

CHILD AND FAMILY COUNSELING CENTER

OFFICE PROCEDURES

The following is a summary of our office procedures at the Child and Family Counseling Center. They are intended to answer commonly asked questions and reduce any possible confusion. Please read these procedures carefully and let us know if you have any questions.

CLINIC INFORMATION

Our business hours are 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM Monday through Thursday and 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Friday. Some therapists have evening hours. Our office phone number is (703) 670-5738. When you call, you will always get our voice mail. Dial the extension number for your therapist at any time during the message and your call will go directly to your therapist if he or she is available or to voice mail. Press 0 if you need to reach administrative staff or our psychiatrists. (703) 670-8213. Our website is <http://cfcc.info>.

SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS

While our therapists do their own scheduling, our psychiatrists have the administrative staff do their scheduling, which is done on our computer. Please keep track of your appointment card and bring it to your appointment if possible. This helps us in case of scheduling problems, which occasionally occur. Please note that some insurance companies do not pay for more than one mental health appointment in a single day (e.g. seeing two different therapists, such as a psychologist and a psychiatrist). However, having a regular counseling session and a 10-15 minute medication check is generally allowed. Please keep this in mind when scheduling.

THE WAITING ROOM

We would appreciate your help in keeping the waiting room neat. Please remember that your children are your responsibility while they are here. Our secretarial staff cannot take the responsibility for disciplining your children. We ask that you instruct your children to clean up after themselves. We also ask that you keep the noise level to a minimum. As much as possible, please do not bring more than a couple of children into the office. After hours, make sure that the front door is locked. We ask that you not leave your children unattended in the waiting room after hours. Please **do not** bring food or drink into the waiting room, as we have had numerous problems with spills.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Payment is expected at the time of your visit. Please pay your therapist directly. For psychiatrists, please pay the receptionist. You may pay by cash, check, VISA, or MasterCard. If you pay in cash, exact change is required as we do not carry change. Checks should be made payable to **CFCC** (Child and Family Counseling Center). Please make your check out **in advance**, as this helps us to stay on schedule.

If you expect your health insurance to cover part or all of the cost, you will need to check with your insurance company to verify what kind of coverage you have and whether or not pre-authorization of sessions is required. You may be responsible for the entire charge if you fail to get proper authorization. Please note that although our office staff is prepared to assist you in working with your insurance company, you are responsible for seeing that your bill is paid in a timely fashion. Unpaid bills may be submitted to a collection agency to obtain payment.

BILLING INFORMATION

Insurance claims are mailed on a weekly basis. Billing statements will be sent to you only if you have an outstanding balance. Ask your therapist if you need an insurance receipt to submit to your insurance company or for a pre-tax spending account.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Regular attendance at scheduled sessions is expected, as the time is reserved for you. In the event that you are unable to keep an appointment, we ask that you contact us at least **24 hours** in advance in order to avoid being charged for the missed appointment. You can always leave a message on our voice mail if the office is closed. Since insurance does not pay for missed appointments, you will be responsible to pay the missed appointment fee. Ask your therapist if you have concerns about our cancellation policy.

CHANGES IN ADDRESS OR INSURANCE COVERAGE

Please inform us of any changes in address, phone numbers, or insurance carriers. You are responsible for paying for sessions if you change insurance carriers and fail to get the proper authorization, if required, for continued care. Please let us know if you have any secondary insurance. While we generally do not file secondary insurance (you can do this yourself), in some cases having a secondary insurance can cause problems with having your sessions be reimbursed. Also, check your benefits each year, as they can change.

EMERGENCIES

If an emergency arises **after business hours** and you need to reach your therapist, call our 24-hour answering service at (703) 257-3669. If your therapist is unavailable or out of town, ask to speak to the therapist on call. If you do not hear back from someone in a reasonable amount of time, call the answering service **again**. Ask your therapist if you are unsure what situations would warrant an emergency call.

APPOINTMENT TIMES

Please let the front desk staff know when you arrive for your appointment. Our therapists try their best to meet with you on time. Emergencies do arise, however, and sometimes you may have to wait. We apologize for the inconvenience and ask you to be patient. If you have waited longer than 10 minutes, please check in with our secretary again.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND RELEASING INFORMATION

Because of confidentiality laws, administrative staff cannot give out information to your relatives (e.g., your spouse or children). This includes billing information, whether or not you have arrived, or when your next appointment is. You will need to sign a release of information form in order for us to release this information.

PHONE CALLS

Concerns that arise during the week are generally best discussed during your next therapy session, as our time is often limited. Feel free to use **voice mail** or to **fax a note** to your therapist if you need to convey information. Some therapists communicate via email, but please remember that confidentiality of email *cannot be guaranteed*. Our voice mail has limited capacity, so please keep your messages brief and always include your phone number. If you have a concern that cannot wait, our therapists will do their best to respond to your messages as soon as possible. However, it may not always be possible to return messages the same day. Let the front desk know if you have an urgent concern. If you don't hear back, please call again.

WHEN CALLING FOR PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

Please be sure to get your medication refills during your regularly scheduled appointments, which should be scheduled **before** you run out of medication. Refills cannot always be done over the phone and you **may be charged** for phone refills. If you do call in for a refill, please have your prescription numbers available. We need to know the name of your medications, the dosages, the amount you usually receive, when you last had it refilled, the phone/fax number of your pharmacy, and the date of your next appointment. You will only be given enough of a refill until your next scheduled appointment. Please note that if it has been a long time since your last appointment, the doctor may need to see you first before refilling a medication. You may have to wait days or weeks to get in, so please try to keep this in mind.

PATIENT RESOURCES

We have binders in the waiting room with helpful articles and resources. More information is available on our website, including various handouts: <http://cfcc.info>.

FINALLY

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help make the administrative aspects of our work together go more smoothly. We look forward to working with you!