

PRACTICE POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Welcome to Four Corners Counseling. I look forward to working with you. Below is some information about my policies and procedures that are important for you to know as a client working with me.

Confidentiality, and the limits of confidentiality.

Generally speaking, the information provided by and to a client during therapy sessions is legally confidential. If the information is legally confidential, the therapist may not disclose the information without the client's consent, however there are exceptions to this confidentiality, some of which are listed in the section of the Mental Health Statute (C.R.S. § 12-43-218) and in the Notice of Privacy Practices provided. Your mental health care information may be used or disclosed when I am required or permitted to do so by law or for health care oversight. Such limitations are indicated here:

- I am mandated to report suspected child or elder abuse without an investigation to the proper authorities who may then investigate.
- I may also take some action, such as seek an order for your emergency or involuntary commitment, without your consent if I deem you to be a serious harm to yourself or another or gravely disabled. Any action I take without your consent will be discussed with you.
- Under C.R.S. 27-10-101, I may seek an order for your emergency or involuntary commitment if I feel that you are either gravely disabled or may cause serious harm to yourself or another person.
- If I am unable to collect my agreed upon fee, I may send your name and address to a collection agency.
- If you file an official complaint or lawsuit against me, according to Colorado law, your right to confidentiality will be waived.
- If you choose to use your health benefit plan, you will have given your insurance or managed care company consent to obtain required confidential information for the purpose of determining eligibility for reimbursement. Information may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, dates and type of service, and other information about your condition and treatment, but will be limited to the least amount necessary for the purposes of the disclosure.
- If I seek consultation from another mental health professional, that professional is also bound by the same obligation to maintain the confidentiality of client communications. I will reveal only the necessary private information for the purpose of consultation. Please refer to the Notice of Privacy Practices for a complete explanation of your rights
- If another mental health professional is involved in your mental health treatment and I determine that it is important for your treatment, I may collaborate in order to coordinate care. Your authorization may not be obtained, but you will be advised of this action.
- Clerical persons who may be hired by this practice may have access to limited confidential information. This information is protected from further disclosure and is used solely for administrative purposes.
- Although security measures will be taken to meet standards of confidentiality, communications occurring via electronic media (i.e. cell phones, voicemails, emails, texts, fax, video/tele conference) cannot be guaranteed. Please note that unless otherwise indicated by you, text and email are the preferred mode of communication for Four Corners Counseling.
- When I am out of the office for a few days or more, we will discuss how to handle any emergent needs which may arise. If we decide to ask another licensed mental health professional to cover for me, I will then tell that provider only what he/she needs to know to best assist you.

Appointments and Cancellation Policy

- Appointments will be scheduled on a first come/first serve basis, with the exception of emergencies.
- If you are more than five (15) minutes late for your appointment, your appointment may be rescheduled and you may be charged for the missed appointment. If we choose to keep the appointment at that time, it will end at the regularly scheduled time and the fee will remain the same.
- Cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance. If you do not show for a scheduled appointment and/or you do not cancel prior to 24 hours in advance for non-emergency reasons, Four Corners Counseling reserves the right to charge the full fee for the missed appointment.
- Due to the nature of possible emergencies, Four Corners Counseling reserves the right to be up to ten (10) minutes delayed for the start of each therapy session.

Availability

- Four Corners Counseling is available by phone (970.946.8004) and through text or email (amie@fourcornerscounseling.com), Monday through Friday, 8am – 5pm. Although this may vary during holiday times, clients will be made aware of such changes as indicated. Messages will be returned within 24 hours (calls/emails/texts received Friday will be returned Monday).
- Four Corners Counseling, if closed for holidays and/or vacations, will ensure clients have access to an appropriate therapist and will be informed of such an arrangement as indicated. Any therapist covering services for Four Corners Counseling reserves the right to charge clients within the limits of his/her practice. However, to the best of our ability, such arrangements will be made prior to the initiation of services.

Emergency Services

- Four Corners Counseling does not provide after hours emergency services. If you are experiencing an emergency and it is outside of business hours, please call the local 24-hour crisis hotline (970.247.5247), call 911, or go to the nearest emergency department.

