

Informed Consent

Whitworth University | Marriage & Family Therapy Center

Welcome to the Whitworth Marriage & Family Therapy Center (MFTC).

Before beginning services, we would like to provide you with some information regarding the psychotherapy services we provide.

Therapeutic Relationship

A therapeutic relationship needs to function under professional guidelines for it to provide maximum benefit. To avoid dual relationship issues, our contact will be limited to therapy sessions or other professional concerns such as scheduling and/or emergencies. If there is contact in another setting, the therapist will protect your confidentiality by allowing you to initiate any interaction that occurs.

Sessions are fifty (50) minutes in length for individual, couples/marriage and family therapy, unless otherwise agreed that they will be longer. The fee for service to non-Whitworth students is \$25 per session. If you must cancel a session, at least 24 hours' notice is preferred in order to allow others to use the time vacated.

Therapist Qualifications

Therapy services offered through the MFTC are provided by interns of the Master of Arts in Marriage & Family Therapy program at Whitworth University. Therapists are supervised by licensed marriage and family therapists who are trained in providing supervision to interns.

Video Monitoring/Recording

Therapy sessions may be monitored or reviewed by the university faculty supervisor to provide instruction and live supervision to interns. Any recording is kept strictly confidential.

Effects of Therapy

While benefits are expected from therapy, no specific outcomes are guaranteed. Part of the process is to establish goals and a plan for reaching them. The client's time in counseling may lead to major changes in how they choose to view important issues in their life. The exact nature of these changes is not predictable and could affect significant relationships, the client's job and/or the client's view of themselves. During the therapy process, there may be periods of increased discomfort and strong feelings. The intent is to facilitate the best possible outcome based on your goals for therapy. The therapist will tailor therapy techniques to the client's specific presenting issue.

Client Rights

The length of time in the therapeutic process varies from a few sessions to multiple years, depending on the needs and goals of the client. The client is in complete control of this decision and may terminate the therapy relationship at any time. However, the therapist asks that clients participate in a termination session when that decision is made. At any time, the client may refuse or discuss modifications of any therapeutic technique or suggestion.

The MFTC is committed to providing therapeutic services in a professional manner consistent with accepted legal and ethical standards. If at any time the client is dissatisfied with services, please let the therapist know. If the therapist is unable to resolve the concerns, the client is welcome to contact the center director, Doug Jones, Ph.D., at 509.777.4430. If the client feels the therapist is not being helpful, the MFTC will help locate another therapist to continue the counseling process. If the client feels an ethical violation has occurred, they may contact the Washington State Department of Health, Health Professions Quality Assurance Office at 360.236.4700.

Referrals

There may be times that the therapist refers the client to other professionals to provide services that will enhance the therapy process. If the client or therapist believes that a referral to another counselor is needed, the MFTC will provide the client with names of other counselors who may assist the client. The client is responsible for contacting and evaluating

those referrals. During the client's time in therapy, they will be expected to allow contact with other professionals such as physicians, therapists and psychiatrists to maximize the quality of care.

Confidentiality

Most communication in the therapy relationship is kept private. However, the following limitations do exist:

1. The therapist may determine that the client is at risk of harming themselves or someone else. This may include physical restraint from self-harm and requesting emergency assistance and transportation to a medical facility.
2. If the client discloses abuse or neglect of a child or an elderly or disabled person.
3. If the client discloses sexual contact with another mental health professional.
4. If the therapist is ordered by a court or subpoena to disclose information or is otherwise required by law to disclose information.
5. If the client directs a release of records via a Release of Information Form.

Children over the age of 13 are considered legal adults when involved in mental health services. Therefore, the same laws as adults govern confidentiality. Before the age of 13, communication of confidential information between the therapist, client and parent/legal guardian is at the discretion of the therapist.

Telehealth

When appropriate and necessary, the MFTC may offer clients telehealth therapy. Telehealth therapy is providing psychotherapy via a video call or, in rare occasions, phone call.

Telehealth therapy may not be appropriate for all clients. In the interest of client safety and therapist competence, some clients may benefit most from in-person therapy. It is at the therapist's and supervisor's discretion to determine if a client who requests telehealth will receive those services.

Even when meeting over the screen, we follow the same privacy laws and personal confidentiality ethics as face-to-face sessions. Therapists will be in a private room with headphones to ensure discretion. It is the client's responsibility to create a private and quiet space on their end of the call. To stay ethical, confidential and legally compliant, the MFTC uses a program called Simple Practice to provide this form of care. This platform allows client information to be encrypted and kept safely secret. However, like in-person sessions, there are limits to confidentiality; those remain the same in telehealth therapy.

The goal is for MFTC interns to provide the same level of care – the same attentiveness, therapeutic process and care – in telehealth as in face-to-face care. However, some aspects of therapy are made more challenging in the cyberspace across screens. The MFTC will do everything within our power to offer consistent care, but it may not feel exactly like in-person therapy. If the client feels uncomfortable or that the quality of therapy diminishes as a result of telehealth services, please contact the clinic for us to address concerns.

Records

All records are the property of the MFTC. Only the therapist or official designee may disclose copies of written client information or release client information. Records are maintained for five years (per IAC WAC 246.809.035).

By signing below, you indicate you have read and understand this Informed Consent and that any questions you had were answered to your satisfaction. If you are signing as a client, you acknowledge you are 13 years of age or older and are legally permitted to pursue your own therapy services. If you are signing as the legal guardian of the client, you ascertain your legal right do so, including the right to pursue therapy services for the child client.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I consent to sharing information provided here.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent or guardian signature if client is under the age of 13.