

Client Agreement and Disclosures

Welcome to Vancouver Counseling Group. The willingness to face life's challenges is the first and most important step in resolving them. By scheduling and coming in for your first counseling appointment, you have taken that first step. Vancouver Counseling Group specializes in working with people who want to face life's challenges and grow through the experiences life presents them. We look forward to helping you in that process.

Your First Appointment

Your first appointment with a therapist is for assessment/evaluation only. In other words, while the first appointment is often very helpful to clients, it is also an opportunity for us to understand what you are asking for help with and to determine whether we can provide those services. Most of the time, we can, but there are occasions when we need to make a referral for the help you need. The first appointment is also a time for you to ask questions you have and determine whether you feel comfortable with your therapist.

Fees

We have a limited number of sliding scale fee slots available. Clients paying directly for their appointments are expected to pay in full at each session. The typical therapy hour is approximately 50-60 minutes long.

Initial Assessment	\$150/HR	Couples Counseling	\$120/HR
Individual Psychotherapy	\$120/HR	Family Counseling	\$120/HR
		Group Therapy (1.5 hr)	\$50/HR

Vancouver Counseling Group reserves the right to refer delinquent accounts to a collection service.

Insurance

If you want us to bill your insurance, you must give us accurate information about your primary and any secondary insurance at your first appointment so we can properly bill for services. Otherwise you will be responsible for your bill and for pursuing reimbursement from your insurance provider(s).

Clients allowing us to bill their insurance are only expected to pay their co-pay amount at each session unless they have a deductible which must be met.

Depending on your insurance coverage, you may need a referral from your doctor, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or managed care organization in order for your insurance to cover all or part of your treatment.

It is important to understand that you are responsible for any portion of your bill that your insurance company does not pay.

Cancellations and Missed Appointments

In order for the therapy process to be effective it is important to keep regular appointments as scheduled. Your appointment reserves your therapist's appointment time for you and thus it cannot be made available for other clients.

We do understand that on rare occasions emergencies may arise that make it impossible for you to keep your scheduled session. Appointments can be canceled or rescheduled by calling our office or leaving a message on our answering machine at 360-718-8030. You will not be charged for appointments you cancel more than 24 hours in advance. If you must cancel an appointment with less than 24 hours advance notice to us, you will be charged at one-half the usual hourly rate.

If you miss (do not attend) an appointment and have not canceled it in advance, you will be charged at the full hourly rate for that appointment. Your therapist will wait for up to 15 minutes for you if you are late for an appointment and haven't notified us you are running late. If an appointment starts late, it still must end at the usual time so that your therapist can maintain his/her schedule on time. You will be expected to pay directly for late- canceled and missed appointments. **Insurance companies do not pay for appointments that you schedule but do not attend.**

Emergencies

In a life threatening emergency, you should always **call 911** or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. For mental health emergencies, the county mental health emergency number in Clark County is **360-696-9560**, or **360-993-7901** for family conflict. These numbers are staffed 24 hours a day.

Confidentiality

Psychotherapists are bound by their professional code of ethics and state law to keep what you discuss with them — including the fact that you have consulted with them — strictly confidential. Confidentiality laws provide that information can be revealed only under the following conditions:

1. With your written permission.
2. If you are an immediate danger to yourself or others, or are unable to attend to your basic needs (i.e., suicidal, homicidal, or unable to take care of yourself).
3. If child abuse or neglect is suspected. Such cases must be reported to Washington Department of Child and Family Services, or Oregon Children's Services Division.
4. If we are ordered by a court to release information.
5. If your account becomes delinquent and is referred for collection.

Reports and/or Court Testimony

Vancouver Counseling Group does not include any type of forensic treatment as part of its practice. Therefore, we reserve the right to decline to testify or produce reports for anyone. If we do write reports or testify, rates may run somewhat higher than regular therapy rates. These services may disrupt scheduled appointments for other clients or may require working outside regular business hours. If you think such services may be necessary, please talk to your therapist.

Counselor Registration or Certification

Under state law in Washington, counselors practicing for a fee must be registered or certified by the state licensing board for the protection of the public. *Registration* of an individual with the board does not include recognition of any practice standards, nor does it imply the effectiveness of any treatment. *Certification or licensing* of an individual by the licensing board does include a recognition that the counselor has met standards of education, training, supervised experience, and continuing education established by the board.

