

Life Choices Professional Group, LLC

810 North Sixth Avenue • Phoenix, AZ 85003
(602) 462-1115 • (602) 462-1119 fax

OFFICE POLICIES & GENERAL INFORMATION/AGREEMENT FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES

This form provides you, the patient, with information that is additional to that detailed in the Notice of Privacy Practices.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your (client's) written permission, except where disclosure is required by law. Most of the provisions explaining when the law requires disclosure were described to you in the Notice of Privacy Practices that you received with this form.

When Disclosure Is Required By Law: Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required by the law are: where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect and where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled (for more details see also Notice of Privacy Practices form).

When Disclosure May Be Required: Disclosure may be required pursuant to a legal proceeding. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by Dr. Waddell-Pratt. In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. Dr. Waddell-Pratt will use her clinical judgment when revealing such information. Dr. Waddell-Pratt will not release records to any outside party unless she is authorized to do so by all adult members (family or otherwise) who were part of the treatment.

Emergencies: If there is an emergency during our work together, where Dr. Waddell-Pratt becomes concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper psychiatric care, she will do whatever she can within the limits of the law, to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive the proper medical care. For this purpose, she may also contact the person whose name you have provided on the biographical sheet as emergency contact.

Health Insurance & Confidentiality of Records: Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO/PPO/MCO/EAP in order to process the claims. If you so instruct Dr. Waddell-Pratt, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Unless authorized by you explicitly, the Psychotherapy Notes will not be disclosed to your insurance carrier. Dr. Waddell-Pratt has no control or knowledge over what insurance companies do with the information she submits or who has access to this information. You must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk to confidentiality, privacy, or to future eligibility to obtain health or life insurance. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is entered into insurance companies' computers and soon will also be reported to the congress-approved, National Medical Data Bank. Accessibility to companies' computers or to the National Medical Data Bank database is always in question, as computers are inherently vulnerable to break-ins and unauthorized access. It has been reported that this medical data has been sold, stolen, or accessed by enforcement agencies; therefore, you are in a vulnerable position.

Confidentiality of E-mail, Cell Phone and Facsimile Communication: It is very important to be aware that e-mail and cell phone communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence, the privacy and confidentiality of such communication can be compromised. E-mails, in particular, are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers have unlimited and direct access to all e-mails that go through them. For this reason, Dr. Waddell-Pratt **DOES NOT** use e-mail as a form of communication with clients. The business email address is for use between Dr. Waddell-Pratt and other business entities only. Please be aware that, when outside of office hours, Dr. Waddell-Pratt uses her cell phone to return calls and to schedule appointments. However, return calls should be returned to the main office number. Faxes can easily be sent erroneously to the wrong address. It is important to know that confidentiality may be compromised under this circumstance. Please notify Dr. Waddell-Pratt at the beginning of treatment if you have questions about Life Choices' position regarding this manner of communication. E-mail or facsimiles are never to be used for emergencies or to schedule/cancel appointments.

Litigation Limitation: Due to the nature of the therapeutic process and the fact that it often involves making a full disclosure with regard to many matters which may be of a confidential nature, it is understood that should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), Dr. Waddell-Pratt could be subpoenaed to testify in court and/or treatment records could be subpoenaed. In these instances, the disclosure of confidential information may be unavoidable. Time spent addressing or responding to such matters is not covered by insurance so would need to be paid privately. Rates are based on the hourly rate.

Consultation: Dr. Waddell-Pratt consults regularly with other professionals regarding her clients; however, the client's name or other identifying information is never mentioned. The client's identity remains completely anonymous, and confidentiality is fully maintained.

* Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, upon your request, Dr. Waddell-Pratt will release information to any agency/person you specify unless Dr. Waddell-Pratt concludes that releasing such information might be harmful in any way.

TELEPHONE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: If you need to contact Dr. Waddell-Pratt between sessions, please leave a message with the answering service at (602) 462-1115 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Messages are generally retrieved a few times a day, except when otherwise specified. If an emergency situation arises, please indicate it clearly in your message. If you need to talk to someone under urgent conditions, you can contact the local crisis line at (602) 222-9444 or call the Police (911) for medical emergencies.

PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT: Clients are expected to pay the standard fee of \$160 per 45-50 minute session at the outset of each individual session unless other arrangements have been made (i.e., you have an insurance policy and are only obligated to make a co-payment). Group therapy or scheduled sessions lasting less or more than the usual time have different fees, as set by your insurance company. Telephone conversations, site visits, report writing and reading, consultation with other professionals, release of information, record reviews, extended sessions, travel time, etc. will be charged at the same rate, unless indicated and agreed otherwise. Any services rendered on your behalf for legal matters (to include but not limited to consultation with other professionals, review of records, report writing, travel, rendering of testimony, responding to subpoenas, etc.) also are assessed at my standard fee (\$160/hr); this is to be paid by you. Please notify Dr. Waddell-Pratt if any problem arises during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments. Please know that a \$25 fee will be assessed to you for

any NSF checks. Clients who carry insurance should know that professional services are automatically charged to your insurance company, unless agreed upon differently. In you so choose, Dr. Waddell-Pratt can provide you with a copy of your receipt on a monthly basis which you can then submit to your insurance company for reimbursement. As was indicated in the Health Insurance & Confidentiality of Records section, you must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk. Not all issues/conditions/problems, which are the focus of psychotherapy, are reimbursed by insurance companies. It is your responsibility to verify the specifics of your coverage. You agree to pay for any psychotherapy services not covered by your insurance company.

