

PATHWAYS OF OHIO COUNSELING SERVICES, LLC

ADULT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OUT-PATIENT CLIENT SERVICES CONTRACT JANUARY 2019

Welcome to Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC. The purpose of this document is to advise you of important information about Pathways of Ohio Counseling's professional services and business policies.

CRISIS SITUATIONS

If you are in a crisis and feel you may physically harm yourself or you feel you are a danger to others **immediately dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room!**

NEVER

COME TO OR CONTACT THE PATHWAYS OFFICE OR ATTEMPT TO CONTACT YOUR THERAPIST!

After you review this document, please sign it if you agree with its content.

This is a summary of what you are agreeing to in this document:

- ✓ You agree to participate in psychotherapy treatment at Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services (**Consent to Treat**).
- ✓ You agree you understand the business model of Pathways of Ohio Counseling and that you understand **we are not an emergency services provider**.
- ✓ **You accept your financial responsibilities** and agree to pay for our services, including cash-based services, as documented in our Fee Schedule and/or the terms of your insurance coverage.

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- ✓ You agree to allow Pathways of Ohio Counseling to bill your insurance coverage company on your behalf
- ✓ You understand **Pathways will release certain HIPAA protected information to your insurer for us to be paid.**
- ✓ You acknowledge you understand your HIPAA rights are prominently displayed in our lobby and that you can, at any time, asked for a paper copy of your HIPAA rights or you can download a copy of your HIPAA rights from our website.
- ✓ You accept and agree to Pathways' right to contact you regarding missed appointments and appointment reminders.
- ✓ You agree you understand Pathways is **not a provider** of medication management services.
- ✓ You understand members of the Pathways professional staff are "**Mandated Reporters**" under the Ohio Revised Code.

ABOUT PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described or explained in general statements. The nature of psychotherapy varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and client, and the problems you hope to address.

There are many different methods, techniques and interventions Pathways' therapists may use to deal with the problems you identify.

Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Rather, successful **psychotherapy requires very active participation on your part.**

For therapy to be most effective, you must work on changing the behaviors or attitudes your therapist and you will talk about during your sessions. Some of our therapists also use assignments for you to complete at home. Some examples of these assignments are thought journals, behavior charts, readings or completing workbook pages.

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- ✓ **The more active, cooperative, honest and consistent with your appointments during your treatment, the more likely you are to have a positive outcome from your work here.**
- ✓ **Therapy involves a considerable commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select.**
- ✓ **In order 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 questions about your therapist's treatment procedures and/or interventions, please discuss them when they arise. If your doubts persist, your therapist will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion. And at any time, you may also request a meeting with Rebecca Nelis, the managing owner and clinical director of Pathways of Ohio Counseling, LLC to discuss any concerns you might have.

RISKS AND BENEFITS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

Psychotherapy can have many benefits but also may involve risks. Psychotherapy has been proven to have benefit for clients who actively participate in therapy. Therapy can lead to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress.

But Pathways of Ohio Counseling or any other psychotherapy organization cannot guarantee what your experience will be. Because therapy often involves discussing unpleasant or unsettling aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness, but in most cases these feelings are transient and will improve as your therapy progresses. It is also possible your relationships with significant others in your life will change as you become more satisfied with yourself.

HOW PSYCHOTHERAPY WORKS AT PATHWAYS

During your first few therapy sessions, your therapist will evaluate your situation and your needs. This allows your therapist to be able to offer you some impressions of what your work with your therapist might include. At the end of the evaluation, your therapist will have a frank discussion with you regarding your therapeutic relationship. If either you or she does not feel she is able to help you with your specific needs, she will make a referral to another Pathways' therapist or give you referrals to other area practitioners whom she believes are better suited to help you.

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No later than your third session with your therapist, you will be asked to participate in the development and to sign a **treatment plan**. A treatment plan is like a road map and outlines what problems you and your therapists feel are the most important for you to address. It is critical you express your opinions about whether you feel comfortable working with your therapist on the goals of your treatment plan.

