



Stephanie Schiller, MSW, LCSW

INFORMATION, AUTHORIZATION, & CONSENT TO TREATMENT

Welcome to Two Roads Counseling. This document is designed to inform you about what you can expect from Stephanie Schiller, MSW, LCSW (referred to as “me” or “I”), the policies regarding confidentiality and emergencies, and several other details regarding your treatment here at Two Roads Counseling. Although providing this document is part of an ethical obligation to my profession, more importantly, it is part of my commitment to you to keep you fully informed of every part of your therapeutic experience. Please know that your relationship with me is a collaborative one, and I welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding your course of therapy at any time.

Background Information, Theoretical Views, & Client Participation

Information regarding my educational background and experience may be found on my website. Please feel free to view that information at www.tworoadscounseling.com.

It is my belief that as people become more aware accepting of themselves, they are more capable of finding a sense of peace and contentment in their lives. However, self-awareness and self-acceptance are goals that may take a long time to achieve. Some clients need only a few sessions to achieve these goals, whereas others may require months or even years of therapy. As a client, you are in complete control, and you may end your relationship with me at any point.

In order for therapy to be most successful, it is important for you to take an active role. This means working on the things we talk about both during and between sessions. This also means avoiding any mind-altering substances like alcohol or non-prescription drugs for at least eight hours prior to your therapy sessions. Generally, the more of yourself you are willing to invest, the greater the return.

Furthermore, it is my policy to only see clients who we believe have the capacity to resolve their own problems with my assistance. It is my intention to empower you in your growth process to the degree that you are capable of facing life’s challenges in the future without me. I also don’t believe in creating dependency or prolonging therapy if the therapeutic intervention does not seem to be helping. If this is the case, I will direct you to other resources that will be of assistance to you. Your personal development is my number one priority. My goal is to facilitate healing and growth, and I am very committed to helping you in whatever way seems to produce maximum benefit. If at any point you are unable to keep your appointments or we don't hear from you for one month, we will need to close your chart. However, reopening your chart and resuming treatment is always an option.

Confidentiality & Records

Your communications with me will become part of a clinical record of treatment, and it is referred to as Protected Health Information (PHI). Your PHI will be kept in a file stored in a locked cabinet in my locked office. Additionally, I will always keep everything you say to me completely confidential, with the following exceptions: (1) you direct me to tell someone else and you sign a “Release of Information” form; (2) I determine that you are a danger to yourself or to others; (3) you report information about the abuse of a child, an elderly person, or a disabled individual who may require protection; or (4) I am ordered by a judge to disclose information. In the latter case, my license does provide me with the ability to uphold what is legally termed “privileged communication.”

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Privileged communication is your right as a client to have a confidential relationship with a counselor. This state has a very good track record in respecting this legal right. If for some unusual reason a judge were to order the disclosure of your private information, this order can be appealed. I cannot guarantee that the appeal will be sustained, but I will do everything in my power to keep what you say confidential.

Please note that in couples counseling, your therapist does not agree to keep secrets. Information revealed in any context may be discussed with either partner.

Structure and Cost of Sessions

Your therapist agrees to provide psychotherapy for the fee of \$150 for initial session and all couples' sessions and \$125 for follow up 60 minute individual sessions, unless otherwise negotiated by you or your insurance carrier. Doing psychotherapy by telephone is not ideal, and needing to talk to your therapist between sessions may indicate that you need extra support. If this is the case, you and your therapist will need to explore adding sessions or developing other resources you have available to help you. Telephone calls that exceed 10 minutes in duration will be billed at \$25 per 15 minutes, prorated to the latest 15 minute increment. The fee for each session will be due at the conclusion of the session. Cash is the preferred method of payment, followed by personal check, Visa or MasterCard. Please note that there is a \$30 fee for any returned checks.

Cancellation Policy

In the event that you are unable to keep an appointment, you must notify me at least 24 hours in advance. If such advance notice is not received, you will be financially responsible for the session you missed. Please note that insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions, thus you will be responsible for the full session fee.

In Case of an Emergency

Two Roads Counseling is considered to be an outpatient facility, and I am set up to accommodate individuals who are reasonably safe and resourceful. I am not available at all times. If at any time this does not feel like sufficient support, please inform me, and I can discuss additional resources or transfer your case to a therapist or clinic with 24-hour availability. Generally, I will return phone calls within 24-48 hours. If you have a mental health emergency, we encourage you not to wait for a call back, but to do one or more of the following:

- Call Behavioral Health Link/GCAL: 800-715-4225
- Call Ridgeview Institute at 770.434.4567
- Call Peachford Hospital at 770.454.5589
- Call 911.
- Go to your nearest emergency room.

