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Some Facts You Should Know About My Clinical Services

When coming to see a psychologist, it is common to have questions concerning how therapy works, what will happen, and what will be expected of you. This facts sheet will provide some of answers to such questions, but you are free to ask any questions of me.

Personal History. I received a B.A. for the University of Utah with majors in Psychology and Secondary Education and minors in Philosophy and German. At the University of Oregon I was granted an M.A. and a Ph.D., both advanced degrees were in Psychology. I completed an internship in Clinical Psychology at the University of Colorado Medical Center. I have been continuously licensed by the State of Kansas as an independent practitioner in Psychology since 1976. I am on the faculty of the Department of Psychology at the University of Kansas. I am also in private practice but limit my practice to part-time only. My major clinical interests are adult individual psychotherapy, marital therapy, parent consultation, family therapy with adolescents, and psychological evaluation. I have published more than 50 articles, book chapters or books and given more than 150 professional presentations and workshops. I am married to Diane Carpenter Karpowitz. We have six children and ten grandchildren. I enjoy reading, walking, calisthenics and computer programming.

Differences Between Psychologists and Psychiatrists. The major difference is in emphasis of training. A psychiatrist typically majors in pre-medicine as an undergraduate, attends medical school for four years and then does a three year residency in psychiatry. The first eight years focus on medicine, i.e., the physical aspects of human functioning; the last three years focus on psychiatry, i.e., the treatment of emotional and behavioral problems primarily through the use of medication.

A clinical psychologist typically majors in psychology as an undergraduate and then continues to focus on psychology in graduate school. At the end of graduate training the clinical psychologist fulfills a one-year internship. After receiving the Ph.D., psychologists are supervised for at least two years before being eligible for a license to practice independently. Thus, the full eight to ten year educational experience of the clinical psychologist is focused on how and why humans think, feel and behave as they do; how to evaluate the effectiveness of others thinking, feeling, and behavior; and how to help people make changes toward greater health and happiness. A psychologist does not prescribe medication. If a client might benefit from medication, I would refer the client to a physician for evaluation and possible subsequent medication. Other differences depend on the particular university at which the degree was granted and individual preferences of practitioners.

Types of Service. I offer a wide range of clinical services but three are most common. First, evaluation. When someone feels discomfort about emotional or behavioral problems he or she may ask such questions as, "Do I really have a problem?" "If so, how serious is the difficulty?" "What resources are available to help me deal with or solve the problem?" Evaluation is intended to increase our understanding of the answers to questions like these. When I do a psychological evaluation this usually takes two to three sessions and then I communicate my findings to you and make some recommendations.

Second, treatment. If after consideration of the various alternatives you and I decide I would be an appropriate resource, we would plan a treatment program together. Such therapy may range from a few weekly sessions to many months. Six to twelve months is an average time period for treatment, but this depends on the nature of the problems, the goals developed and the speed of progress.

A third service I offer is consultation to schools, community groups, businesses and others. I do not offer inpatient (hospital) service. If the problems you or family members are experiencing require hospitalization, I will refer you to an appropriate resource. I also do not work with children or early adolescents individually.

Fees. My fee for clinical services is \$130.00 per 45 to 50 minute session. If you contribute 10% or more of your gross income to charity, I reduce the fee by \$10.00. Payment should be made at the time of the session unless you make other arrangements with me. When payment is made at the time of the service at \$10.00 reduction is given. Please bring a check already made out or the cash so we don't waste valuable time.

Sessions which are longer or shorter in length than 45 to 50 minutes will be prorated on the basis of length in 15 minute increments. If you have health insurance which covers emotional/mental health, please let me know. Such coverage typically pays from fifty to eighty percent of the services you receive from me. Please feel free to discuss fees more specifically with me whenever you have a question or concern.

Client and Therapist Responsibilities. Psychotherapy or counseling requires participation and cooperation from the client. Your own effort will play the most important role in determining how much benefit you receive from coming to therapy. Another important part of treatment is honest communication between the client and the therapist. This should include your raising any concerns you have about the procedural matters described here or introduced later.

Much of what occurs during a psychotherapy session is talk. You will be expected to relate problems and concerns as well as successes and enjoyable experiences. Sometimes you may feel anxious or angry or some other emotion. Such feelings are perfectly "ok" to experience. They are a normal part of the therapy process.

In order for communication to occur effectively the client and the therapist should come to like each other, to be friendly. During the first few visits you should ask yourself if I am the kind of person you can talk with comfortably. I will also ask this question of myself about you. Please feel free to express concerns you have in this area at anytime.

At appropriate times you will also be given homework assignments. These assignments may include reading, keeping a journal, monitoring your own or someone else's behavior, practicing a new skill, filling out a questionnaire, etc. It is important that such homework be carried out conscientiously. You may also be asked to take some tests at various stages of the psychotherapy process. All homework assignments are intended to help you reach your goals more quickly and effectively. Some clients experience depression as part of their problems. At times individuals can become so depressed and discouraged that they seriously think about taking their own life. Such feelings, should you have them, are important to discuss with me. Other possible solutions can be discovered and explored. I will do all I reasonably can to assist you in finding and implementing these alternative solutions. I don't want you or anyone to attempt suicide. However, in the final analysis each person is responsible for his or her own life. If an individual is determined to end his or her life, he or she will find a way. You and I must each bear the responsibility for our own lives.

When late adolescents are seen, it is sometimes best to meet together with a part or the whole family also. When minors talk with me individually I do not reveal the specific contents of these talks to the parents unless they represent a gross violation of the law or may result in someone's serious harm. Youth and parents may communicate about these sessions if everyone is agreeable. I do indicate to parents how things are going in general, ask for specific information and ask for help from parents.

It is important for your treatment that you regularly and promptly attend the sessions you and I arrange. In most situations sessions are scheduled once each week or every other week and are 45 to 50 minutes in length. Marital and family sessions may be closer to 55 minutes. If an appointment cannot be kept, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Appointments are held at my home office (2224 Marvonne Road). I can usually be reached at home (785-841-2610) or at my university office (785-864-9801). If you call and I am not available, leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible. I charge for time talking on the phone when it is more than just a quick visit to change an appointment or dealing with some other brief matter.

Confidentiality. Almost all information that you give to me is kept confidential and will not be released to anyone without your written permission or in unusual circumstances by a court order. Exceptions to this confidentiality are as follows. I am required by law to report any suspected child abuse. I am also required to warn appropriate others when a life is in danger (assault, rape, murder, suicide). A judge can subpoena my records although in more than 35 years of practice this has never happened. With your permission I may sometimes audio- or videotape record sessions. These tapes are kept in strictest confidence and used only in the treatment process. They are erased when their therapeutic usefulness has ended. You will always be informed when such recordings are going to be made.

Please feel free to ask questions or raise concerns at any time. It is my hope that this psychotherapy experience will help you to lead a richer, fuller, happier life.