

Office Policies and Procedures

Welcome to J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC. We appreciate you giving us the opportunity to be of help to you. This document answers questions that clients often ask about our psychological services. We believe our work will be most helpful to you when you have a clear idea of what we are trying to do.

This document answers and informs on the following topics:

- What are the risks of receiving counseling services?
- What are the benefits of receiving counseling services?
- What are the goals of counseling services and what are the methods of treatment?
- What is the duration of the psychological services?
- How much are the services and how do we handle money matters?

After you read this, you and your treatment provider can talk in person about how these issues apply to you. When you have fully understood all the information contained in this document, your treatment provider will sign this and will ask you to sign it as well. You may request a copy of this document; however the original will remain in your file.

About Psychological Evaluations

J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC psychological assessment services will vary in price and duration. For more information about the types of testing we offer please consult with your provider. Although you will be provided with breaks, depending on the duration of testing, please eat and drink prior to testing. I would be helpful for you to bring documentation from your other treatment providers (i.e., medication records, etc.) Please be prepared to provide us with a list of prescription drugs you are currently taking, so that we may determine their impact, if any, on your assessment results. If you wear corrective lens, please bring them to your testing appointment.

About Psychotherapy

J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC staff strongly believe you should feel comfortable with the provider you choose and feel hopeful about the counseling services. When you feel this way, treatment is more likely to be very helpful to you. Psychotherapy is the personal relationship you possess with a J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider to assist you with life problems. Our providers employ a range of techniques based on experiential relationship building, dialogue, communication, and behavior change. These techniques are designed to improve the mental health of a client/patient, or to improve group relationships such as in a family. Practitioners with a number of different qualifications such as rehabilitation counselors, psychiatry, counseling psychology, occupational psychology, social work and others can perform psychotherapy services. J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC providers are likely to draw on various psychological approaches according, in part, to the problem that is being treated and our assessment of what will best benefit you. These approaches include, but are not limited to, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, cognitive, psychodynamic, existential, system/family, developmental (adult, child, family), humanistic or psycho-educational. J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provides neither custody evaluation recommendation (nor medication or) prescription recommendation nor legal advice, as these activities do not fall within the scope of our practice.

Your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC treatment provider may take notes during your meetings and you may find it useful to take your own notes as well. Within a reasonable period of time, after the initiation of treatment, your provider will discuss with you his or her working understanding of the problem, treatment plan, therapeutic objectives, and view on the possible outcomes of treatment. If you have any questions about your treatment provider's approach or method used during the course of therapy, ASK. You also have the right to ask about other treatments for your condition and their risks and benefits. If you could benefit from any treatment that J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC does not provide, we have an ethical obligation to assist you with a referral to another treatment provider in your area. We view therapy as a partnership and you define the problem areas to be worked on. Your provider will use some special knowledge to help you make the changes you want to make. Psychotherapy is not like visiting a medical doctor. It requires your active involvement or best efforts, honesty, and openness in order to experience progress with your treatment. J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC will ask for your feedback and views on your therapy, its progress and other aspects of your treatment, and will expect you to respond openly and honestly. For example, we want you to tell us about your experiences, what they mean to you and what strong feelings are involved. By doing this, you are an active partner in therapy.

In a treatment plan, your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC treatment provider will list the areas to work on, goals, the methods to be used, the time and money commitments to be made, and some other things. After agreeing on a plan, hard work will follow. Periodically throughout your treatment your progress will be reviewed and if needed, change to the treatment plan, goals, or its methods may be made.

An important part of your counseling will be practicing new skills that you will learn during your sessions. You may be asked to practice outside of your meetings and may set up homework assignments for you. You may be asked to do exercises, keep records, and read to

deepen your learning. You will probably have to work on relationships in your life and make long-term efforts to get the best results. These are important efforts needed to make personal change. Change will sometimes come quickly, however this is not a very common result. More often it will be slow in progression, often frustrating, and something you will need to keep trying and working towards. However, you can learn new ways of looking at your problems that will be very helpful as it relates to changing your feelings and reactions.

Most of our clients see a J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC providers once a week for 3 to 4 months. Thereafter, you will meet less often for several more months and then the sessions are usually “ended.” The process of ending counseling is called “termination.” Although the word “termination” sounds negative, it is actually a very positive step in the completion of your therapy. Termination is a very valuable part of your work and your progress. Stopping therapy is a process and is not a casual completion. However, either you or your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider may decide to end your relationship casually if both of you believe it is in your best interest. If you wish to stop counseling at any time, we ask that you agree to meet for one final session to review your work together with your counselor. At that time a review of your goals, your progress, and any future work that may need to be completed will take place during the session. If you would like to take a “time out” from therapy to try it on your own, we should discuss this together to make sure the “time out” is more helpful. If at any time you feel that you are not benefiting from the relationship you have developed with your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider, you may terminate the professional relationship and/or ask to be transferred or referred to another provider.

