

Information for New Clients

Education & Licensure

I have a Master of Arts in Expressive Therapies and Mental Health Counseling from Lesley University and am currently enrolled in a post-graduate certificate for Play Therapy from the University of Southern Maine. I have completed the Cape Cod Training Program through the Gestalt International Study Center. I hold a license with the state of Maine as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

In addition, I maintain memberships with the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association, National Play Therapy Association and New England Play Therapy Association.

Areas of Competence

I am trained for work with individuals (children, adolescents and adults), groups, families and couples. I have trained in Foxborough Public Schools and at The Center for Grieving Children. I have also trained in psychiatric hospitals, homes with families in crisis and Residential Treatment. I have experience in the areas of grief, trauma, depression, stress/anger management, anxiety, relationships, abuse, sexuality, ADHD, gender identity and various issues with people with disabilities.

I have extensive training in the use of expressive arts therapy, including the following modalities: music, art, drama, writing, poetry, sandtray and movement. I am under training and supervision for Play Therapy, I specialize in Child Centered Play therapy, Adlerian Play Therapy, Gestalt play therapy and Filial Play Therapy. I also engage in ongoing trainings through the Gestalt International Study Center.

Course of Action

At our initial meeting, we will assess your current needs and concerns, and decide if we can work together to address them. I do not take clients to whom I do not feel I cannot be helpful. If the client feels comfortable, I may use the expressive arts during the intake process. We will evaluate the results of our work together and determine goals for our time together. If diagnosis is needed, I will discuss the diagnosis with you and the reasons behind the diagnosis and ask for your input and reflection. My course of treatment is a combination of expressive art therapy interventions, play therapy interventions and evidenced-based practice interventions.

You may seek a second opinion from another therapist and may terminate therapy at any time. Deciding when to stop our work together is meant to be a mutual process and often we will discuss a plan for phasing out of therapy. If it is not possible to phase out of therapy, I recommend a termination session.

The Benefits and Risks of Therapy

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The purposes of Psychotherapy are generally used to help someone address, cope with and accept major life changes and stressors such as relationship conflict, traumatic events and stressors, workplace stress and substance abuse. As with any powerful treatment, there are some risks as well as many benefits. In therapy, there is a risk that clients will, for a time, have uncomfortable levels of strong emotions or negative feelings. These feelings could be disruptive in areas of your life and some people in the community may mistakenly view anyone in therapy as weak or dangerous. Even with our best efforts, there is a risk that therapy may not work out well for you.

While you consider these risks, you should also know the benefits of therapy have been demonstrated in hundreds of well-designed research studies. In therapy, people have an opportunity to learn new strategies to manage and understand difficult feelings, experience an improved mood, solve challenging life problems and enjoy improved interpersonal relationships.

About Appointments

The first two times we meet, we will need to give each other a lot of basic information. Following this, we will meet for 50 minutes once or twice a week, then less often as treatment progresses. Except in illnesses and emergencies, I make every effort to provide advance notice of my vacations or any other times we cannot meet. Please try not to miss sessions. In the therapeutic space, consistency is one of the most important aspects.

Why might you ask? Because safety builds trust and trust builds relationships. The therapist and client work to build a relationship to reach certain goals. Without consistency, safety is not obtained and thus, the relationship is not built on a strong foundation, often lacking the necessities to reach therapeutic goals.

In the case of snow or inclement weather, I will call to cancel if I will not be in the office. I do not have any expectation that someone will walk or drive in unsafe weather conditions so please let me know if you need to reschedule. As an office policy, if the Lewiston Public School system has cancelled school due to the weather, the office will also be closed.

If you need to contact me :

If you have a behavioral or emotional crisis, you or your family members should call the statewide crisis number at 1-888-568-1112, call 911 or go to your local emergency room.

My telephone number is 207-784-3811. I make every effort to be available to you when needed. That being said, I cannot promise you will always be able to reach me. Please leave a message on my voicemail, and I will return your call as soon as I can during office hours.

Email, Texting & Social Media

For confidentiality and other reasons, I use social media in a very limited way with my practice. I do have a practice related Facebook page, it is updated only on occasion and I do not respond to comments nor communicate through Facebook messenger.

