

Practice Policies - 2020

Dr. Sohi Lachini

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

PSY 27858

PRACTICE POLICIES

APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

At this time, all appointments are held online due to the development of the novel Coronavirus (COVID19) in our community.

We will meet online for 50 minutes every week. My standard fee for psychotherapy is **\$200 for 50 minutes**. Requests to change the 50-minute sessions and/or the frequency of the sessions need to be discussed with the therapist in advance. I charge the same fee (prorated) for other professional services. Other professional services may include occasional phone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes, attending meeting with other professionals that you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other services you may request of me. My standard fee for participating in legal proceedings is \$800/hour regardless of individualized reductions to the psychotherapy fee. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even when I am called to testify by another party. There will be an annual fee increase on January 1st of each year, and I will give you several weeks' notice by email prior to any change (this does not apply to payments by insurance). Your payment will be expected at each session or every two weeks. If you are covered by insurance, you are expected to pay for therapy each session and I will give you a SuperBill for reimbursement from your insurance carrier.

You will be charged the full fee (i.e. not just your co-pay) if you miss or cancel a scheduled session without giving more than **48 hours notice by leaving a message on my office voicemail or email. In addition, you will be charged the session fee if you cancel with more than 48-hour notice but the canceled session is not rescheduled during the same week. You can request and receive a waiver of this fee once per quarter.** This is necessary because a time commitment is made to you and is held exclusively for you. If you are late for a session, you may lose some of that session time. (You should note that insurance companies generally will not reimburse for missed sessions).

A **\$30.00** service charge will be charged for any checks returned for any reason for special handling. Payments are non-refundable. Unpaid balances older than 90 days would be subject to collection proceeding and service may be interrupted until payment is made.

TELEPHONE ACCESSIBILITY

If you need to contact me between sessions, please leave a message on my voice mail. **Email is not a confidential way of communicating.** Please limit email communication to matters of scheduling. I am often not immediately available; however, I will attempt to return your call within 24-48 hours during the work week. If a true emergency situation arises, please call 911, go to your nearest emergency room, or crisis stabilization unit.

SOCIAL MEDIA

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, LinkedIn, 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. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

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 for issues regarding scheduling or cancellations, I will do so. 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 and/or request assistance for emergencies. Keep in mind that my voicemail service does not accept text messaging.

TELEHEALTH

Services by electronic means, including but not limited to telephone communication, the Internet, facsimile machines, and e-mail is considered telemedicine by the State of California. Under the California Telemedicine Act of 1996, telemedicine is broadly defined as the use of information technology to deliver medical services and information from one location to another. If you and your therapist chose to use information technology for some or all of your treatment, you need to understand that: (1) You retain the option to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting the right to future care or treatment or risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. (2) All existing confidentiality protections are equally applicable. (3) Your access to all medical information transmitted during a telemedicine consultation is guaranteed, and copies of this information are available for a reasonable fee. (4) Dissemination of any of your identifiable images or information from the telemedicine interaction to researchers or other entities shall not occur without your consent. (5) There are potential risks, consequences, and benefits of telemedicine. Potential benefits include, but are not limited to improved communication capabilities, providing convenient access to up-to-date information, consultations, support, reduced costs, improved quality, change in the conditions of practice, improved access to therapy, better continuity of care, and reduction of lost work time and travel costs. Effective therapy is often facilitated when the therapist gathers within a session or a series of sessions, a multitude of observations, information, and experiences about the client. Therapists may make clinical assessments, diagnosis, and interventions based not only on direct verbal or auditory communications, written reports, and third person consultations, but also from direct visual and olfactory observations, information, and experiences. When using information technology in therapy services, potential risks include, but are not limited to the therapist's inability to make visual and olfactory observations of clinically or therapeutically potentially relevant issues such as: your physical condition including deformities, apparent height and weight, body type, attractiveness relative to social and cultural norms or standards, gait and motor coordination, posture, work speed, any noteworthy mannerism or gestures, physical or medical conditions including bruises or injuries, basic grooming and hygiene including appropriateness of dress, eye contact (including any changes in the previously listed issues), sex, chronological and apparent age, ethnicity, facial and body language, and congruence of language and facial or bodily expression. Potential consequences thus include the therapist not being aware of what he or she would consider important information, that you may not recognize as significant to present verbally the therapist.

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.

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. Termination process is often a collaborative one and it occurs in communication together and once the goals of treatment have been met. 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 names and contact information of 2-3 qualified psychotherapists to treat you. You may also choose someone on your own or from another referral source.

Should you fail to schedule an appointment for two consecutive weeks, unless other arrangements have been made in advance, for legal and ethical reasons, I cannot guarantee your same appointment time and I must consider the professional relationship discontinued.

BY CLICKING ON THE CHECKBOX BELOW I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.