Professional Relationship

Psychotherapy is a professional service I will provide to you. Because of the nature of therapy, your relationship with me has to be different from most relationships. It may differ in how long it lasts, the objectives, or the topics discussed. It must also be limited to only the relationship of me and you. If we were to interact in any other ways, you would then have a "dual relationship," which could prove to be harmful to you in the long run and is, therefore, unethical in the mental health profession. Dual relationships can set up conflicts between my interests and your interests, and then the your interests might not be put first. In order to offer all of my clients the best care, my judgment needs to be unselfish and purely focused on your needs. This is why your relationship with me must remain professional in nature.

Additionally, there are important differences between therapy and friendship. Friends may see your position only from their personal viewpoints and experiences. Friends may want to find quick and easy solutions to your problems so that they can feel helpful. These short-term solutions may not be in your long-term best interest. Friends do not usually follow up on their advice to see whether it was useful. They may *need* to have you do what they advise. A therapist offers you choices and helps you choose what is best for you. A therapist helps you learn

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how to solve problems better and make better decisions. A therapist's responses to your situation are based on tested theories and methods of change.

You should also know that therapists are required to keep the identity of their clients confidential. As much as your therapist would like to, for your confidentiality I will not address you in public unless you speak to me first. I also must decline any invitation to attend gatherings with your family or friends. Lastly, when your therapy is completed, I will not be able to be a friend to you like your other friends. In sum, it is my duty to always maintain a professional role. Please note that these guidelines are not meant to be discourteous in any way, they are strictly for your long-term protection.

Statement Regarding Ethics, Client Welfare & Safety

Two Roads Counseling assures you that our services will be rendered in a professional manner consistent with the ethical standards of the National Association of Social Workers. If at any time you feel that your therapist is not performing in an ethical or professional manner, we ask that you please let him or her know immediately.

Due to the very nature of psychotherapy, as much as I would like to guarantee specific results regarding your therapeutic goals, I am unable to do so. However, I, with your participation, will work to achieve the best possible results for you. Please also be aware that changes made in therapy may affect other people in your life. For example, an increase in your assertiveness may not always be welcomed by others. It is my intention to help you manage changes in your interpersonal relationships as they arise, but it is important for you to be aware of this possibility nonetheless.

Additionally, at times people find that they feel somewhat worse when they first start therapy before they begin to feel better. This may occur as you begin discussing certain sensitive areas of your life. However, a topic usually isn't sensitive unless it needs attention. Therefore, discovering the discomfort is actually a success. Once we are able to target your specific treatment needs and the particular modalities that work the best for you, help is generally on the way.

Technology Statement

In our ever-changing technological society, there are several ways we could potentially communicate and/or follow each other electronically. It is of utmost importance to us that we maintain your confidentiality, respect your boundaries, and ascertain that your relationship with me remains therapeutic and professional. Therefore, I've developed the following policies:

Cell phones: It is important for you to know that cell phones may not be completely secure and confidential. However, we realize that most people have and utilize a cell phone. I may also use a cell phone to contact you. If this is a problem, please feel free to discuss this with me.

Text Messaging and Email: Both text messaging and emailing are not secure means of communication and may compromise your confidentiality. However, we realize that many people prefer to text and/or email because it is a quick way to convey information. If you choose to utilize texting or email, please discuss this with me. Please do not bring up any therapeutic content via text or email to prevent compromising your confidentiality. **You also need to know that we are required to keep a copy of all emails and texts as part of your clinical record.**

Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest Etc: It is my policy not to accept requests from any current or former client on social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, etc. because it may compromise your confidentiality

Google, etc.: It is my policy not to search for my clients on Google or any other search engine. We respect your privacy and make it a policy to allow you to share information about yourself to me as you feel appropriate. If there is content on the Internet that you would like to share with me for therapeutic reasons, please print this material out and bring it to your session.

In summary, technology is constantly changing, and there are implications to all of the above that I may not realize at this time. Please feel free to ask questions, and know that I am open to any feelings or thoughts you have about these and other modalities of communication.

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Our Agreement to Enter into a Therapeutic Relationship

I am sincerely looking forward to facilitating you on your journey toward healing and growth. If you have any questions about any part of this document, please ask me.

Please print, date, and sign your name below indicating that you have read and understand the contents of this form, you agree to the policies of your relationship with me, and you are authorizing me to begin treatment with you.

Client Name (Please Print)

Date

Client Signature

Client Name (Please Print)

Date

Client Signature

My signature below indicates that I have discussed this form with you and have answered any questions you have regarding this information.

Therapist's Signature

Date

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