

New Leaf Counseling Gayle Whitlock, LMFT 84009 1030 2nd Street, Suite B Santa Rosa, CA 95404 (707) 387-4146 www.gwhitlocktherapist.com

PRACTICE POLICIES

APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS Please remember to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance (707) 387-4146. **You will be responsible for the entire fee if cancellation is less than 24 hours.**

The standard meeting time for psychotherapy is 50 minutes. It is up to you, however, to determine the length of time of your sessions. Requests to change the 50-minute session needs to be discussed with the therapist in order for time to be scheduled in advance.

A \$10.00 service charge will be charged for any checks returned for any reason for special handling.

Cancellations and re-scheduled session will be subject to a full charge if NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE. This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time. You can change or cancel your appointment by calling (707) 387-4146.

TELEPHONE ACCESSIBILITY If you need to contact me between sessions, please leave a message on my voice mail. I am often not immediately available; however, I will attempt to return your call within 24 hours. Please note that Face- to-face sessions are highly preferable to phone sessions. However, in the event that you are out of town, sick or need additional support, phone sessions are available. If a true emergency situation arises, please call 911 or any local emergency room.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATION Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION I cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages. If you prefer to communicate via email or text messaging for issues regarding scheduling or cancellations, I will do so. While I may try to return messages in a timely manner, I cannot guarantee immediate response and request that you do not use these methods of communication to discuss therapeutic content and/or request assistance for emergencies.

Services by electronic means, including but not limited to telephone communication, the Internet, facsimile machines, and e-mail is considered telemedicine by the State of California. Under the California Telemedicine Act of 1996, telemedicine is broadly defined as the use of information technology to deliver medical services and information from one location to another. If you and your therapist chose to use information technology for some or all of your treatment, you need to understand that: (1) You retain the option to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting the right to future care or treatment or risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. (2) All existing confidentiality protections are equally applicable. (3) Your access to all medical information transmitted during a telemedicine consultation is guaranteed, and copies of this information are available for a reasonable fee. (4) Dissemination of any of your identifiable images or information from the telemedicine interaction to researchers or other entities shall not occur without your consent. (5) There are potential risks, consequences, and benefits of telemedicine. Potential benefits include, but are not limited to improved communication capabilities, providing convenient access to up-to-date information, consultations, support, reduced costs, improved quality, change in the conditions of practice, improved access to therapy, better continuity of care, and reduction of lost work time and travel costs. Effective

therapy is often facilitated when the therapist gathers within a session or a series of sessions, a multitude of observations, information, and experiences about the client. Therapists may make clinical assessments, diagnosis, and interventions based not only on direct verbal or auditory communications, written reports, and third person consultations, but also from direct visual and olfactory observations, information, and experiences. When using information technology in therapy services, potential risks include, but are not limited to the therapist's inability to make visual and olfactory observations of clinically or therapeutically potentially relevant issues such as: your physical condition including deformities, apparent height and weight, body type, attractiveness relative to social and cultural norms or standards, gait and motor coordination, posture, work speed, any noteworthy mannerism or gestures, physical or medical conditions including bruises or injuries, basic grooming and hygiene including appropriateness of dress, eye contact (including any changes in the previously listed issues), sex, chronological and apparent age, ethnicity, facial and body language, and congruence of language and facial or bodily expression. Potential consequences thus include the therapist not being aware of what he or she would consider important information, that you may not recognize as significant to present verbally the therapist.

MINORS If you are a minor, your parents may be legally entitled to some information about your therapy. I will discuss with you and your parents what information is appropriate for them to receive and which issues are more appropriately kept confidential.

FEES As of 1/1/2018: Individual therapy is \$120.00, couples therapy is \$185.00 per 45-50 minute session and family session is \$185.00-\$200.00 depending on the complexity of the issues presented. You will be asked to pay for each session at the time of the session. Payment can be made by check, cash or credit card. You may request a statement for tax purposes for reimbursement. There is no direct billing with any insurance company, as such, if you are choosing to work with me out of network, you are responsible for my full fee. I will provide a superbill (invoice) for you to submit to your insurance carrier.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A THERAPY CLIENT

You are responsible for coming to your session on time and at the time we have scheduled. Sessions last for 45-60 minutes. If you are late, we will end on time and not run over into the next person's session. If you miss a session without canceling, or cancel with less than 24 hours' notice within business hours (Monday - Saturday), you will be charged for that entire session. You can re-schedule or cancel your appointment by calling (707) 387-4146.

RECORD-KEEPING I keep brief records of each session noting the dates we meet, the topics we cover, progress reports from the client's perspective, interventions and impressions from the therapist and next steps. My records are kept private and not shared with others, in accordance with HIPPA requirements.

DIAGNOSIS If a third party, such as an insurance company, is paying for part of your bill, I am normally required to give a diagnosis to that third party in order to be paid. Diagnoses are technical terms that describe the nature of your problems and something about whether they are short-term or long-term problems. If I do use a diagnosis, I will discuss it with you.

OTHER RIGHTS You have the right to ask questions about anything that happens in therapy. I'm always willing to discuss how and why I've decided to do what I'm doing, and to look at alternatives that might work better. You can feel free to ask me to try something that you think will be helpful. You can ask me about my training for working with your concerns, and can request that I refer you to someone else if you decide I'm not the right therapist for you. Because I have a limited practice, I do not have 24-hour emergency or "on-call" coverage. If you believe you will need a therapist with 24-hour coverage, I will be happy to make a referral. If you experience a psychiatric emergency, you should call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room rather than waiting for me to call you back. You may also contact Psychiatric Emergency Services at (707) 576-8181. If I am out of town for an extended period, I will give you the name of a colleague you can contact in case of an urgent need.

TERMINATION Ending relationships can be difficult. Therefore, it is important to have a termination process in order to achieve some closure. The appropriate length of the termination depends on the length and intensity of the treatment. I may terminate treatment after appropriate discussion with you and a termination process if I determine that the psychotherapy is not being effectively used or if you are in default on payment. I will not terminate the therapeutic relationship without first discussing and exploring the reasons and purpose of terminating. If therapy is terminated for any reason or you request another therapist, I will provide you with a list of qualified psychotherapists to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source.

Should you fail to schedule an appointment for three consecutive weeks, unless other arrangements have been made in advance, for legal and ethical reasons, I must consider the professional relationship discontinued.

BY CLICKING ON THE CHECKBOX BELOW I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ,
UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.