

ANN R. HOWIE, LICSW, ACSW

I hope that the following information will help you make an informed decision about the kind of counseling I offer and whether or not to work with me in counseling:

Methods and Techniques Utilized

I use cognitive, experiential, and behavioral styles of therapy designed to help clients think about, experience, and act effectively when dealing with life stresses. Sessions are based on finding a solution that meets your needs. Therapy is a collaborative process, and change is sometimes painful. I ask you to come to each session with an idea of what you want to work on. I will listen to your concerns, clarify your issues, encourage independence, and offer professional insight to help you identify and develop a healing plan that is most useful for you. Most treatment plans are short-term rather than extended, but length of treatment time is based upon your need and desire. I sometimes work with a trained therapy dog to further the therapeutic process, and sometimes my dog is present in my office without being an active participant in the therapy session.

Counselor's Education, Experience, and Credentials

- Masters Degree in clinical social work (MSW in counseling) from Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, TX, 1987. Clinical practice since 1986.
- Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW) with the State of Washington, #020704 LW00005333. I am licensed to provide service only in the State of Washington.
- Academy of Clinical Social Workers (ACSW), national, #884030263.

Fees and Billing

- Fees (including insurance co-payments) are due at the beginning of each session. Clients utilizing Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) benefits are not required to pay at the time of service.
- My standard fees are:
 - Intake session (60 minutes) - \$145
 - Follow-up sessions of 45 minutes - \$100
 - Follow-up sessions of 60 minutes - \$135
 - Private-pay clients are expected to pay in full before each session. As a result, they are given a discounted rate of \$80 per session. If payment is not made at the time of the session, the rate is \$90.
- It is important for clients who use insurance to know that counseling may not be a covered service under your specific plan. If your insurance does not pay, you will be billed for services.
- As a matter of courtesy, please give me at least 24 hours' advance notice if you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment. This allows someone else to be seen. *If you do not arrive for a scheduled appointment or do not give at least 24 hours' advance notice by phone, you will be billed for your session.* Clients utilizing EAP benefits who give less than 24 hours' advance notice forfeit that appointment.
- I will wait for you for 15 minutes beyond your scheduled appointment time. If you arrive late, you lose the time you missed.
- In the event your check is dishonored or returned for any reason, you authorize me to electronically (or by paper draft) re-present the check to your bank account for collection of the amount of the check, plus any applicable fees as permitted by state law. NSF fee is \$25.

Access and Social Media

- I am available for urgent telephone consultation. Calls over 10 minutes are billed accordingly.
- I strongly discourage e-mails and texts about clinically relevant issues; they are not secure.
- Because I am self-employed, I may work during unusual hours. It is possible that you could receive a response from me outside of the hours of 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. This is not a gesture of friendship, but rather a reflection of atypical work hours.
- Please understand that I do not participate in social media (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and others) with clients.

Confidentiality

- Your client record is confidential. The exceptions to this are in times of emergency, when I believe you may harm yourself or others (see following bullet), and to comply with legal requests and laws which may require me to disclose to law enforcement.
- If you share information that leads me to believe that you might commit a crime or harm yourself or someone else, I am bound by law (RCW 18.19.180 1-6) to disclose that information to authorities.
- Should you elect to use health insurance benefits to pay for psychotherapy, your diagnosis, symptoms, history, and substance abuse (if any) will become part of your permanent record. Your insurance company has the right to access and copy any and all of this information, as well as all clinical documentation of treatment. In some cases this information may be submitted to insurance databases and/or to employers when they are the purchaser of my medical/mental health benefits.
- I may share information about your situation (not your identity) with other counselors during professional consultation sessions, and this is bound under confidentiality.
- Your contact information may be shared with a collection agency for non-payment of account.

Acts of Unprofessional Conduct

The State of Washington has determined a number of acts that constitute unprofessional conduct. The following list gives you a general idea of the kinds of behaviors that could be considered a violation of the law:

- Abuse of a client or sexual contact with a client. Incompetence, negligence, or malpractice that harms a client or creates an unreasonable risk or harm to a client.
- Willful betrayal of the counselor-client privilege as recognized by law.
- The commission of any act involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, or corruption relating to the practice of counseling. The act does not have to be a crime to be a violation of the law regulating counselors.
- Practicing counseling while suffering from a contagious or infectious disease in a way that would pose a serious risk to the public.
- Aiding a client to obtain an abortion through illegal means.
- Possession, use, or distribution of drugs except for legitimate purpose; addiction to drugs or violation of any drug law.
- Habitual use or impairment from the use of alcohol.
- Misrepresentation or fraud in any aspect of the conduct of the profession.
- Advertising that is false, fraudulent, or misleading.
- Offering to treat clients by secret method, procedure, or treatment.
- Promotion for personal gain of any drug, device, treatment procedure, or service that is unnecessary or has no acceptable benefit to the client.
- Conviction of any gross misdemeanor or felony relating to the practice of counseling.
- Violation of the rebating laws, including payment for referral of clients.
- Interference with an investigation by use of threats or harassment against a client or witness to prevent them from providing evidence in a disciplinary proceeding or other legal action.

If you believe that I have committed an act of unprofessional conduct, I hope you will feel comfortable talking with me about it. If you feel that any of those acts have occurred during your treatment, you may report this to the Department of Health Professional Licensing Complaints at 1800 SE Quince St., P.O. Box 47869, Olympia, WA 98504 or call the Hotline at 360-236-4700.

I have read this statement and received a copy. I hereby agree to these policies and give my consent for treatment.

Client/Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Therapist Signature

The purpose of the Counselor Credentialing Act (RCW 18.19) is to provide protection for public health and safety and to empower the citizens of the State of Washington by providing a complaint process against those counselors who would commit acts of unprofessional conduct. "Counselors practicing counseling for a fee must be registered or certified with the Department of Health for the protection of the public health and safety. Registration of an individual with the department does not include a recognition of any practice standards, nor necessarily implies the effectiveness of any treatment." WAC 246-810-031