appointments and answer brief questions or concerns (5 minutes or less). Every attempt will be made to return your e-mail within 24 hours during a regular work week. Do not use e-mail for urgent or emergent situations. Please bring your questions in to your therapy session or appointment. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Intake Session. Our first session is an “intake” where I gather information about your current situation and how I may be of help to you. With children, I prefer to meet with one or both parents (without the child present) at the initial intake to gather a solid social, developmental and family history. Again, please do not bring your child to this session unless we have previously discussed this. Our first session may last anywhere from 60-90 minutes. The fee for this intake is typically \$155 for up to 90 minutes. Beyond 90 minutes, there is a charge of \$125 per hour, pro-rated in 15 minute increments.

Regular Sessions. Sessions for adults are 50 minutes and are \$125. Longer sessions are available upon request at a rate of \$155 for 90 minutes, and shorter sessions are available at a rate of \$75 for 30 minutes.

Sessions for children and teens are typically 45 minutes and are \$115.

Please note that there is a pro-rated charge for clinical phone calls lasting more than 5-10 minutes, report writing and other clinical services that may be requested (see below). You will not be billed for phone calls relating to scheduling, billing, or other non-clinical questions.

Off-Site Observations. Observations in schools or meetings with a child’s teachers and other health care practitioners are \$135 per hour. There is a pro-rated charge for travel time to/from the off-site location.

Sliding Scale/Reduced Fee Policy. To make services affordable to everyone, I have tried to keep my fees a bit lower than other clinicians. I truly believe that healthcare should be a right and not a privilege. For that reason, if you are experiencing financial hardship, please speak to me individually, as I do have some sliding scale slots available in my practice.

Fees for Services Other than Psychotherapy. Given the trust and confidentiality of our relationship, I do not get involved in any legal proceedings on your behalf. My participation could have a harmful effect on the therapeutic relationship we have. If you do become involved in legal proceedings that may require my involvement, you will be expected to pay me for my professional time (including preparation, transportation and communication with attorneys) even if I am called on to testify by another party. Due to the complexities of legal involvement, I charge \$275 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

My fee for other professional services is \$125 per hour, pro-rated in 15 minute increments for periods of less than one hour. Examples of other clinical services might include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 5 minutes, reading health records, testing and school reports, preparation of records or treatment summaries. Consultations with other health care professionals or teachers on your behalf are also billed at this rate.

BILLING & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

Please expect to pay for each session at the time it is held. Missed appointments are not billable to insurance and you will be responsible for paying for these. I accept cash, check, and major credit cards as well as most Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) and Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). I do ask all clients to leave a confidential credit card on file.

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. I can help you fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance I 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 policy covers. I am happy to provide a “SuperBill” for you to file with your insurance company using your out-of-network benefits.

E-MAIL CONFIDENTIALITY

In regard to e-mail and texting, please know that while these are easy and effective ways to communicate, they are not secure ways of relaying confidential information. Both of these can be misdirected to the wrong recipient and intercepted at times. If you choose to communicate with me via e-mail or text, please know that there are possible risks associated with it. If you prefer to communicate with me confidentially, please call me at (919) 967-1036.

CONSENT

In accordance with the North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board’s Ethical Guidelines, I shall obtain consent (agreement to participate in social work intervention) from all clients or their legally authorized representative, except when laws require intervention to ensure the client's and community's safety and protection. At our initial appointment you will be asked to sign a “Receipt and Acknowledgment/Consent” of this Notice that affirms your consent to participate in services and your agreement to abide by the business practices outlined herein.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to discuss them with me by calling (919) 967-1036.

The effective date of this Notice is Feb. 24, 2020.