



PRACTICE POLICIES

APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Please remember to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance. You will be charged a **\$50 cancellation fee** if notice is provided in less than 24 hours. I understand that illness and emergency occur, therefore the 1st late cancellation of the year is free of charge. Following this event, applicable fees will be applied.

If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time. I often cannot run over scheduled time due to subsequent appointments. **If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, we will need to reschedule your appointment. If we are unable to reschedule the appointment for the same week, the above late cancellation fee will apply.

If you know you will be late in accordance with this policy, please give me a call or text to let me know. **

CONTACTING MELISSA

If you need to contact me between sessions, please send me an email, text or leave a message on my voice mail. I am often not immediately available; however, I will attempt to return your call the same day. Please limit communication off working hours to emergencies and/or scheduling concerns. Basically, if the conversation can wait until we meet again for session, make a note of what you would like to discuss and bring it to session with you. We can dive in then. If a true mental health emergency situation arises and I am not available, please call 911 or go to any local emergency room.

PAYMENT

Payment of your session fee (if paying out of pocket) or insurance copay is due at time of session. I take payment via cash, check or debit/credit card. If using a card, a HIPPA compliant online payment system called IVY Pay is used. I will walk you through setting up the process at the end of our session. I will send out statements monthly reflecting any balances due and to keep you informed as to the status of your account. If at any time during our work together, you need considerations for financial difficulty, please discuss options with me. I am more than willing to work out payment plans to help you continue treatment.

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, Instagram, Twitter, 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. The only exception for social media is LinkedIn. I will accept requests from LinkedIn from a professional standpoint, but only if the request originates from the client. I will not begin the connection. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it. This is also in accordance with ethical standards of my profession.

MAIL CHIMP

I use the confidential email marketing platform, Mail Chimp, to communicate vacations, other important information and group/program offerings. As a client of Metta Counseling Chicago, LLC, I automatically add you to my Active Client list. Of course, you may unsubscribe at any time but, this may prevent you from receiving important information. This being considered, I also try my best to verbally remind clients of important information.

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. I do not discuss in-depth therapeutic issues via email or text. 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.

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. In general, anyone over the age of 12 is guaranteed privacy in therapeutic settings and must provide written permission to disclose information regarding treatment.

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.

If more than a month passes without a session arranged, unless an understanding of a pause in sessions has been arranged, for legal and ethical reasons, I must consider the professional relationship discontinued. If you would like to restart sessions, please let me know and we will take appropriate steps to begin again.

As you will or have learned, I am a flexible and open therapist. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to bring them to my attention.