

Rachel Abel, PsyD
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Office Policies and Informed Consent for Treatment

Please read the following sections regarding important guidelines for the provision of consultation and psychotherapy services in this practice. In order for our work to be most productive and effective, it is important that you have a clear understanding of your rights and responsibilities as a patient, as well as what you can expect in terms of the structure of sessions, confidentiality, clinical records, scheduling, and payment.

Where are you located? At this time, telehealth sessions only are available

How do I contact Dr. Abel? If you need to contact Dr. Abel, please call 347.762.1332 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. If an emergency situation arises, first call 911 or visit your local emergency room, and then indicate the status of your emergency clearly in your message. Please do not use email for emergencies, as these may not be received in a timely manner.

How long are sessions? Sessions are scheduled by appointment only. Initial consultations are 90 minutes and subsequent sessions are 45 minutes. If you are late for a scheduled session, the session will end by the regularly scheduled time to ensure timeliness for all patients.

Requests are frequently made for consultation outside of the scheduled therapy sessions. Dr. Abel will do her best to accommodate these requests. These are billed at the same rate as therapy sessions and may include:

- School conferences
- School visits
- Reports or letters
- Telephone conferences/conversations (beyond 15 minutes) with parents or other professionals

How does payment work? Dr. Abel offers a phone consultation for prospective clients at no charge (up to 30 minutes). Initial 90-minute consultations are \$275 and must be paid at the time of service. The fee for therapy sessions is \$225 per session. Payment is requested at the time of service; credit card or Zelle payments are accepted.

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Do you accept insurance? If you carry insurance, please understand that Dr. Abel's professional services are rendered and charged to *you*, not the insurance company. As an out-of-network provider, Dr. Abel will provide you with a statement that may be submitted for reimbursement from your insurance company.

What is the cancellation policy? Since the scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24 hours notice is required for rescheduling or canceling an appointment. You will be charged the full fee if you provide less than 24 hours notice, or if you miss an appointment. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions. In the rare occasion that an emergency requires Dr. Abel to cancel your appointment, she will make every effort to do so with at least 24 hours notice and you will not be charged.

Is treatment confidential? The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a federal law that provides privacy protection and patient rights with regard to the use and disclosure of your clinical records, also called Protected Health Information (PHI), used for the purpose of treatment, payment, and health care operations. All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission except where disclosure is required by law. It is unethical for Dr. Abel to disclose any information regarding your treatment, with a few exceptions: (1) You may authorize Dr. Abel to release records or other information to individuals of your choosing, such as insurance companies, family members, or other clinicians you may be working with (e.g., psychiatrists, nutritionists, physicians). This may only be done with your expressed written consent. (2) Under ethical and legal requirements, Dr. Abel must break confidentiality in the event of a clear and imminent danger to yourself or another person. If there is an emergency where Dr. Abel 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. (3) In the event that you disclose information that provides evidence of current abuse or neglect of minor children, the law requires that Dr. Abel make a report to the appropriate agency. (4) In certain legal proceedings, confidential information may be disclosed by court order. This is a rare occurrence and would not happen without your knowledge.

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 agreed that, should there be legal proceedings (such as, but not limited to divorce and custody

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disputes, injuries, lawsuits, etc.), neither you nor your attorney(s), nor anyone else acting on your behalf will call on Dr. Abel to testify in court or at any other proceeding, nor will a disclosure of the psychotherapy records be requested unless otherwise agreed upon. *For patients under 18 years of age:* Although Dr. Abel's responsibility to your child may require involvement in conflicts between legal guardians, Dr. Abel's involvement will be strictly limited to that which will benefit your child. This means, among other things, that you will treat anything that is said in session as confidential. You agree there will absolutely be no audio, video, or other recordings of sessions. In the event of any legal proceeding between parents, neither of you will ask Dr. Abel to testify in court, whether in person, or by affidavit. You also agree to instruct your attorneys not to subpoena Dr. Abel. Note that such agreement may not prevent a judge from requiring testimony, even though Dr. Abel will work to prevent such an event. If required to testify, Dr. Abel is ethically bound *not* to give her opinion about either parent's custody or visitation suitability. She is not an evaluator of custody or visitation time. If the court appoints a custody evaluator, guardian ad litem, or parenting coordinator, Dr. Abel will provide information as needed (if appropriate releases are signed or a court order is provided), but will not make any recommendation about the final decision.