Client Rights and Responsibilities

Every client has the right and responsibility to participate in his or her own treatment. This includes the right to ask questions about treatment, request a change in treatment approach, and/or refuse treatment. It is a good idea to discuss your needs and expectations with your therapist in the first appointment in order to decide whether he/she is likely to be of help to you.

The Client Bill of Rights includes the following rights:

1. To expect that a licensee has met the minimal qualifications of training and experience required by state law.
2. To examine public records maintained by the Board and to have the Board confirm credentials of a licensee.
3. To obtain a copy of the Social Work Code of Ethics.
4. To report complaints to the Board.
5. To be informed of the cost of professional services before receiving services.
6. To privacy as defined by rule and law, including the exceptions to confidentiality of information obtained in the course of services which include the following:
 - a. Reporting suspected child abuse
 - b. Reporting imminent danger to client or others
 - c. Reporting to relevant agencies
 - d. Licensee consultation or supervision
 - e. Defense of claims brought by client against licensees.
7. To be free from being the object of discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, or other unlawful category while receiving services.

If you ever have a concern or complaint about your treatment at Vancouver Counseling Group, we want to hear from you and try to solve the problem. If your concern is not resolved by talking with your counselor, either you or your counselor can bring your concern to the attention of the clinical supervisor or director for review. For additional information or to complain you can contact the Washington Department of Health, Health Systems Quality Assurance, P. O. Box 47857, Olympia, WA 98504-7857.

HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices Compliance

As part of providing services to you, we maintain personal information about you and your health. State and federal law protects such information by limiting its uses and disclosures. For more information, please see our Notice of Privacy Practices (NOPP). You may discuss this with your counselor and you will sign a separate consent form.

Therapeutic Orientation, Methods and Techniques

All of the counselors on our staff have a minimum of a Master's degree in a counseling field from an accredited university. Each counselor has had training in clinical assessment, object relations, behavioral techniques, psychodynamic theory, family systems theory, marriage communication, child development, and human sexuality. The extent to which particular theories, conceptualizations, or techniques are employed in your counseling depends on the particular problem you want to work on and your counselor's assessment of the most beneficial approach to reaching your goals.

More than anything else, the therapeutic process involves examining your life, your situation, your relationships, and yourself. Counseling (psychotherapy) can provide a safe, private environment in which you and your therapist can bring their experience to bear on your individual situation. It is very much a collaborative process in which therapist and client together find solutions to problems. Therapy often involves more than problem solving in that it facilitates insight, growth, and self-actualization.

The focus of your counseling will be your current situation, relationships, thoughts and feelings, but will usually include an examination of earlier experiences that may have a bearing on the present situation. An examination of early memories and any dreams you would like to discuss may be useful in the therapy. Your counselor will work to provide an understanding and supportive environment that encourages improved communication, and increased self awareness, self-esteem, and independence.

If you have any feelings or opinions about the way your therapist is working with you, you are encouraged to share those thoughts with him/her.

Client Agreement

I have received a copy of the Vancouver Counseling Group’s “Client Agreement and Disclosures,” the Washington Department of Health brochure “What to expect from your Licensed Mental Health Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, [etc.],” and I understand that I can obtain specific information regarding my counselor’s licenses, training, and experience. I understand that I have the opportunity to discuss with my counselor any questions I have regarding confidentiality, fees, and policies. I understand that counseling services are psychological in nature and that I am expected to consult my physician regarding matters of physical health. I further understand that Vancouver Counseling Group cannot offer any guarantee of effectiveness or client satisfaction with counseling services.

Fee Agreement:

I hereby assign to Vancouver Counseling Group, LLC any and all insurance benefits due me to the full extent of my financial obligations for services rendered. I also authorize the release of any information required to process claims for insurance benefits. I understand that any co-payment, deductibles, or non-covered costs are my responsibility. I understand that if I use my credit or debit card, an abbreviated form of “Flagship Merchant Services” will appear on my statement. I understand that if I contest the charge and a chargeback occurs, I will be responsible for the chargeback penalty and any other costs incurred.

I understand that I am responsible to pay the full fee for any appointments I schedule, whether attended or not, with the following exceptions. There is no charge for appointments canceled with at least 24 hours advance notice. Appointments canceled with less than 24 hours notice are charged at one-half the usual fee.

My signature below acknowledges that I received the above described documents and disclosures and I agree with the fees, terms, consents, policies, and conditions described above.

(Agreement must be signed by adult clients and by the person who will be responsible to pay fees, if they are not the same person.)

Signatures:

Therapist	Client	Responsible Party
Date	Date	Date