MEDIATION & ARBITRATION: All disputes arising out of or in relation to this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediation, before, and as a pre-condition of, the initiation of arbitration. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of Dr. Waddell-Pratt and client(s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in Maricopa County, AZ in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association which are in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, Dr. Waddell-Pratt can use legal means (court, collection agency, etc.) to obtain payment. The prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceedings shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum for attorney fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum.

THE PROCESS OF THERAPY/EVALUATION: Participation in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improving 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 very active involvement, honesty, and openness in order to change your thoughts, feelings and/or behavior. Dr. Waddell-Pratt will ask for your feedback and views on your therapy, its progress, and other aspects of the therapy and will expect you to respond openly and honestly. Sometimes more than one approach can be helpful in dealing with a certain situation. During evaluation or therapy, remembering or talking about unpleasant events, feelings, or thoughts can result in your experiencing considerable discomfort or strong feelings of anger, sadness, worry, fear, or experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc. Dr. Waddell-Pratt may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations that can cause you to feel very upset, angry, depressed, challenged, or disappointed. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to therapy in the first place, such as personal or interpersonal relationships, may result in changes that were not originally intended. Psychotherapy may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing, or relationships. Sometimes another family member can view a decision that is positive for one family member quite negatively. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and even frustrating. There is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results. During the course of therapy, Dr. Waddell-Pratt is likely to draw on various psychological approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and her assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, system/family, developmental (adult, child, family), or psycho-educational.

Discussion of Treatment Plan: Within a reasonable period of time after the initiation of treatment, Dr. Waddell-Pratt will discuss with you (client) her working understanding of the problem and in agreement with you will develop the treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and her view of the possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any unanswered questions about any of the procedures used in the course of your therapy, the possible risks, Dr. Waddell-Pratt's expertise in employing them, or about the jointly constructed treatment plan, please ask and you will be answered fully. You also have the right to ask about other treatments for your condition and their risks and benefits. If you could benefit from any treatment that Dr. Waddell-Pratt does not provide, she has an ethical obligation to assist you in obtaining those treatments.

Termination: As set forth above, after the first couple of meetings, Dr. Waddell-Pratt will assess if she can be of benefit to you. Dr. Waddell-Pratt does not accept clients who, in her opinion, she cannot help. In such a case, she will offer you referrals (if she can provide them) or she will refer you back to your insurance carrier. If at any point during psychotherapy, Dr. Waddell-Pratt assesses that she is not effective in helping you reach the therapeutic goals, she is obliged to discuss it with you and, if appropriate, to terminate treatment. In such a case, she would offer you referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, Dr. Waddell-Pratt will talk to the psychotherapist of your choice in order to help with the transition. If at any time you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another therapist, Dr. Waddell-Pratt will assist you in finding someone qualified, and, if she has your written consent, she will provide her or him with the essential information needed. You have the right to terminate therapy at any time. If you choose to do so, Dr. Waddell-Pratt will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

Dual Relationships: Not all dual relationships are unethical or avoidable. Therapy never involves sexual or any other dual relationship that impairs Dr. Waddell-Pratt's objectivity, clinical judgment, or therapeutic effectiveness or can be exploitative in nature. Dr. Waddell-Pratt will assess carefully before entering into any dual therapeutic relationships. Be aware that you may bump into someone you know in the waiting room or into Dr. Waddell-Pratt out in the community. Dr. Waddell-Pratt will never acknowledge working therapeutically with anyone without his/her written permission. Many clients choose Dr. Waddell-Pratt as a therapist because they know her before they enter into therapy with her and/or are aware of her stance on certain topics. Nevertheless, Dr. Waddell-Pratt will discuss with you, the often-existing complexities, potential benefits, and difficulties that may be involved in such relationships. Dual or multiple relationships can enhance therapeutic effectiveness but can also detract from it and often it is impossible to know that ahead of time. It is your, the client's, responsibility to communicate to Dr. Waddell-Pratt if the dual relationship becomes uncomfortable for you in any way. Dr. Waddell-Pratt will always listen carefully and respond accordingly to your feedback. Dr. Waddell-Pratt will discontinue the dual relationship if she finds it interfering with the effectiveness of the therapeutic process or the welfare of the client and, of course, you can do the same at any time.

CANCELLATION: Since scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24 hours (1 day) notice is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless we reach a different agreement, the full fee (\$160) will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. This charge will be your complete responsibility. The insurance company will not pay this assessed fee.

I have read the above Agreement and Office Policies and General Information carefully. I understand them and agree to comply with them.

Printed Name

Signature, Date