

## OAKLAND PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC, P.C.

Welcome to Oakland Psychological Clinic, P.C. We are glad you chose us for your counseling needs. It is important to us that you understand as much as possible about your treatment. Please read this information carefully and ask questions of the office staff or your therapist. You may call the Administrative Offices at any time at 248-322-0003.

### ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

**Consent to Treatment:** When any person under 18 years of age seeks treatment, we require the written consent of a parent or legal guardian. A step-parent may not consent to the treatment of a minor. Both legal parents (or legal guardians) have equal rights regardless of the custody situation. When a child is over the age of 10 years, we also ask the child to sign the Consent for Treatment.

**Parents and Family Involvement in Treatment:** When a child or adolescent is in treatment, we recommend that all persons playing a parental role in the life of a minor be involved in the treatment. Family members' participation is extremely important in the success of the treatment. The family's perception of the patient's needs is identified as well as the effect the patient's problems have had on the family. Parents and guardians, as well as the minor, should expect to be involved in planning and agreeing to treatment and attending sessions.

**Children of Divorced Parents:** It is our practice to obtain consent of both the mother and father when the parents have divorced. This is to avoid problems later in treatment should a parent object to the treatment being rendered. It is recommended that a copy of the divorce decree be obtained and a Consent for Treatment be signed by both biological parents. The person bringing the patient to the intake session and signing the Fee Agreement is considered the financially responsible party. We do not render an opinion on who is responsible for payment other than the signature on the Fee Agreement. All other understandings are between the parents and the court. Both parents have equal rights to copies of the patient's record and are to be treated with equal respect regardless of custody status.

**Custody Issues:** Therapists who treat minors are dedicating their efforts to resolve the minor's problems. Please do not expect your therapist to advocate for custody of a child. If your purpose for bringing your child to treatment is to determine custody, an independent custody evaluation of both parents can be arranged.

**Minor's Participation in Treatment:** When a child or adolescent is in treatment, they are directly involved in planning and agreeing to their own treatment. Children and adolescents over the age of 10 are asked to authorize any releases of information along with a parent or guardian.

**Conflicts:** Should a difference of opinion develop between a parent and a child or adolescent about treatment, an independent therapist will be brought into the situation to assist in resolution.

### ABOUT OUR PROFESSIONALS

Oakland Psychological clinic, P.C.'s staff includes therapists who have masters or doctorate degrees and are certified or licensed by the state to provide services. Our staff includes psychologists, social workers, counselors and substance abuse therapists. Please feel free to ask your therapist about his or her experience and education.

Psychiatrists who work for Oakland Psychological Clinic, P.C. are licensed physicians who have specialized in psychiatry. With few exceptions, they are certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Although our psychiatrists are licensed physicians, they do not treat health problems unrelated to emotional or mental health. They will, however, be happy to assist you in finding suitable health care.

**Supervision:** Therapists and psychiatrists work together to provide you with the best treatment. Our clinical staff members report to Leslie Johnsen, MA, LLP, who is the Executive and Clinical Director. Her office is located in our Bloomfield Hills Clinic.

**Dissatisfaction with Your Therapist:** When patients call the clinic for their first appointment, every effort is made to match their needs with the best therapist available. However, we cannot predict your preference in style and personality. If, after a couple of visits, you do not feel like you are connecting with your therapist, we will be happy to find another therapist for you. This is nothing to be embarrassed about. We want you to feel as comfortable as possible with your therapist. To request a new therapist, discuss it with your therapist. You may also ask the Office Manager to explain your situation. Your therapist and Office Manager will make every effort to meet your needs and transfer you to a new therapist.

**Dual Relationships:** We strive to provide the highest level of professional services. We offer you the comfort and security in knowing that your therapist is only your therapist and nothing more. An improper dual relationship arises when a therapist or psychiatrist assumes

something other than a professional role with a patient. We believe that our staff members behave in a professional manner. However, should anything take place outside of a professional relationship, please report that to the management. A therapist should never engage in any of the following: 1) Social activities with the patient outside of the clinic. 2) A sexual relationship of any kind including physical touching is always unethical. 3) Business activities such as selling or bartering anything to a patient or buying things from a patient, such as books, vitamins, etc. 4) Accepting or exchanging gifts other than a nominal value.

**Personal Values and Beliefs:** Because of great differences in our society and the cultural differences between people, it is possible you could be assigned to a therapist who is unable to relate to your experiences and beliefs. Your therapist is expected to respect your personal values and beliefs. If, at any time, you feel that your therapist's personal experience prevents him or her from respecting or understanding your beliefs, please request a different therapist. We have a large clinical staff and can usually accommodate special requests.

## **ABOUT OAKLAND PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC, P.C.**

**Payment:** Oakland Psychological Clinic, P.C. receives payment for its services from insurance companies and from payments made by the patient or the financially responsible party. We hold contracts with over 40 insurance companies and have set fees that we will bill the insurance companies. We have an established fee schedule that is posted in the waiting room. Some therapists may, at their discretion, choose to reduce their fee. Our therapists and psychiatrists are independent contractors and receive a percentage of payments collected.