Access to records

- A designated record may include identifying information, dates and types of sessions, an assessment and diagnosis, a treatment plan, progress notes or treatment summaries, any reports or correspondence, consultations or collateral contacts made, and informed consent disclosures. My private psychotherapy notes are kept separate, and are not part of the record. HIPAA further protects these psychotherapy notes from subpoena and unauthorized access.
- Your records will be stored safely with attention to your privacy for at least 7 years after we stopped working together. In the event that I am no longer able to secure and monitor access to your record, another mental health professional will act as my professional representative. That professional representative will keep your records secure and accessible for the required 7 years.
- Your records are protected by Colorado Statute, HIPAA regulations, and Professional Ethics. Records can only be released with your written permission and direction. It is my policy to not release an entire record, even with your authorization. Instead, I may summarize the content related to the request. Colorado Statute, CRS 25-1-803, limits access to a summary after termination.
- You will be granted reasonable access to your designated record, but no copy of the record. If you choose to read your record, it is my policy to be present in order to respond to any questions or confusion you may have about the recordings. If it is thought that access to your mental health records would harm you, your access may be restricted. You may request, in writing, an amendment or addition to your record. If you were seen in couples sessions, all adults present will have to sign for the release of any record or information gathered from our joint work. Please refer to the Notice of Privacy Practices.

Grievance Procedures

- The practice of both licensed and unlicensed psychotherapists is regulated by the Department of Regulatory Agencies under **CRS 12.43.214 (1)(c)**. Questions or complaints may be addressed to: Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, Mental Health Licensing Section, 1560 Broadway, Suite 880, Denver, CO 80202, (303) 894-7766. Please refer to the Disclosure Statement.
- You have the right to grieve or complain about services, or about the denial of services or treatment rights, and that no retaliation will be made against the client because of the complaint.

Termination

- Termination will usually be agreed upon mutually, however you have the right to terminate services at any time and for any reason. I strongly encourage however, that this decision is discussed prior to your final session, as closure is important for both client and therapist. As you present with a readiness for termination, Four Corners Counseling will discuss that with you as well.
- Four Corners Counseling reserves the right to terminate the relationship for any reason, including but not limited to whenever, in the therapist's opinion, an effective therapeutic relationship cannot be established or maintained. Should this occur, the reason for your termination will be discussed with you, and you will be helped to make different plans for yourself, including referral to a more appropriate resource.

Treatment

- Treatment recommendations will be determined, to the best of my ability, following an initial session and re-visited periodically through subsequent visits. Therapist and client will work together to determine the most appropriate course of treatment.
- Four Corners Counseling uses a variety of treatment modalities based on individual cases, including, but not limited to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance & Commitment Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Client Centered Therapy and Solution Focused Therapy.
- Therapist will explain treatment modalities, treatment diagnosis, and treatment plans as requested and as indicated.
- Therapist may request that clients complete screening tools, assessments, and homework as part of his/her treatment.
- Therapist may request client authorization to talk with collateral contacts as appropriate for the benefit of treatment.

Treatment of Minors

- Any minor, age 15 or older may consent to mental health treatment without a parent/guardian. See Notice of Privacy Practices for a complete explanation.
- A minor of any age may consent to substance abuse treatment without a parent or guardian. See Notice of Privacy Practices for a complete explanation.
- Any parent/guardian seeking services for a minor may be required to show proof of custody. Any minor enrolled in services, whose enrolling parent/guardian does not have full custody and decision making rights, will be not be seen without the written consent of both parents/guardians.

Health Care Benefits

- At this time, Four Corners Counseling is not currently billing insurance companies directly. At your request, I will provide you with necessary paperwork/statements to submit to your insurance provider for potential reimbursement. In the event you choose to use your health care benefits and my services are reimbursable under your plan, you may have to give me written authorization to release required information should it be requested. Released confidential information may range from identifying information, diagnosis, dates and types of sessions and charges, to an assessment with treatment goals and progress reports when your benefits come under managed care. My policy is to provide the least amount of information necessary for the purpose of authorizing benefits, however I can no longer be in control of the storage or access to your confidential information when it is given to a third party. The insurance company will determine benefit coverage and the kind of service for which they will reimburse.

Couples

- Whenever more than one related person is seen by me, issues around confidentiality and conflicts of interest must be discussed. Related individuals must be fully informed about the planned work and in order to protect my role as therapist, each person must agree to respect the confidentiality of other related members. Any release of information about related members will require a signed authorization. In addition, each person must agree to not involve me in litigation with the other.

Litigation

- If you are involved in divorce or custody litigation, please understand that my role as a therapist is not to make recommendations for the Court concerning parenting or custody issues, nor to testify in Court concerning an opinion or issue involved in the litigation. Only Court appointed evaluators can make recommendations to the Court on disputed issues concerning parental responsibilities and parenting plans. Information discussed in therapy is meant for your exclusive use in healing and growth. If you request a substance use evaluation from me, that evaluation may be released directly to you, or to a designated party (i.e. attorney) with written consent by you. By signing my disclosure statement, you agree to not call me as a witness in any litigation.