

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY

Office Policies & Agreement for Psychotherapy Services

Welcome to Tabono. Your first visit to a new therapist is very important, and you may have many questions. This letter is to introduce ourselves and provide information about the therapy process as well as general office policies. Please take time to read it carefully and let us know if you have any questions or need more information. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and Tabono.

Qualifications

All Tabono clinicians are independently licensed in the state of Ohio or work under a supervisor's license. Each clinician has his/her own area of expertise defined by his/her education, training, and experience. We provide evidenced based practices, which simply means that our interventions are backed by research. We strive to stay abreast of changes in our field to ensure that our clients receive the best possible services.

The Process of Therapy/Evaluation

When you schedule your appointment, you will be invited to complete documents through a client portal managed by our Electronic Health Records System (EHR). This system is secure and HIPAA compliant, so your private information is protected. It also allows for secure messaging. These forms include information about the therapeutic process, HIPAA, and office policies. You will also be asked to complete an intake questionnaire, which provides information about your background and key concerns which will then be reviewed with your clinician.

During the first session, you and your clinician will meet to discuss your goals. Part of this meeting is to also see if you two "fit" together, as a strong therapeutic relationship is critical to success. If your concerns are outside of the clinician's area of expertise, s/he will refer you to another provider. The first session is often information gathering, learning about you. You and the clinician will work as partners to develop goals, a plan to reach those goals, and discuss services provided along the way. You are encouraged to ask questions about the process.

Termination and Follow-Up

Deciding when to stop our work together is meant to be a mutual process. Before we stop, we will discuss how you will know if, or when, to come back, or whether a regularly scheduled "check-in" might work best for you. Noncompliance with treatment recommendations may necessitate early termination of services. Should these issues arise, we will examine them to determine whether ongoing treatment with us will be in your best interest. Your responsibility is to make a good faith effort to fulfill the treatment recommendations to which you have agreed. If you have concerns or reservations about treatment recommendations, we strongly encourage you to express them, so that we can resolve any possible differences or misunderstandings. On some occasion, your clinician may determine that s/he is not helping you reach your therapeutic goals. Clinicians are obligated to discuss this with you and, if appropriate, terminate treatment. In these rare cases, your clinician will give you the names of other providers who may be better suited to meet your needs. If working with a new provider is in your best interest, we are available to talk with your new therapist. This just requires a signed Authorization to Release Information form.

If you commit violence to, verbally or physically threaten or harass any Tabono staff, the office, or our family, we reserve the right to terminate your treatment unilaterally and immediately. Failure or refusal to pay for services after a reasonable time is another condition for termination of services. Please contact us to make arrangements any time your financial situation changes.

Dual Relationships

Therapy never involves sexual, business, or any other dual relationships that could impair objectivity, clinical judgment or therapeutic effectiveness or could be exploitative in nature. It is possible that during the course of your treatment, we may become aware of other preexisting relationships that may affect our work together. Should this happen, clinicians will do their best to resolve these situations ethically. This may entail ending our work together and referring you to a new provider.

Benefits and Risks of Psychotherapy

Participation in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improved interpersonal relationships and resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy. Working toward these benefits requires effort on your part. Psychotherapy requires your active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings, and/or behavior. Your therapist will ask for your feedback and views on therapy and its progress. Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful.

During the initial evaluation or the course of therapy, remembering unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts may result in your experiencing considerable discomfort, strong feelings, anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. Your therapist may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of thinking about or handling

situations that may cause you to feel upset, angry, or disappointed. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you into therapy may result in changes that were not originally intended. Psychotherapy may result in decisions to change behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing, or relationships. Change can sometimes be quick and easy, but more often it can be gradual and even frustrating. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results.

Emails, Phone Calls, and Emergencies

For small administrative matters such as checking appointment times or changing them, please call our office or message your clinician through the client portal.

If you need to contact your clinician between sessions about a clinical matter, please call the office or message your clinician through the client portal.

Your therapist will let you know if s/he is planning to be out of town. S/he will also let you know who is providing emergency coverage.

Emergency phone consultations of five minutes or less are normally free. For calls lasting more than five minutes or extensive voicemails (more than 5 minutes cumulative per week), you may be charged a prorated fee for those services.

If an emergency situation arises, please indicate it clearly in your message. If your situation is an acute emergency and you need to talk to someone right away, contact:

- 911
- Psychiatric Emergency Services at 513- 558-7700

Social Media Policy

Separate Accounts

Tabono holds separate and isolated accounts to be used for the sole purpose of professional matters regarding Tabono Center for Wellbeing. These accounts are separate from any personal accounts held by any staff of Tabono.

Secure Messaging through EHR

Every client is invited to create a client account through our Electronic Health Records System. This allows secure messaging between you and your therapist. This is the preferred electronic method of contacting Tabono.

Email

If you feel it is necessary to contact your clinician via email, please do so only for administrative reasons (modifying appointments, billing information, etc.). Please do not email content related to our counseling sessions, unless otherwise discussed. Email communication is not completely secure or confidential. Any emails received from you and any responses Tabono sends to you become a part of your legal record.

Text Messages

Please do not send text messages, unless otherwise agreed upon. Your clinician will not respond to texting. Any text message received from you becomes a part of your legal record.

Friending

Tabono does not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.). Adding clients as friends on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and the therapeutic relationship.