**Managed Care:** Many insurance companies are managing benefit use through outside companies and case managers who will authorize treatment. Some insurance companies have also established networks or panels of providers that are approved. These networks or panels are called PPOs or HMOs. Oakland Psychological Clinic, P.C. is approved by many managed care groups and participates on many panels. Individual therapists within our clinic are also approved. If your insurance is managed by a third party, we cooperate with the case manager to provide you services. Usually, a certain number of visits will be authorized (between 1 and 20) and then your therapist must contact the managed care company to obtain further authorization. When your therapist contacts the case manager, he or she will describe in a general way your treatment and progress. It is rare that your managed care company will deny services. If this should happen, there are avenues for appeal.

**Complaints:** If at any time you have a complaint within the clinic, its staff or services, you should ask for a complaint form or ask that one be completed for you. All written complaints are reviewed by the administration of Oakland Psychological Clinic, P.C. and you will receive a response. Of course, if a minor conflict is easily resolved, it may not be necessary to complete a written complaint. You may ask for a complaint form from the front office staff or the Office Manager.

**Children in the Waiting Room:** We ask that young children not be brought to the clinic because they become bored and may interfere with sessions. If they are brought to the clinic, we ask that they be supervised by a responsible adult in the building and waiting room. We will ask that unruly children of any age be removed from the building, waiting room, or parking area accompanied by a responsible adult. Patient's sessions will be interrupted due to unruly children because our front office staff are not expected to "baby sit" for unattended children.

## **ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is part of the trust needed for therapy. Oakland Psychological Clinic, P.C., makes every effort to protect your confidentiality; however, we want to be as clear as possible about the limits of confidentiality.

As you know, what you say to your therapist or psychiatrist is almost always confidential. Professional ethics and federal law prevent us from telling anyone what you said in session unless you give us permission in writing. However, there are some exceptions that are described below.

1. We are required to keep treatment records. This record includes all forms that you complete or sign, an assessment of your problem and treatment notes of your sessions. The record is protected by law and can only be read by someone else if the court orders it or if an insurance company that paid for part or all of the sessions is auditing the record.
2. If you use health insurance, we have to give the insurance company some information. The insurance company usually wants only your diagnosis, fees, dates of appointments and sometimes a summary of your treatment. If your insurance is managed by another company (as already discussed), we will also provide similar information to them. While we believe the insurance

company or managed care company will act ethically and legally, we cannot control who sees this information once it leaves our office. We ask that you let the therapist know what you do not want discussed.

3. Therapists sometimes consult with other Oakland Psychological Clinic, P.C. professional staff about the treatment of patients. The identity of the patient is not revealed during these consultations.
4. When your therapist is not available, another therapist may respond to urgent calls at your request. All clinical staff of Oakland Psychological Clinic, P.C. are bound by the same rules of confidentiality.
5. If your account is unpaid and overdue and you have not arranged a payment plan, we may give your name, address, phone number and amount due to a collection agency, a lawyer or to the court.
6. In cases in which we treat several members of a family (husband and wife, parents and children, and other relatives) the confidentiality situation can become very complicated. At the start of therapy, we must clarify the purpose of treatment for each family member and our role in regard to your family. Only with such clarity can we determine any limitations on confidentiality. Specifically if you or your spouse separate or divorce and you want to use the treatment records for court purposes, we will need to know about it. Expectations need to be clear from the onset of treatment. We normally ask you to sign a **release of information** form before we talk with anyone (family members included) about your therapy.
7. There are some legal and ethical rules we must obey which say that we must not keep some information confidential.

There are laws written to protect persons from harm when, in a therapist's professional judgment, there is a danger to those persons from a client. These include the following:

- a) If we come to believe that you are threatening serious harm to another person, we are required to try to protect the other person(s). In that case, we may have to tell the intended victim, the police and/or seek your hospitalization. Similarly, if you threaten or act in a way which is very likely to harm yourself, we may have to seek hospitalization for you, or call your family members or others who can help protect you. If such a situation arises, we will attempt to notify you before we talk with others, in order to protect your, or someone else's, life.
- b) If we believe or suspect that a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person is being abused (by neglect, assault, battery or sexual molestation) we must file a report with the appropriate state agency. We do not have authority to investigate further into the situation. The state agency will investigate.

**Other Information About Confidentiality:** The office staff or clinical staff are not able to acknowledge to anyone that you are a patient at Oakland Psychological Clinic, P.C. unless you give us written permission to do so. If your spouse or other person is expected to call the office to make or cancel appointments or discuss your treatment, tell your therapist and a release will be completed.

The office staff routinely block "Caller ID" when it is necessary to call your home whenever this is possible. Please do not give us telephone numbers you do not want us to call.

If you have special needs or are concerned about family members or anyone else knowing you are in treatment, tell your therapist. Billing statements sent to your home will not have our name on the envelope. If you are concerned about someone seeing your statement, you may request that bills not be sent to your home.

As you can see, issues surrounding confidentiality can be complicated. Generally, we will only release information if you have requested it and signed a release of information, however, there are some exceptions stated above. If you have any other questions, please ask.