

How Long Will My Session Last?

by John C. Gifford, CBPM, NCTMB - Owner, Motionwise®

When is an hour not an hour? Often a new client will ask, "How much is it for the hour session?" I then have to clarify that the standard session, although often scheduled on the hour, will not last a full hour and may be much less than an hour. In the therapy services industry the meaning of an "hour" can vary greatly. It is a good idea to get clear from the beginning how your therapist defines the meaning of "an hour." When this issue is not clear, misunderstandings can arise. If some sessions are shorter than others, for example, clients may feel as if they are being charged excessively and therapists may feel as if their integrity is being challenged with the inference they are trying to get by with as little work as possible.

In my practice, for example, I have "limited sessions" which last up to 20 minutes, "standard sessions" which last up to 45 minutes, and "extended sessions" which can last up to 75 minutes. Therapists with full time practices need at least 15 minutes between sessions if they are doing deep bodywork with a clinical focus. Without time to regroup physically

and mentally, busy therapists will find themselves inefficient, stressed, and out of practice in a few years.

Now comes an area that can be confusing.

What is the meaning of "up to"? In "spa type" bodywork the session is geared toward filling the time allotted. In clinical bodywork, the session is completed when the therapist has determined, based on a multitude of factors related to the client and to the therapist, that it is time for the session to end. For a standard session in my practice, "up to" could mean a session requiring 25 minutes or 45 minutes. Every session is unique.

The bottom line is this: You must trust that your therapist is working for your best interest. If you have questions about any policy or procedure in their office ask for clarification. The tension of assumptions and confusion will only work to negate the benefits you hope to derive while you are there. If your therapist is defensive about bringing up questions such as the length of sessions, fees, etc., it may be prudent to look elsewhere for care. Till next time,



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John Gifford has performed over 30,000 sessions as an approved provider of sports massage and a unique style of bodywork called Bonnie Prudden Myotherapy® and Exercise Therapy. His mission as a clinician, lecturer, consultant, and author is to empower people to lead more active, successful, and fulfilling lives through the reduction and prevention of their muscular pain and tension.

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