Following

No clinician will follow any client on Twitter, Instagram, blogs, or other apps/websites. If there is content you wish to share from your online life, please bring it to your session where you and your clinician can explore it together. Tabono publishes Tidbits, or blog posts, on our website and social media. You are not expected to follow, nor share these posts. If you do so, please be aware of any easily recognizable names. If your clinician happens to notice that you are following any of these, you and your clinician may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on your working relationship.

Search Engines

It is not a regular part of Tabono's practice to search for clients on Google, Facebook, or other searchable sites. An exception could be during a crisis. If a clinician has reason to suspect you are a danger to yourself or others and all other reasonable means to contact you and/or your emergency contact have been exhausted, then Tabono may use a search engine for information to ensure your welfare. If this ever occurs, it will be fully documented and discussed at your next session.

Location-Based Services

Please be aware if you use location-based services on your mobile phone you may compromise your privacy while attending sessions. Tabono's office is not a check-in location on various sites such as Foursquare, however it can be found as a Google location. Enabled GPS tracking makes it possible for others to conclude you are a counseling client due to regular check-ins at our office location.

Cancellations and Lateness

Missed and cancelled sessions pose issues for both you and your clinician. First, the work of psychotherapy is sometimes challenging and when we hit a difficult place together, it can feel easier to want to avoid coming in for treatment. It is better for you to discuss this with your therapist rather than intentionally cancelling your appointment. Also, cancelling or failing to attend your session without notice can be unfair to others who are waiting to be seen.

If you cancel less than 48 hours, you will be charged \$50. Missed appointments without notice will also be charged \$50. If you are more than 15 minutes late for your appointment, this will count as a missed session and billed \$50.

Payment and Financial Arrangements

Fee For Service

At Tabono, we understand that medical and mental health services can be expensive. Nonetheless, there are many advantages to paying for sessions individually (also called out-of-pocket- or fee for service) rather than using insurance. For example, to bill insurance, Tabono has to provide a diagnosis. These diagnosed conditions become pre-existing conditions which may have an impact on applications for medical, life, and disability insurance. This is particularly troubling as many individuals seek counseling to help manage a specific stressor, not because they are struggling with a significant psychiatric disorder. Insurance companies, however, will not pay for services without a diagnosis. Another benefit for not using insurance is that many managed healthcare plans require pre-authorization for treatment. This may slow the therapeutic process. In addition, many plans limit the number of sessions an individual can use during an annual period. When you choose to pay “out of pocket” and not use insurance, you and your clinician are in control of treatment planning, the frequency of sessions, goals, and monitoring success. You also control ALL your information. It is not shared with insurance carriers.

Fees depend on each clinician. Master level clinician charge \$200 per 50-minute therapy hour. Doctoral level clinicians charge \$225 per 50-minute therapy hour.

We offer a sliding scale fee. For household incomes under \$250,00, the master level clinician rate is \$80 per 50-minute therapy hour. Doctoral level clinicians charge \$100 per 50-minute therapy hour.

Insurance Reimbursement

If you choose to use your insurance, Tabono will complete and submit forms necessary for billing purposes. Depending on your policy, you may be responsible for any co-pays or deductibles. Further, your policy may detail how many sessions are covered and if pre-authorization is required. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers. You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage policy that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. Tabono will try to assist you in any way we can. For example, if it is necessary to clear confusion, your therapist is willing to call the company on your behalf.

You should also be aware that insurance companies require certain information, including session dates and a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes, they may require that Tabono provides additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files. While all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, Tabono has no control over what carriers do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. If such information is requested, you will be provided with a copy of any information submitted.

Additional fees:

Notes, invoicing, physician consultation, and calls to your insurance panel regarding your policy are considered part of the typical service delivery and not billed separately. On the other hand, we charge between \$50-\$100 (depending on length) to complete paperwork associated with FMLA, work, and disability. This list is not exhaustive. Consults with an attorney are billed \$100 every 15 minutes.

Tabono expects payment at time of service. If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, Tabono has the option of using legal means to secure the 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.] In most collection situations, the only information released regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided and the amount due.

Professional Records

The laws and standards of our profession require that we keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy or a summary of your records. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, we recommend that you review them with your therapist so you can discuss any concerns with him/her. Clients may be charged for this additional meeting.

Minors

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is Tabono's policy to request an agreement from parents that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, they will be provided only general information about our work together, unless there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, they will be notified of this concern. When treatment is complete, they may also be provided a summary of your treatment. Before doing so, you and your Tabono clinician will discuss this matter. Your clinician will do his/her best to resolve any objections you may have.

Confidentiality

Information shared in the context of therapy is considered privileged communication. This means that all information disclosed in our sessions and written notes of those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission, except where law requires disclosure. Most of the provisions explaining when the law requires disclosure are described in the enclosed Notice of Privacy Practices.

When Disclosure Is Required by Law

Disclosure is required when there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect AND when a client presents a danger to self or others. Your safety is an utmost priority. Your clinician may be obligated to seek hospitalization for you or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

When Disclosure May Be Required

Disclosure may be required in a legal proceeding. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation that you initiate, the defendant may have the right to obtain your psychotherapy records and/or my testimony. If you have not paid your bill for treatment for a long period of time, your name, payment record and last known address may be sent to a collection agency or small claims court. In couple or relationship therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. Clinical judgment will be used when revealing such information.

Consultation with Other Professionals

On occasion, clinicians find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, your therapist will make every effort to avoid revealing identifying information about you. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, these consultations will not be shared with you unless your clinician believes it is clinically relevant.

Thank you for taking time to review these policies. Please do not hesitate to ask your clinician any questions about them.