

JAKE THIESSEN, PhD
Individual, Couple & Family Therapy
West Shore Office Park
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717-730-0733

INFORMATION FOR THOSE ENGAGING IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

The following information is designed to answer questions that typically arise when entering psychotherapy. My practice policies and procedures are outlined along with legal and ethical issues about which you have a right to be informed. If you have questions or concerns about anything not addressed below, please raise those with me early in our work.

Training and Background. I received my masters in theology and marriage and family therapy from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California in 1977. In 1979 I received my doctorate in marriage and family therapy from Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. I am a licensed marriage and family therapist and a clinical member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. After completing my formal academic education, I taught full time at the college level for fifteen years while maintaining a private practice.

My approach to psychotherapy is integrative and systemic. I believe people are multifaceted—including physical, spiritual, emotional, cognitive and relational dimensions. Effective therapy is respectful of each of these dimensions and addresses them individually and collectively as the situation warrants. I believe meaningful change occurs only as these aspects of our selves are understood, accepted and engaged empathically.

Confidentiality. A critical, foundational dimension of the practice of psychotherapy is the development of a trusting relationship between therapist and client. Such trust requires, of course, the privacy and confidentiality of all information you share with me. Be assured that I will do my utmost to respect, protect, and guard the confidential nature of our conversations. This means, for example, I will make every effort to safeguard your records and that I will disclose confidential information only with your written consent. There are, however, certain situations that require me to report information revealed during the course of therapy to other persons or agencies without your written consent. These situations are outlined below.

- If you reveal information about physical or sexual abuse or neglect of a child, a disabled person or an elderly person, I am required by law to report this to the appropriate authority.
- If you threaten suicide I am required by law to report this to appropriate authorities and, if possible, to notify persons close to you.
- If you threaten bodily harm or death to another person, I am required by law to warn the intended victim(s) and notify the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

- If a court of law issues a legitimate subpoena, I may be required by law (i.e., court order) to provide the information specifically described in the subpoena. (Note: If you choose to use confidential information on your behalf in a court proceeding, such as a custody or divorce proceeding, the opposing attorney also has a right to your records.)
- If you are using health insurance for reimbursement you may have already signed a “consent for release of information” form. This means the insurance company can request information from me, including diagnosis, type of therapy, dates of treatment, fees charged, and treatment progress and outcome.

Limitation on Confidentiality in Couple and Family Therapy. When I agree to work with a couple or a family, I consider that couple or family (the treatment unit) to be the patient. For instance, if there is a request for the treatment records of the couple or family, I will seek the authorization of all members of the treatment unit before I release confidential information to third parties.

During the course of my work with a couple or a family, I may see a smaller part of the treatment unit (e.g., an individual) for one or more sessions. These sessions should be seen as a part of the work that I am doing with the family or the couple, unless otherwise indicated. If you are involved in one or more of such sessions with me, please understand that generally these sessions are confidential in the sense that I will not release any confidential information to a third party unless I am required by law to do so or unless I have your written authorization.

However, I may need to share information learned in an individual session with the entire treatment unit—that is, the family or the couple, if I am to effectively serve the unit being treated. I will use my best judgment as to whether, when, and to what extent I will make disclosures to the treatment unit, and will also, if appropriate, first give the individual or the smaller part of the treatment unit being seen the opportunity to make the disclosure. Thus, if you feel it necessary to talk about matters that you absolutely want to be shared with no one, you might want to consult with an individual therapist who can treat you individually.

This policy is intended to allow me to continue to treat the patient (the couple or family) by preventing, to the extent possible, a conflict of interest to arise where an individual’s interests may not be consistent with the interests of the unit being treated. For instance, information gathered in the course of an individual session may be relevant or even essential to the proper treatment of the couple or family. If I am not free to exercise my clinical judgment regarding the need to bring information to the family or couple during their therapy, I might be placed in a situation where I will be unable to further the therapy goals agreed upon at the onset of our work.

Treatment. Each therapy session is generally 50 minutes long. The goals for the therapy are determined within the first few sessions and will be periodically reviewed and refined. You and I will mutually agree on the frequency of our meetings. Termination, hopefully, will occur because both of us mutually agree that the goals have been satisfactorily addressed or because circumstances beyond our control bring our work to a close. Though you have the right to terminate therapy at any time, it would be in your best interest to discuss openly with me your concerns if you are thinking about ending therapy.

Participating in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you including reduction or alleviation of psychological distress, improved interpersonal relationships, a better understanding

of your personality patterns and life goals, values and direction, resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy. Working toward these benefits, however, requires effort on your part and may result in your experiencing considerable discomfort. Remembering, discussing, and resolving unpleasant events and situations in therapy can bring on strong feelings of anger, sadness, fear, depression, and so forth. Attempting to resolve issues between marital partners, family members, and other individuals can also lead to discomfort and may result in changes that were not originally intended. In other words, meaningful change is often accompanied by the need to undergo some distress. My therapeutic knowledge, skill, understanding, and support will be employed to make this process manageable and constructive in outcome. I will always do my best, but alas, there is no guarantee.

Since the experience of therapy can be quite intense, many people find it difficult to recall all that occurred during the course of a session. Some find it useful to tape record sessions to be listened to between sessions. Please feel free to bring a tape recorder to record your session.

Therapy and Physical Symptoms. Physical symptoms are sometimes the result of emotional stress and can be the focus of psychotherapeutic work. It is important, however, that an appropriate medical specialist review your current situation to assess the degree to which the symptoms have a physical base. I will, therefore, request that you undergo a medical examination whenever a physical symptom is a primary concern. When appropriate, I will work closely with your medical specialist to coordinate treatment and services.

