



Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC
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Informed Consent for Treatment

Hello and welcome! I understand how difficult the decision can be to start therapy and want to congratulate you on taking this first step! I am looking forward to beginning our work together. This document is intended to provide important information to you regarding your treatment. Please review the entire document carefully and initial each as you read/agree to it. Please feel free to ask me about any additional questions you might have.

About Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC:

Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC is an establishment located in Manlius, NY providing mental health therapy services to individuals. This establishment currently employs one therapist who has been working in the Mental Health field for over 10 years in a variety of settings in therapist and management positions. Academically, she has a Master of Science degree in Community Mental Health Counseling, as well as a Master of Science degree in School Counseling, both from the University of Rochester. Prior to that she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and Health Science with a concentration in Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counseling. As a result of post-graduate training, she has become recognized as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor through the State of New York (License #004828-1) and a National Certified Counselor (Certificate #254056). She holds a Level-One Certification in Rational Living Therapy (Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy). Please feel free to ask her any additional questions regarding her education and/or experience.

Risks and Benefits of Therapy:

Therapy can bring about a number of benefits including improving interpersonal relationships, development of coping skills, making positive behavioral changes, reducing symptoms of mental health disorders, resolution of the concerns that led to you to seek these services and overall improved quality of life. Successful therapy requires effort on both your part and mine. It requires your active involvement, honesty and openness to change. Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful in working through an issue or dealing with a situation. The approach used may depend on the problem being treated, my professional assessment of what may benefit you, and/or feedback you provide. In order to be the most successful, you will have to work outside of sessions on things we discuss. Despite the potential benefits, therapy does not work for everybody and may not work for you. This is an immensely personal process and can bring up unpleasant memories or emotions including but not limited to anger, sadness, worry and fear, and it can cause considerable discomfort. You may feel challenged at times to think about or consider things differently than you are used to. You may choose to make behavior or life changes as a result of our discussions in therapy. Sometimes the changes you make may be viewed positively by you but negatively by another person in your life. Although changes can happen quickly, it is more common for them to occur over time. Clients can sometimes make improvements but then return to previous thoughts, emotions or behaviors over time.

Confidentiality:

All clients sign and agree to confidentiality/HIPAA guidelines that are available for your review indicating that I follow standards as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor to protect the privacy of your personal information. Spoken, written and other personal information is legally protected as confidential and privileged unless you provide written and specific authorization to share it. However, there are limits to the privilege of confidentiality. Exceptions include:

1. When therapist has reason to believe you are in danger of harming yourself or another person
2. Suspected abuse or neglect of a minor, elder or disabled adult
3. A valid court order
4. When your insurance company is involved, i.e. in filing a claim, insurance audits, case review or appeals, etc.
5. For purposes of carrying out payment activities
6. When otherwise required by the law

Your right to confidentiality extends beyond the walls of this office. If you ever see your therapist in the community outside your regular therapy time, your therapist will not be able to approach or acknowledge you unless you choose to do so first. Please know that if you acknowledge her in public places this may jeopardize your confidentiality as other people present may be able to infer the nature of your relationship.

Technology and Confidentiality:

As technology continues to evolve and improve, we are constantly being introduced to new methods of communication. Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC understands that cell phones are a preferred mode of technology for many people. It is important that you understand cell phones may not be completely secure and confidential. Please let your therapist know if her use of a cell phone presents problems for you. Additionally, text messaging and emailing are not guaranteed to be confidential. However, it is understood in our fast paced world, these may be preferred methods of communication. If you do choose to send your therapist a text message or email, please limit the content to things such as appointment scheduling. Please do not include any therapeutic information in these messages, as doing so may compromise your confidentiality. If you would ever like her to send you things via text or email, please be aware that your confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Social Media/Internet:

Therapists are not permitted to accept invitations from current or former clients on personal social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn. Adding clients as “friends” on these sites can compromise your confidentiality. Doing so can also blur the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship.

You are welcome to “like” or “follow” any of Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC's professional social media feeds and read anything that may be posted. However, because social media sites are public spaces, anyone who can see the professional social media pages can also see your posts or comments. Additionally, when you post, comment or “like” a page, it may also be published on your page. Please use your own discretion when deciding whether to “like”, comment on or follow these pages. Please note that in order to maintain ethical boundaries, your therapist is not permitted to follow you back. If there are things you would like to share with her via the internet, please bring them into your therapy sessions where you two can view and discuss them together.

