

Working with Minor Children Policies

Due to the importance of trust between client and therapist, when the client is a minor child (under 18 years of age), it is our practice to offer parents general information about the therapeutic process and overall themes within the scope of the child's confidentiality, but not specific details about what information is exchanged during each session. If at any time, we feel that your child is engaging in dangerous behavior, we will encourage your child to discuss with you as a part of the therapeutic process. It is important that your child feel that our office is a safe place where he or she can trust the therapist enough to share the sensitive things that may be underlying the presenting problem. We are sensitive to parents' desire to be involved in the process, however, this should be balanced with the child's need for a safe place.

Divorce and Custody Cases

We provide therapy services for adults and children whose families are going through divorce or separation. Because this process can be difficult for both parents and children, we have found reason to develop specific guidelines.

1. If we are seeing a child whose parents are in the process of divorce or already divorced, we require a copy of the standing court order demonstrating the custodial rights of each partner and/or the parenting agreement that is signed by both parents and the judge at the intake session. We will need to have contact with the parent who has legal custodial decision making for mental health issues before we see the child for counseling and will need to obtain written consent for the child to participate in counseling from the legal custodian. We also prefer to have contact with both parents prior to seeing the child, unless otherwise arranged with your therapist.
2. We will be available to provide an interview with a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) assigned to investigate the best interest of any child we are counseling upon production of a valid court order or authorization demonstrating the GAL's right to examine a child's clinical record or speak with their therapist. Otherwise, both parents of the child client will need to sign a release for me to speak with the GAL. The client will be charged a full session fee to have such meeting with the GAL.
3. We will encourage both parents to participate in the therapeutic process of their child.
4. If we are required to be called into court to testify, our rate is \$150 per hour and charges to and from court to the office will be added, as well as, charges for other services provided to prepare for court. Payment will be assessed for a half day (4 hours) increment at the time of the request due to practitioner's inability to schedule other clients to prepare for court.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____