

## CSWFL INFORMED CONSENT FOR COUNSELING SERVICES

Welcome to my practice. The following documents contain important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read through them carefully and write down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our first meeting. When you sign these documents, it will represent an agreement between us.

I look forward to providing you support and services.

## **CSWFL Informed Consent for Counseling Services**

Welcome to the Counseling Group of Southwest Florida (CSWFL). CSWFL is a private counseling practice specializing in outpatient drug and alcohol counseling services for adolescents, young adults and adults. Counseling at CSWFL can be thought of as a partnership between yourself and an experienced professional, whom will assist you in identifying the changes you want to make, and provide you unconditional support and guidance as you work towards making those changes. Counseling requires you to take an active role in the process if you are to achieve success. Your counselor will often ask you to work on things we discuss during sessions at home, as well as apply what we work on to various areas of your life.

There are some possible risks involved, as counseling will often require you to discuss unpleasant and painful aspects of your life. You may experience feelings of sadness, loneliness, anger, frustration, helplessness, shame, and guilt as you work toward the changes you want to make. However, there are also numerous potential benefits to counseling, which may include making lasting changes in areas of your life which have been negatively impacted by drug and alcohol use. Additionally, you may discover positive and healthy aspects of yourself you were unaware of or had lost due to drug and alcohol use. There are no guarantees that you will achieve all of your counseling goals, but it is our experience at CSWFL that when you give a maximum effort in the counseling process, the likelihood of success is greatly enhanced.

Over the next few pages we will go over various important aspects of your counseling services with CSWFL, it is important that you read this material carefully, and ask any questions in areas that you may not understand. We will start by providing an overview of the counseling process at CSWFL.

### **Overview of Counseling process at CSWFL**

Counseling services begin at CSWFL with an in-depth assessment with a qualified professional to determine your specific needs and identify which services would be most appropriate to meet them. Upon completion of the assessment a CSWFL counselor will discuss with you (and your family) clinical recommendations, which includes recommended length of counseling, and the various counseling modalities to be employed during the counseling process. During your first counseling session your counselor will assist you in developing an outline of your goals for counseling, and the action steps necessary to accomplish them. This is also called your treatment plan. Your treatment plan will serve as a guide throughout the counseling process while at CSWFL. Periodic treatment plan reviews are scheduled and serve to review progress and to modify, add or remove treatment goals as you accomplish them, or your needs change.

Treatment plans and reviews at CSWFL are completed with you to ensure that the counseling process is specifically tailored to address your needs, and allow for the process to be fluid and changeable as you progress through treatment.

In adhering to our belief that the highest quality service requires a comprehensive approach, our clinical recommendations will often consist of a combination of several different types, or modalities, of counseling services within CSWFL. These services include individual counseling, group counseling, and family counseling. Additional services not offered at CSWFL may be recommended in conjunction with the services you are receiving us. If so, CSWFL will assist you and your family in making necessary referrals, if you so choose.

If its determined that CSWFL is not the most appropriate agency to address your specific needs, CSWFL will carefully discuss your treatment options and assist you in identifying a more appropriate service provider.

## Sessions and Fees

As mentioned above, upon completion of the initial assessment, your counselor will discuss with you which counseling services at CSWFL would be most appropriate to address your specific treatment goals. Individual counseling sessions at CSWFL last 50 minutes, and are typically scheduled at least one time per week, although they could be longer or more frequent, depending on treatment recommendations.

Group Counseling at CSWFL will also typically occur at least one time per week, unless otherwise indicated in your treatment recommendations, and will last 60 minutes. Counseling groups will typically consist of between 8 and 12 members and will be specialized and tailored to address the specific needs of its members (adolescence, young adults, or adults.) Family counseling sessions typically last 50 minutes and are scheduled as needed throughout the counseling process.

The fee for your initial in-depth assessment at CSWFL is \$150.00. The hourly fee for Individual counseling at CSWFL is also \$90.00. Group counseling sessions are \$25.00 per group session. For Group counseling services, the development of your treatment plan as well as treatment plan reviews are \$90 per plan and/or review session. Your individual treatment plan will be developed with you prior to starting your first group session and will be completed individually with your counselor (a treatment plan development session typically takes 60 minutes.) Likewise, treatment plan review sessions are also completed individually with your counselor and are scheduled and conducted once every four group sessions. The hourly fee for Family counseling at CSWFL is \$90.00 per hour. CSWFL provides drug testing on-site, and those tests are \$25 per test.

In addition, CSWFL charges \$90.00 per hour for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include treatment consultation and coordination, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other service you may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party.

Fees are to be paid at the time of service, or in advance.

A detailed estimate of fees will be provided to you and your families prior to beginning services with CSWFL. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, I may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment plan.

At this time, I am not an in network provider on any insurance panels and am not accepting private insurance. All fees are to be paid with cash, check or credit card.

Scheduled appointments require a 24-hour cancellation notice. You will be charged in full for any sessions not kept and not cancelled 24-hours in advance, except in the case of extreme emergencies

**Confidentiality:**

In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and a Counselor is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work to others with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions.

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. For example, if I believe that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is being abused, I must break confidentiality and file a report with the appropriate state agency.

If I believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I am required by law to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm himself/herself, I am obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her and/or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. These situations have rarely occurred in my practice. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

If you are under eighteen years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is my policy to request an agreement from parents that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless I feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, I will notify them of my concern. Before giving them any information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections you may have with what I am prepared to discuss.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at our first meeting. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and I am not an attorney.

**CSWFL Client Guidelines:**

Listed below are four principles or guidelines that CSWFL asks that both its clients & staff adhere to. It is our personal belief and experience that adherence to these principles will not only enhance your ability to achieve your counseling goals, but enhance the abilities of those around you. These guidelines were designed with you in mind, as it is always the goal at CSWFL to provide services that will maximize your personal ability to change.

1. **Respect:** Respect for yourself and the counseling process, as well as for others participating in the counseling process along with you.



2. **Confidentiality & Privacy:** Ensuring who you see at CSWFL, as well as what is shared by others during counseling sessions remains private and confidential. Trust is essential to success in the counseling process and adherence to this principle is necessary for the establishment of it.
  
3. **Participation:** Counseling is a process where your successes and achievements are directly correlated to your level of participation. Participation at CSWFL means coming to each counseling session prepared to work on your goals, as well as following through with the homework assignments and counseling recommendations provided to you during session.
  
4. **Commitment:** Like participation, your success is directly linked to your level of commitment. Commitment is expressed through attendance and timeliness to scheduled sessions, as well as through completion of homework assignments and the willingness to follow counseling recommendations.

CSWFL understands that not everyone seeking our services, shares the same goal of complete abstinence and recovery from alcohol and drug use, and your individual treatment plans will reflect your personal goal in this area. However, during the counseling process at CSWFL, we require that you maintain abstinence for the length of your counseling services. Furthermore, you must come to sessions unimpaired. If we believe that you are using drugs and alcohol or are coming to counseling sessions impaired, you will be given a warning, if the behavior continues; you may be discharged from counseling services at CSWFL. This only serves to benefit you, as counseling isn't cheap and we want all of our clients to receive the maximum benefit from our services.

Drug and alcohol testing is not a requirement for everyone seeking counseling services at CSWFL, but for many it can be a vital part of the treatment process, and it is a treatment service we offer on-site. If it has been established as a part of your individual treatment plan, we can provide the testing on-site. Drug and alcohol testing will be at your expense.

**Your signature below indicates that you have read all of the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Client Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/ Guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CSWFL Counselor Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**