With your permission, I may use text and email but tend to limit this to administrative communication such as appointments, scheduling and to forward educational materials. While I

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take steps to protect electronic information, anything going through the internet is at risk. Being said, many parents have found it helpful to send updates via email or text for me to review prior to seeing their child for the weekly appointment.

Confidentiality, Clinical Records and Privileged Communication

It is a general rule of professional ethics that all communication occurs in confidence. Thus, clients have the right to expect complete confidentiality EXCEPT as required by law:

- (1) threat of serious harm to self or others,
- (2) reasonable suspicion of child abuse, or abuse of elder or any incapacitated person,
- (3) court order,
- (4) voluntary release signed by client or guardian,
- (5) defense against a legal action or formal complaint which the client makes before a court or regulatory board and, as required by Board rules, and
- (6) during supervisory consultations.

If there is an emergency during our work together, I am required by law and by the rules of my profession to contact someone – perhaps a relative, spouse or close friend. I am also required to contact this person, or the authorities, if I become concerned you may harm yourself or someone else.

Confidentiality extends to community interactions. For example, if we meet socially, I may not acknowledge you to maintain your confidentiality.

Supervision

To insure the quality of my counseling practice, the services of a counseling supervision are utilized. This is a proper professional protocol and the supervisor is held accountable to the same ethics of client confidentiality as outlined above. The cost of this supervision is to this practice and not to you. However, while the focus of supervision is on my work more than yours, the benefit is to us both.

Client Rights

I do not discriminate against clients because of any of these factors: age, sex, family/marital status, race, color, religious beliefs, place of residence, veteran status, physical disability, health status, sexual orientation, gender identity or criminal record unrelated to present dangerousness. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please bring this matter to my attention immediately.

Dual Relationships

Therapy should never involve sexual, business or any other dual-relationships that could impair my objectivity, clinical judgement, therapeutic effectiveness or could be exploitative in nature. It is possible during the course of your treatment, I may become aware of other preexisting relationships that may affect our work together. In that case, I will do my best to resolve these situations responsibly and ethically, but this may entail our needing to stop working together. Please discuss this with me if you have any questions or concerns.

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Clients under the age of 18

When working with children and adolescents, communication with guardians/parents is vital. In the case of separated or divorced parents, both parents must consent to treatment unless there is a specific court order stating otherwise. Parents have a right to know how treatment is progressing so decisions can be made about the minor's care; however, the minor has the right to a certain level of confidentiality to facilitate development of the therapeutic relationship and effective intervention. A child's assent/consent, in keeping with their developmental level, will be sought when information is shared, unless urgency precludes same.

Payment of Services and Hours of Business

Payment of services is expected at the time services are rendered unless other arrangements have been made prior. A 50 minute counseling session costs \$150. Please talk to me if you having trouble paying for the sessions. I provide a sliding fee scale based upon income ranging from \$30-\$75.

I currently accept Mainecare, Aetna, Anthem, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, UMR, United Behavioral Healthcare, Health Plans & Martin Point.

In the event that you cannot make our scheduled appointment, it is expected that you will contact me at least 24 hours in advance. There is a missed appointment fee of \$60.00 for any cancelled appointments with less than 24 hours-notice. This is not billable to insurance.

Mainecare will not allow me to bill for missed appointments. Therefore, if you are a Mainecare client and have 2 "no shows" or short notice cancellations (less than 24 hours), services will be terminated. A referral for services can be provided at termination.

Complaints, State Regulation & Accountability

Just as in any other relationship, if you are unsatisfied with any area of our work, please raise your concerns with me immediately. Our work together will be slower or harder if your concerns are not addressed. I will make every effort to hear any complaints or concerns you have and to seek solutions. If you feel like I have treated you unfairly or have even broken a professional rule, please tell me. You may also contact the Counseling Board.

The practice of counseling is regulated by the Board of Counseling Professionals Licensure. The board is authorized by law to discipline counselors who violate the board's law or rules. To learn about the complaint process, or to file a complaint against a counselor, contact:

Complaint Coordinator Financial Regulation

Office of Licensing & Registration

35 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Phone: (207) 624-8660

Website: www.maine.gov/professionallicensing

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