Benefits, Goals and Risks of Therapy

When comparing the risks to the benefits of counseling, it is important to always keep the overall goal you wish to achieve close in mind. Most of these risks are to be expected when people are making important changes in their lives. Some of these risks are short term and you may not experience any or all of them. You should think about both the benefits and risks when making any treatment decisions.

Some short term and long term benefits/goals are:

- You may find your mood lifting and begin to feel more optimistic.
- You may no longer feel afraid, irritable, angry, or anxious.
- You will have a chance to talk things out fully until your feelings are relieved or the problems are solved.
- Your relationships and coping skills may improve greatly.
- You may gain the ability to stay in school or work.
- You may get more satisfaction out of social and family relationships.
- Your personal goals and values may become clearer.
- You will be able to manage emotions more efficiently.
- You may regain your memory and see things more clearly.

While you consider these risks, you should know also that the benefits of therapy have been proven by scientists in hundreds of well-designed research studies. Possible risks of Therapy:

- You may, for a period of time, have uncomfortable levels of irritability, sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness, helplessness, or other negative feelings.
- Feeling uncomfortable in change you may feel the need to relapse or continue damaging behavior.
- You may experience physical cravings (pertaining to substance abuse)
- When making life changes, some people may view your positive changes as a threat and react negatively.
- You may have problems with your interpersonal relationship.
- Family secrets maybe told.
- Your lifestyle may change causing deterioration of longstanding relationships.
- You may recall unpleasant memories or have short term memory loss.
- Your marital relationship may become strained and sometimes may even lead to a divorce.
- Your problems may temporarily worsen after the beginning of treatment.
- Even with our best efforts, there is a risk that therapy may not work out well for you.

It is important for you to know that J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC does not take on clients that we do not think can benefit from our services. Therefore, your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider and you will enter into the relationship with optimism about your progress.

Consultations

Typically, during the first three sessions, your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider will assess if he or she can be of benefit to you. Ethically, a J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC treatment provider cannot continue to treat you if treatment is not working for you. In such a case, we will give you a number of referrals who you can contact. We will try to direct you to the most appropriate qualified person that can help. You have a right to ask us about such other treatments, their risks, and their benefits. Based on what is learned about your problems, your provider may refer you for additional treatments such as a medical exam, psychiatric assessment, or

biofeedback. If your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider does this, he or she will fully discuss the reasons with you, so that you can decide what is best. If another professional is treating you, your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider will coordinate services with him or her.

You have a right to terminate treatment at any time. If you request a referral and authorize it in writing, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC will talk to the psychotherapist of your choice in order to help with the transition. If at any time you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another therapist, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC will assist you in finding a qualified person, and if we have your written consent, we will provide him or her with the essential information needed. A qualified person also includes other treatment providers within our facility. J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC staff consult regularly with other professionals regarding clients; however, the client's identity remains completely anonymous, and confidentiality is fully maintained.

What to Expect from Your Relationship with Your Therapist

As a professional, your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC treatment provider will use his or her best knowledge and skills to help you. This includes following the state laws, rules and regulations and standards of the associations for which we are affiliated. You can expect the following from any therapist within J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC:

1. To operate within the scope of our profession.
2. Maintain a confidential relationship
3. To maintain a therapeutic relationship only

In the event of a divorce or custody dispute, we want you to understand and agree that your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC therapist will not provide evaluations or expert testimony in court as this could not always yield a positive result. You should hire a different mental health professional for any evaluations or testimony you require. This position is based on (3) reasons: (1) The counselor statements can be seen as biased or in your favor because you have developed a therapeutic relationship; or (2) during cross examination your counselor may release certain information that may not yield a positive result (3) thus, the testimony might negatively impact the therapeutic relationship between you and your counselor.

Even though you invite your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC treatment provider to a party, family gathering, or wedding, he or she will not be able to participate. In addition, your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC therapist will not be able to celebrate holidays or partake in gift giving.