YOUR INITIAL THERAPY SESSION

During your first session, your therapist will work with you to gather information regarding your current symptoms and situations and from that, develop an evaluation. The length of time for the initial session varies but generally lasts 45 to 90 minutes. The evaluation consists of taking your history over a range of subjects including when your symptoms began, any current or previous mental or behavioral health treatment, physical health problems, family and social histories and assessment of drug, alcohol and nicotine abuse or dependence.

It is critically important for you to be honest with your therapist about your history and what problems or feelings you are experiencing at the time of the evaluation.

ON-GOING THERAPY SESSIONS

After your initial evaluation, Pathways' therapists usually schedule follow up sessions to last 45 to 60 minutes. Most of Pathways' therapists schedule new clients to come to therapy once a week if the therapist's and your schedules allow. Weekly sessions allow a strong therapeutic relationship to develop quickly.

Once you and your therapist are comfortable with your relationship and that you are working on your most important problems, sessions are generally scheduled every two weeks.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES/PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS

Pathways does not have a medical staff and does not provide medication for mental health diagnoses.

However, Pathways does have relationships with several area providers of psychotropic medications and will help you find a provider and will work in conjunction with your medication provider to ensure you have what you need to be successful in treatment.

APPOINTMENT REMINDERS/NOTIFICATIONS

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Pathways uses an automated reminder system that will contact you 24 hours in advance of your appointment. The delivery system uses text, voicemail or email to remind you of your scheduled appointment. The automated system we use generates text or voice mail reminders from **area code 215**, so pay attention to messages from this area code.

If the date and time of your reminder message is different from the date or time your therapist or the administrative staff gave you, please call the office as soon as possible to resolve the problem.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS/MISSED APPOINTMENT FEES

You are expected to keep all appointments you have scheduled with your therapist.

If you can't keep the appointment you've scheduled, you are required to give 24 hours' notice of your cancellation.

One of the rudest things you can do is make an appointment with your therapist and not honor it. Whether you are late or simply don't show up, you are showing your therapist that you don't care about her time and are not committed to your treatment.

The value of time becomes more precious as we get busier in life, so when you schedule an appointment with your therapist you need to see it as a valuable commodity. Never intentionally waste that time or treat it without the respect it deserves. If you schedule an appointment, proper etiquette dictates that you keep it.

This basic rule of etiquette is particularly important for Pathways therapists who are paid by the session. If you don't show up or are significantly late, your therapist will not be paid for the session you scheduled.

In order to protect their income, some of our therapists have set policies for missed appointment fees. This means you will be expected to pay that fee unless you cancel your appointment 24 hours in advance of your appointment time. Your therapist will inform you if she has a missed appointment fee policy.

If an unforeseen circumstance (weather, flat tire) causes you to miss or be late for an appointment we expect you to contact our administrative staff as soon as possible.

If these circumstances occur after 4:00 PM or during the weekend, call The Help Network on "211" as soon as possible and ask the staff there to forward the information to our administrative staff of your situation.

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MISSED APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

If you miss an appointment and you do not call to reschedule within 2 business days, our staff will reach out to you to check on your wellbeing and to reschedule your appointment.

PROCESS FOR CLOSING YOUR PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES CASE

You may choose to close your case at any time. We appreciate being notified of your decision, but you do not have to give us the reason for your decision. After you close your case, you may receive a client survey regarding the services you received at Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services and we very much appreciate your honest feedback.

REOPENING YOUR PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES

In most cases you can reopen your case at Pathways at any time. There are exceptions and those are outlined in your Client's Rights and Responsibilities document.

If your request to return to our services is denied, you will be notified in writing of the reason we've made this decision. If the reason is an open account balance, we will contact you so you can make arrangements to bring your account up to date.

You may ask to be counseled by your former psychotherapist or by another member of our qualified staff. If you choose to receive your services from a different therapist, you will not be asked to explain your decision.

WHY PATHWAYS COULD CLOSE YOUR CASE

If you don't respond to our attempts to reach you after a missed appointment or if it has been more than 45 days since your last appointment and you have not rescheduled, you'll receive a letter from your therapist or the Pathways' administrative office stating your case has been closed.

