

Declaration of Practices

Declaration of Practices and Procedures

1. The following declaration is provided for you to understand the nature of the counseling relationship, the qualifications of the therapist, the services that are offered, and your own rights and responsibilities as a client.

2. **Counseling Relationship:** Evidence of Grace has Licensed Professional Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists, they will work to facilitate an atmosphere of trust and understanding so that you, the client, may be able to openly examine patterns of behavior that are presently causing you difficulty. The goal of counseling is to work together as a team to create a plan of action that will identify new behaviors, find ways to modify your life in a more healthful manner, and develop a plan to implement these changes into your life.

3. **Areas of Expertise:** Our team will work with adults, children and teenagers in individual, and family settings to address growth and development, anger management, self-esteem, substance abuse and communication difficulties in an outpatient setting.

4. **Fee Scales and Office Procedures:** Fees paid by you, the client, or by your insurance company are to be paid directly to Evidence of Grace. Clients will be charged for appointments that are broken or canceled without 48-hour notice.

5. **Services Offered and Clients Served:** Our team uses a variety of Therapeutic counseling when counseling children, adolescents, adults, and their families in individual, group and family settings. We believe that all behavior is motivated by people striving to meet their basic physiological and psychological needs, which are the same for everyone. These basic needs are identified as four psychological needs for belonging, power, freedom, and fun and the physiological need for survival. Our team goals are to help clients find more effective ways of meeting their needs. Counseling consists of assisting clients in learning ways to regain control of their lives and to live more effectively. We will challenge clients to examine what they are doing, thinking, and feeling to find out whether there is a better way for them to function. We will place emphasis on the fact that we can control only our own behavior, therefore since we cannot control anyone else's behavior; the best way to control events around us is through what we do. We also believe that some problems are organic and may require medical attention, and if so, appropriate referrals will be made.

6. **Code of Conduct:** Since our center has Licensed Professional Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists, we are required by state law to adhere to a professional Code of Conduct for Licensed Mental Health Counselors and the Code of Ethics for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists as developed by the Texas Board of Examiners. Copies of these codes are available upon request.

7. **Privileged Communication:** We are required to abide by the professional practice standards for Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and Texas law. By law, counselors cannot release information regarding their clients to a third party without the written consent of the client. Material revealed in counseling will remain strictly confidential except under the following circumstances in accordance with state law: (1) the client signs a written release of information indicating informed consent of such release. Verbal permission for release of information is accepted only in the case of emergencies. (2) The client threatens serious imminent harm to him/herself or to a specific individual(s), (3) There is a reasonable suspicion of abuse/neglect against a minor, elderly person (65 or older), or handicapped person, (4) A court order is received directing the disclosure of information.

It is my policy to assert privileged communication on behalf of the client and the right to consult with the client if at all possible, except during an emergency, before mandated disclosure. In family or group counseling, information cannot be revealed to a third party without the written consent of all therapy participants. Material obtained from an adult client individually may be shared with the client's spouse or other family members only with the client's written permission. Any material obtained from a minor client may be shared with the client's parent or legal guardian. Note, however, that refusal to provide such permission could hinder the therapeutic process and result in referral.

8. **Client Responsibilities:** The client is responsible for keeping scheduled appointments, terminating the counseling relationship before being seen by another mental health professional, and notifying this counselor if the client is currently involved in an ongoing mental health relationship. The client is ultimately responsible for making changes in his/her own life. It is not ethical for the counselor to provide advice on specific matters such as divorce, separation, child custody, or legal matters. The counselor will assist the client in exploring options and possible consequences, but clients must make their own decisions.

9. **Physical Health:** Mental, emotional, and physical health is closely related. We recommend that each of my clients schedule a physical exam if they have not had one in the past year.

10. **Potential Counseling Risks:** Counseling involves change, not only in the client, but also in the interpersonal relationships of the client. Often change can produce stress that may impact these interpersonal relationships as well as revealing additional underlying issues that have been previously unclear or unknown. Personal change does not always lead to other problems, but it usually produces some change or adjustment in other relationships. Clients are encouraged to explore these issues as they may arise.