It is not part of Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC's regular practice to search for clients on Google, Facebook or other search engines. Because therapists are mandated reporters, exceptions may be made during times of crisis. If your therapist has reason to believe you or another person may be in danger and am unable to reach you through usual means such as appointment attendance, phone or email, there may be times when using a search engine becomes necessary to ensure your welfare (i.e. to find you, someone close to you, or view recent status updates).

Recording:

Recording therapy sessions (i.e. audio or video via cell phone or other device) is not permitted as it puts your privacy at risk. Doing so without your knowledge or your therapist's may be a violation of trust. Recording your sessions without the knowledge and consent of both therapist and client may be grounds for termination of services.

Professional Consultation:

Your therapist at Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC regularly participates in clinical, ethical and legal consultation with appropriate professionals in order to provide the best possible care for her clients. The client's name or other identifying information is never disclosed. The client's identity remains anonymous and confidentiality is maintained. If your therapist is on vacation or some other form of personal or medical leave, she may also need to share information with the licensed therapist "covering" for her. If the leave is for an extended period of time and the client and licensed professional agree to participate in therapy sessions, personal information such as name, phone number, diagnosis and treatment goals may be shared. If this practice presents any concerns to you, please let your therapist know so that you can discuss it further.

Insurance:

Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC chooses not to participate on any insurance panels for a number of reasons including the increased choice, control and confidentiality of a therapy service that is not under contract with managed care. However, your therapist can provide you with a monthly statement that you can submit directly to your insurance company for out-of-network reimbursement. It is your responsibility to contact your insurance company prior to your first session to ask about the out-of-network benefits specific to your plan. Please note that most insurance plans do not cover online counseling at this time.

Fees:

Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC's fee for a 45 minute individual session or couple/family/other group consultations is _____. Accepted forms of payment are cash, check (made payable to Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC) and all major credit cards (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover). Please fill out the form for credit card use that all clients complete even if they intend to pay by cash or a check. This allows use as a back-up if you forget your payment or for a late fee. Payment is due at the time of service (and is generally collected at the end of each session). There is a \$25 fee for all returned checks. If you wish to discuss a written agreement that specifies an alternative payment procedure, please do so prior to the session.

Sometimes a video session using VSee, a free confidential platform, is appropriate as an option due to challenges such as work, travel, illness or snow. Rates remain the same for this type of service.

Cancellation Policy:

If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment, please let your therapist know as soon as possible. Unlike doctors who may overbook, when your therapist schedules a session that time is reserved just for you. Excessive cancellations or requests for appointment time changes are disruptive to the therapeutic process, disruptive to therapist's schedule and may also deny other clients the opportunity to be seen. It is incredibly important for client and therapist to respect each other's time. Therefore, 24 hour notice is required to cancel or reschedule appointments. You will be charged the full session fee of \$100 for any missed sessions or sessions canceled with less than 24 hour notice. Notice of cancellation may be received by phone (or voicemail), email or text message.

Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC understands that life can be unpredictable and providing 24 hour notice to miss appointments is not always possible (i.e. due to illness, transportation issues, work conflicts, etc). Each client will therefore be permitted to cancel within 24 hours of the session and will have the fee waived two times per calendar year. It is up to the discretion of the client to determine the importance of these life occurrences and when you chose to utilize these waivers. After the fee for late cancellations has been waived two times in a calendar year, all sessions canceled with less than 24 hour notice will be charged the full session fee of \$100 regardless of the reason for the missed session. The only exceptions will be sessions missed due to hazardous weather conditions and sessions that are able to be rescheduled, and the client is seen, within the same week (a week is considered Monday-Thursday). This will be dependent on therapist's availability and may not be an option for each late-canceled session. If excessive cancellations become a concern, the therapist reserves the right to terminate treatment or assess a \$25.00 rescheduling fee.

Please note that this revised policy only applies to sessions canceled within 24 hours of the scheduled start time of the session. Missed sessions in which no notice was provided to therapist prior to the start of session will continue to be charged the full session fee of \$100. In these instances, waivers will not be granted.