There are other reasons your case may be closed. These are explained in your Client's Rights and Responsibilities document.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

A copy of our professional fees is in your folder.

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The fees associated with a CPT Code are the fees that are billed to your insurance company. CPT Codes are “Current Procedural Terminology”, a world-wide code set use by the medical community that is used to report medical, surgical, and diagnostic procedures and services. These are reported to your insurance company, so they can pay us for the services we’ve provided.

Fees marked as “**Cash Pay**” represent services you may request the Pathways staff to provide for you. These services **are never billed to your health insurance company**, so it is very important for you to understand **when you request a Cash Pay service from our staff you will be wholly and totally responsible for paying for those fees in ADVANCE of the service being rendered**. **Cash pay psychotherapy sessions are payable at the time of service.**

ASSIGNMENT OF BENEFITS

“Assignment of Benefits” means you, the patient or parent or guardian of a minor child who is a Pathways patient, have asked your health insurance company to pay your benefit – i.e., the payments your insurance company makes for services you receive here, directly to Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC.

The assignment of your benefits to Pathways will remain in effect until cancelled by you in writing or until the services you are receiving from Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC have ended, and all your insurance claims have been processed and paid.

Cancelling this document before you stop your services with us could mean you would owe Pathways more money than if this agreement stays in effect.

If you refuse to assign your benefits to Pathways, all the charges you incur while you’re getting services from Pathways are your personal responsibility.

When you agree to this provision, a copy or fax released to your insurance company is as valid as an original copy.

In agreeing to have your insurance benefit paid to Pathways, you accept Pathways’ use of electronic billing. You are also allowing for the release of any patient and/or medical information your insurance company needs to pay your claims.

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You are responsible to notify Pathways of any change to your health insurance status – including changes in benefits or any insurance information you receive relating to the services you have or will receive at Pathways.

Failure to notify Pathways of changes to your insurance coverage could result in significant personal financial responsibilities for you.

INSURANCE REGULATIONS, REIMBURSEMENT AND YOUR FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for most mental health treatment. 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.

It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

Services and fees that are NOT covered by your insurance policy become your direct and exclusive financial obligation.

If your insurance coverage changes while you are in treatment at Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services and you fail to notify your therapist or the Pathways' administrative staff, you will be held liable for any and/or all the charges you've incurred that are not covered by your new insurance company.

Many commercial "Managed Health Care" plans and some Medicare Advantage plans may require prior authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. Make sure you have obtained these prior authorizations before your therapy begins.

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Some plans limit the number of sessions they will pay for. Should your work with your therapist need to exceed the number of sessions your insurance company allows, you have the right to pay for your therapists' services yourself to avoid the problems unless your insurance contract prohibits our professional relationship.

ALL COPAYS AND DEDUCTIBLES ARE PAYABLE AT THE TIME SERVICE IS PROVIDED

If you have commercial health insurance or Medicare, you are responsible for any copays or deductible amounts associated with your coverage.

Most insurance companies require we provide your clinical diagnosis for them to pay for our services.

Pathways is sometimes required to provide additional clinical information, such as your treatment plan, progress notes or in very rare cases, copies of the entire record. This information will become part of the insurance company files.

By signing this document, you are acknowledging you understand Pathways will release all information required by your insurance company so Pathways of Ohio Counseling Service, LLC will be paid for services we've rendered to you.

Secondary, or supplemental insurance is generally billed at the same time as your primary insurance. However, some secondary insurances will not process your claim until the primary insurance has paid.

If you have secondary insurance, our administrative staff will be happy to help you understand what, if any financial obligations you might be responsible for.

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For your convenience, we accept cash, check, Visa, MasterCard, Discovery and American Express cards.

There is a **\$45.00 returned check fee** that is fully your responsibility to pay. Your psychotherapy services could be interrupted if you do not pay the outstanding balance and returned check fee within 7 days of notification from your bank.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

If you and/or your family meet the Federal Poverty Guidelines and you provide documentation of your income and expenses, your copay and deductible might be waived or reduced.

In other circumstances of unusual financial hardship, Pathways may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan. These requests will be reviewed and if there is merit to your request, may be approved by Rebecca Nelis, MSSA, LISW-S, Managing Owner and Clinical Director of Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC.