Medications and Psychotherapy. In the event a consideration of medication for psychological distress seems warranted, I will then assist you in obtaining a medical evaluation, preferably with a psychiatrist. Please inform me of any and all prescribed medications and of any changes made in prescriptions.

Fees for Service. Although I am flexible in my fee schedule, I normally charge \$90.00 per session for individual, marital or family therapy and \$45.00 per session for group therapy. Since I am a licensed marriage and family therapist and *not a psychologist*, some insurance companies will not cover my fees. I will do my best to work with you and your health insurance company to acquire the benefits you deserve. My policy is to request payment at the end of each of the first four sessions. Thereafter, you may pay me by the 25th of each month if you prefer. *We will be more efficient in our sessions if you have your check written before you come in.* Should you have trouble meeting the cost of therapy, please do not hesitate to discuss your situation with me.

A fee is charged for telephone and email consultations of a therapeutic nature that exceed ten minutes. Routine calls for the purpose of scheduling or billing information are not billed.

Missed Appointments and Cancellations. Your appointments represent a contract for my services. I am not a salaried employee. My income is generated solely by fees received for services. Therefore, it is my policy to charge full fee for appointments missed with less than 24 hours notice. If, however, you miss an appointment without 24 hours notice for a reason totally beyond your control, discuss this with me and I will, of course, waive the fee. Please note that insurance companies cannot be billed for missed appointments.

Telephone Accessibility and Emergency Calls. Since I do not have a receptionist, my phone is equipped with a telephone-answering device. You may leave a message there at any time of day or night. I check messages frequently and will make every effort to return your call within 24 hours of receiving your message. *I am not in a position to offer emergency service.* If you have an emergency and are unable to reach me please contact your local crisis intervention center or dial 911. The telephone number for crisis intervention can usually be found in the blue pages of your phone book under the “Guide to Human Services” section.

Vacation Policy. I will be away from my office periodically throughout the year. Whenever this occurs I will notify you well in advance of my leaving and will provide you with either a number where you can reach me or the number of a colleague who can be of assistance to you should you need it.

I hope this information serves to answer most of your questions. If you have any comments or concerns, please discuss them with me.

By signing below you indicate that you have read the above information, have had an opportunity to thoroughly discuss it with Jake Thiessen and have been given a copy for future reference.

Signed _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Date _____

Client Information

Name _____
Last First MI

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

Please circle the number where you prefer to be called. Is it OK to leave message? Y N

Birth Date: ____/____/____ Sex: M F Social Security No. ____-____-____

Marital Status: Married Single Divorced Widowed Other

Spouses Name: _____ Birth Date: ____/____/____

Referred by: _____

Insurance _____

Insured _____ ID# _____

Jake Thiessen, PhD

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DIRECTIONS TO THE OFFICE

My office is in the West Shore Office Park on Lenker Street, off the Carlisle Pike and behind the Carpet Mart. It is located between the Hampden Center, home of the Hampden 8 Movie Theaters, and Gateway Square, home of Carrabba's Italian Grille. Lighthouse Drive intersects the Carlisle Pike.

Off I-81 from the North or South

Take the Rt. 581 exit (Exit 59) toward the Carlisle Pike. Once on Route 581, take the Carlisle Pike exit (3), the exit following the Creekview exit. The exit ends at a traffic light. Turn left at the light. As you turn left, remain in the left hand lane being sure to go under the overpass. Once past the overpass turn left at the Rancho Grande restaurant on Lighthouse Drive. Follow Lighthouse Drive to the West Shore Office Park, which will be on your left. Go to number 5006, the Pine Building.

From Harrisburg/Hershey/Lancaster

Follow I-83 south and continue as it becomes Rt. 581. Continue on Rt. 581 exiting at the Carlisle Pike exit. The exit ends at a traffic light. Turn left at the light. As you turn left, remain in the left hand lane being sure to go under the overpass. Once past the overpass turn left at the Rancho Grande restaurant on Lighthouse Drive. Follow Lighthouse Drive to the West Shore Office Park which will be on your left. Go to number 5006, the Pine Building.

From Carlisle

Follow Rt. 11 (Carlisle Pike) past Gateway Square to Lighthouse Drive. Turn left at the Rancho Grande restaurant on Lighthouse to the West Shore Office Park. Or, follow Trindle Road (641) through Mechanicsburg to Sporting Hill Road. Turn left off Sporting Hill to the Carlisle Pike. Turn left off the Carlisle Pike and go one block to Lighthouse Drive. Then, turn right on Lighthouse to the West Shore Office Park. Go to number 5006, the Pine Building.

From Rt.15 and points south

Follow Rt. 15 north to the Rt. 581 exit toward Carlisle. Once on Rt. 581, take the Carlisle Pike exit. The exit ends at a traffic light. Turn left at the light. As you turn left, remain in the left hand lane being sure to go under the overpass. Once past the overpass turn left at the Rancho Grande restaurant on Lighthouse Drive. Follow Lighthouse Drive to the West Shore Office Park which will be on your left. Go to number 5006, the Pine Building.

From Rt. 15 and points north

Follow Rt. 15 south to I-81. Take I-81 south towards Carlisle exiting at Rt.581 (exit 59). Once on Rt. 581, take the Carlisle Pike exit. The exit ends at a traffic light. Turn left at the light. As you turn left, remain in the left hand lane being sure to go under the overpass. Once past the overpass turn left at the Rancho Grande restaurant on Lighthouse Drive. Follow Lighthouse Drive to the West Shore Office Park, which will be on your left. Go to number 5006, the Pine Building.