Late Attendance Policy:

There may be times when life challenges cause you to arrive late for a session. Because time is valuable and there may be another client scheduled after you, your therapist may not have the luxury of ending a session late. Therefore, if your session begins late due to your tardiness, your session will still end at the regularly scheduled time and you will be charged the full fee of _____. Please note that shortened sessions may affect reimbursement from your insurance provider so please do your best to arrive on time.

Because your time is also important, your therapist will do her best to start and end your sessions at the agreed upon time. However, in rare instances where another issue causes her to begin late (i.e. a crisis with another client), you will still be provided the entire duration of your scheduled session.

Litigation Limitation:

Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and that it often involves disclosing the details of many matters which may be confidential in nature, you agree that should there be legal proceedings (such as but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc), neither you (client) nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on your therapist to testify in court or at any other proceeding. However, if your therapist's appearance at court is required by law, Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC's fee is \$2,000 per day (or \$250 per hour) plus any related travel expenses (driving will be billed at the IRS 2019 standard mileage rate of 58 cents per mile). Any related preparation (including but not limited to phone calls, letter writing, meetings with attorneys, etc) or travel time will also be billed at the rate of \$250 per hour. If more than four hours of your therapist's time are needed in one day, you will be charged for the entire day at the rate of \$2,000. This must be paid in full 30 days prior to the expected court date.

Therapist Availability/Emergencies:

You may leave a message for your therapist at any time on her voicemail at (315) 503-1151. Calls will be returned within two business days (Monday through Thursday) during normal business hours excluding major holidays. Please note that telephone calls will be kept brief due to the belief that important issues should be addressed during regularly scheduled therapy sessions. Please remember that Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC is a solo private practice and so there may be times when you will be unable to reach your therapist right away.

If you are experiencing a psychiatric or medical emergency, please call 911, Contact Community Services at (315) 251-0600 to reach their 24 hour crisis hotline, or go to your nearest hospital emergency room.

About the Therapy Process:

It is Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC's intention to provide services that will assist you in reaching your therapy goals based on the information you provide to your therapist. You and your therapist are partners in the therapeutic process and feedback is encouraged along the way. Remember that therapy is a service you purchase – if you are not happy with the services you receive, it is your responsibility to make that known to your therapist. She will also periodically provide feedback to you regarding your progress. Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC is unable to predict the length of your therapy or guarantee a specific outcome or result.

Duration and Termination of Therapy:

Most people attend sessions weekly although that can be adjusted depending on your schedule and availability, finances, treatment goals and progress. The length of your treatment depends on your treatment goals and the progress you achieve. Some clients may come for a few months until they get back on track while others may benefit from longer term therapy. Some clients use therapy for a period of time, take a break, and return when they are ready or need to do more work. As you approach the completion of your treatment goals, your therapist will discuss a plan for termination. You may choose to discontinue therapy at any time. If you or your therapist determines that you are not benefiting from treatment, either party may initiate a discussion of your treatment alternatives. Treatment alternatives may include referral, adjusting your treatment goals or terminating your therapy, among other things. If your therapist initiates termination with you, it will be because she feels that she is not able to be helpful or a higher level of care is indicated. If she no longer feels that Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC is the right resource for you, she will offer referrals to other sources of care but cannot guarantee they will accept you or how they will approach your treatment needs. Once you have stopped attending you are no longer under the care of Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC and the therapeutic relationship will be ended unless you reinitiate treatment here.

Ending therapy well is important. If you decide you would like to terminate services, please let your therapist know so that you can have 1-2 wrap up sessions to solidify gains you've made and to discuss recommendations to maintain progress. Demonstrating a pattern of canceled or missed appointments may be grounds for case termination. Additionally, if you stop scheduling or attending sessions and/or your therapist is unable to reach you by phone, text or email your case may be terminated after 30 days.

HIPAA:

Please know that Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC adheres to the privacy practices outlined in the HIPAA National Providers policy available for your review. Typically state and license confidentiality regulations are far more stringent so the most restrictive standard is adhered to for counseling.

Your signature below indicates the following:

I understand that I have the right to decline or refuse treatment. I have read and fully understand the information and policies described in this plan including information regarding HIPAA. I have discussed any questions or concerns with my therapist and she has addressed all questions/concerns regarding this agreement to my satisfaction. I agree to abide by the terms and conditions of this agreement and consent to treatment with Christina L. Gmyr, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, PLLC.

Client Name (Please Print)

Client Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date