

Kathleen Rapp, LCSW

How We Will Work Together

A counseling relationship with a clinical social worker or any other professional psychotherapist has only one purpose - the client's emotional, psychological, and personal well-being. Because clients disclose to their clinicians many deeply felt personal thoughts, feelings and experiences, the relationship becomes very close and very important. Sometimes clients come to want the relationship to become more than a professional counseling relationship: a friendship, a dating relationship, or a business association. Although these feelings are understandable, it is necessary for all clients to recognize that there is only one relationship with the clinician and that is a counseling relationship.

I cannot and will not at any time, during or after your course of treatment, be anything but your therapist. In addition, it is my professional and ethical obligation to ensure that once we begin your treatment, our relationship remains solely professional. If, after we begin working together, either of us experiences difficulties in maintaining the singular focus of our work, we will discuss these issues as part of therapy. I encourage you to bring them to my attention as soon as they arise.

The confidential nature of information you share with me is one of the most important things to understand. Ordinarily, anything and everything you share with me in this setting is strictly confidential—whether you say it in person, say it on the telephone, or write it. Significant parts of the information you give me about yourself and matters that we discuss will be recorded in your clinical record. Other parts of our conversations may not relate specifically to your treatment and thus may not be included in the clinical record. In all cases, however, anything you tell me is treated with the strictest of confidence, including the fact that you are receiving treatment at this setting.

If we mutually decide that, in your interests, I should provide some part of your confidential information to another professional, your insurance company, your attorney, or even you, you will need to sign a specific and time-limited release of information as is outlined in the HIPPA policy.

There are three (3) circumstances in which I would be required by law to reveal confidential information about you without your consent. The first situation would be if I learned that you were in serious danger of harming yourself or at serious risk for harming another person. The second situation would be if I learned that you were abusing or neglecting a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person in your care. The third situation would be in the event of a court order compelling me to release your clinical record to a court of law.

Depending on your situation, our first few sessions will be spent getting to know you, clarifying your issues and assessing the reasons for them. There is a possibility that I will ask you to have a physical examination with your primary care physician before we begin treatment.

Once we understand your issues, we will agree on the goals you want to accomplish in treatment. We will also identify some ways to measure your progress. At this point, we will be ready to work out a specific, *individual treatment plan* for you. You and I will develop this plan jointly.

Successful treatment requires a commitment from you (*as an individual, as a family, as a couple*) for optimal outcomes to be achieved. There can be many benefits to our working together. For example, you may learn to communicate better, resolve or lessen the severity of personal and relationship problems at home or elsewhere, and improve your methods of coping with problems in daily life. Be aware, however, that in the course of treatment you will work hard and sometimes feel uncomfortable.

There are some risks involved in treatment. At times, counseling requires the sharing of painful feelings and thoughts. As a result, you may experience unpleasant feelings. Growth is difficult, and things may get worse before they get better during our work together. Finally, although scientific research persuasively shows how helpful social work treatment can be, there is always the possibility that in your specific case, our work will not result in the progress we hope to make.

There are alternatives that you or I may want to consider in addition to or instead of our working together. It is important for you to know that it is your choice to engage my services and to continue with them; it is also my professional choice, which I will make in your best interests, to engage you as my client and to continue working with you.

If we discover that, despite our best efforts, you are not making progress in meeting your goals, we will talk about several options. I may ask you for permission to talk with a consultant if that seems to be indicated. As an additional part of your treatment, I may refer you directly to someone else for further assessment or for specific services that I am unable to provide. Finally, if I determine that your best interests are not being served by working with me, then we will end our treatment relationship. In that event, we will work closely together to connect you with professional help that will meet your needs.

Kathleen Rapp, LCSW

Financial Policies

I am committed to providing the most effective and efficient social work treatment and services possible. To do so, I need your understanding of my fee policy and the reasoning behind it, as well as your cooperation.

Payment

My fee is \$125 for a 45 minute session and \$150 for a 55 minute session. Payment is due at the time services are rendered, unless other arrangements have been approved in advance. By having you pay at each session, I eliminate the need to bill you. I ask that you have your payment ready (i.e. check written) as this will give me more time for your session. I encourage you to contact me immediately for assistance if temporary financial problems affect the timely payment of your account.

Financial Responsibility

I emphasize that my relationship is with you and not with your insurance company. Although I file insurance claims as a courtesy to my clients, **you are ultimately responsible for payment of any and all services which are not paid for by your insurance plan.** If you wish, I will submit your claim, or you may file your own claim.

Payment Methods

I accept cash, credit cards, and personal checks. Returned checks will be subject to a \$20.00 charge, which will be added to your bill. Unpaid balances older than ninety (90) days and in excess of \$100.00 will be the basis for terminating service. In this unfortunate event, I will make every effort to help you locate alternative affordable care; however, I will be unable to continue to work with you in the face of financial default.

Note that the law allows the referral of unpaid bills to a collection agency or the utilization of small-claims court procedures. This is not the preferred course of action, but may become necessary if a delinquent account cannot be resolved otherwise.

Cancellation of Appointments

I require 24 hours advance notification if you are not able to keep a scheduled appointment. For appointments scheduled on Monday, please notify me of the cancellation/reschedule request as early as possible on the previous Friday. This notice permits me to offer that time to someone else. If you have given 24 hours' notice, you will not be charged for the appointment. However, if you miss your appointment and have not given 24 hours notice, *you will be personally responsible for the full amount of the session.* Charges for missed appointments and appointments canceled without 24-hours' notice cannot be billed to your third-party payer. Please try to give as much notice as possible.

I understand that there may be occasional emergencies when you will not be able to keep your appointment and also will not be able to notify me within 24 hours. I will take these circumstances into account.

Charges for Home Visits, Telephone Contacts, Emergency Appointments and Collateral Contacts

Occasionally, it is advisable for a session to be held in your home. My out-of-office fee is charged as two (2) sessions to compensate for travel time. Lengthy telephone calls will be billed at the rate of \$30.00 for each fifteen (15) minutes. If your need is more urgent and complex and it cannot be postponed until a scheduled appointment, an immediate emergency appointment will be arranged and billed at your usual fee. If, with your permission, I contact other people on your behalf—such as family members, teachers, or other health care professionals—and consult with them in person, by letter or by telephone, charges will be billed at the rate of \$30.00 for each fifteen (15) minutes.

Questions

If you have any questions about any of these policies, please ask me for assistance.