COLLECTIONS OF PAST DUE ACCOUNTS

If you have an outstanding balance and you have made no attempt to pay on your account within 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, Pathways has the option of using legal means to secure your 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 against you.

In most collection situations, the only information Pathways will release regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the dates, times, and nature of services provided, and the amount due.

CONTACTING YOUR THERAPIST

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The psychotherapists who work for Pathways are Independent Contractors (IC) and not regular employees. As ICs, each therapist has the option of setting her own work hours. None of the ICs work for Pathways in a traditional Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM, 40-hour work week.

Because of her IC status, your therapist may not be immediately available to you by telephone or to meet with you except during your scheduled appointment.

If you have a history of needing frequent out-of-session contact with your therapist, Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services may not be a good fit to meet your needs.

CONTACTING THE PATHWAYS' OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

The business office numbers are **330-921-8308 or 330-787-9817**.

Our FAX number is **330-757-1166**.

The Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services web site address is:

www.pathwaysofohiocounseling.com

The Pathways Office is located at:

**Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC
58 South Main Street, Suite 4
Town One Square
Poland, Ohio 44514**

Our business office is open by appointment only. If you need a face-to-face meeting to speak to our administrative staff, call the business office to set up an appointment.

The business office phones are answered by our administrative staff from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM on business days.

After 4:00 PM on weekdays, weekends and holidays, our phone lines are forwarded to The Help Network (formerly Help Hotline).

We pay a monthly fee to The Help Network for their staff and volunteers to answer calls from our Pathways' clients to relay non-emergency information to our administrative staff via FAX. The Help Network will:

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- Fax your appointment cancellation notices to the Pathways' business office
- Fax any general questions about your services to the Pathways' business office

The Help Network does not have the ability to contact your therapist or the Pathways' administrative staff during off hours.

The Help Network is staffed with their employees and volunteers and might be of help to you are struggling with your mental health symptoms.

However, if you are in crisis and feel you are a danger to yourself or others ALWAYS call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

UNDERSTANDING MANDATED REPORTING

Protecting individuals who may be experiencing family violence is everyone's business. However, the professionals at Pathways are mandated by law to report aspects of family violence to appropriate authorities.

Child Abuse or Neglect

Per Ohio Revised Code section 2151.421: Mandates our professional staff is required to make a report to child protective services or law enforcement if we suspect that abuse is taking place. The law requires that we make a report if we believe that a reasonable person would also suspect abuse or neglect, given the same circumstances. We do not have to provide proof when making a report of abuse. It is not our responsibility to investigate.

As mandated reporters, it is a misdemeanor criminal offense for us to fail to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Additionally, failure to report could jeopardize our licensures. If we make a report in good faith, we are immune from civil or criminal liability if complaints about us intentionally providing false information are unfounded.

Domestic Violence

Per Ohio Revised Code section 2921.22: We are required to handle reports of domestic violence in a specific manner. If the victim presents with felony-level injuries, such as gunshot wounds, stabbings, second or third-degree burns, or other serious injuries, we are required to report these injuries to law enforcement.

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Elder Abuse

Per Ohio Revised Code section 5101.6: Our professional staff is mandated to report elder abuse. The law requires us to make a report if we believe a reasonable person would also suspect abuse or neglect, given the same circumstances. We do not have to provide proof when making a report of abuse or neglect and it is not our responsibility to investigate.

We will call 911 immediately if an elder person indicates that they are afraid to return home.

In non-emergency cases, we may contact Adult Protective Services (APS) through the Department of Job and Family Services. APS is responsible for investigating cases of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation for persons 60 years of age or older. APS also investigates abuse of adults with developmental disabilities and works collaboratively with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to respond to these individuals.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

If, while you are an active client of Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC and the organization deems significant changes to the information contained in this document to be necessary, you will find the changes clearly defined on our website, www.pathwaysofohiocounselingservices.com **30 days in advance of the change.**

If, while you are an active client of Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services, LLC and a user of our Client Portal, change notifications will be sent to you through the Portal **30 days in advance of the change in information.**