Dual Relationships: (a) In many communities and situations, it may not be feasible or reasonable for providers to avoid social or other nonprofessional contacts with persons such as patients, clients, students, supervisees, or research participants. Providers must always be sensitive to the potential harmful effects of other contacts on their work and on those persons with whom they deal. A provider refrains from entering into or promising another personal, scientific, professional, financial, or other relationship with such persons if it appears likely that such a relationship reasonably might impair the provider's objectivity or otherwise interfere with the provider's effectively performing his or her functions as a provider, or might harm or exploit the other party.

(b) Likewise, whenever feasible, a provider refrains from taking on professional or scientific obligations when pre-existing relationships would create a risk of such harm.

(c) If a provider finds that, due to unforeseen factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the provider attempts to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and maximal compliance with the Ethics Code.

About Confidentiality

The J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC treatment providers and staff will treat with great care all the information you share. It is your legal right that your sessions and counselor records about you are kept private. That is why we ask you to sign a "release-of-information" form before discussing your records with anyone else. In general, we will tell no one what you have shared with your counselor and will not even reveal that you are receiving treatment from us. In all but a few rare situations, your confidentiality is protected by federal and state laws and by the rules of your treatment provider.

E-Mails, Cell Phones, Computers and Faxes: It is very important to be aware that computers, e-mail, and cell phone communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized persons and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. E-mails, in particular are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers have unlimited and direct access to all e-mails that go through them. Additionally, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC staff emails are not encrypted. Faxes can easily be sent erroneously to the wrong address. Our staff's computers are equipped with a firewall, a virus protection, and a password, and all confidential information is routinely backed up on CDs. The CDs are stored at a secure location off-site. Please notify our staff if you decide to avoid or limit in any way the use of any or all communication devices, such as e-mail, cell phone, or faxes.

Records and Your Rights to Review Them: Both the law and the standards of J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC staff profession require that appropriate treatment records are kept for at least 7 years. Unless otherwise agreed, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC can retain clinical records only as long as is mandated by Texas State Law. If you have concerns regarding treatment records please discuss them with your assigned J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider. As a client, you have the right to review or receive a

summary of your records at any time, except in limited legal or emergency circumstances or when J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC assesses that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. In such a case, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC will provide the records to an appropriate and legitimate mental health professional of your choice. Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, upon your request, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC will release information to any agency/person you specify unless J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC determines that releasing such information might be harmful in any way. When more than one client is involved in treatment, such as in cases of couple and family therapy, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC will release records only with the signed authorizations from all the adults (or all those who legally can authorize such a release) involved in treatment.

Appointments

At your initial session, there will be many questions and much information needed to be shared. For this reason, we usually schedule 1-2 hours for the first meeting. Following this, you will usually meet for a 50-minute session once or twice a week with your counselor then with progress you will meet less often. Your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider will provide you at least a month in advance of his or her vacations. Please ask about their schedule when making your own personal plans.

An appointment is a working commitment. It is important to be on time. If your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider is unable to start on time, we ask for your understanding. We also assure you that you will receive the full time agreed to. If you are late, your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider will probably be unable to meet for the full time, because it is likely that they will have another appointment after yours.

Bring Children

We request that you do not bring children with you if they are young and need supervision. The reason for this is we are unable to provide childcare.

Property

You will be charged for any damage to or theft of property in this office by you or anyone for whom you are legally responsible. We cannot be responsible for any personal property or valuables you bring into this office.

Cancellations

Since the scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24-hours (1 day) notice is required for rescheduling or cancelling an appointment. If a 24-hour notice is not provided, we will have to charge you the full fee for sessions missed without such notification. Most insurance companies do not reimburse for missed sessions. Cancellations for a Monday appointment should be made no later than Friday afternoon.

Fees, Payments, and Billing

Payment for services is an important part of any professional relationship. It is your responsibility to ensure the payment of services provided to you, even if you do not receive reimbursement from your insurance company. Meeting this responsibility shows your commitment and maturity.

Fees for services are based per hour, unless stated otherwise. You will be given advance notice if any fees should change.

	<u>LPC/LMFT</u>	<u>PSYCHOLOGIST</u>	<u>LPC INTERNS</u>
Individual Therapy:	140.00	200.00	35.00
Couples Therapy:	160.00	220.00	45.00
Family Therapy (4 or more):	180.00	260.00	50.00

This price list is only for the therapeutic session. The **initial session, which includes a diagnostic evaluation, is **30 dollars more for individuals, 45 dollars more for couples, and 50 dollars more for families.***

**Licensed Professional Counseling Interns are individuals who hold a temporary license to practice counseling. They are under the supervision of a Licensed professional Counselor – Supervisor.*

Please make payment for services at the beginning of the sessions. If paying with a check, please make out your check before each session begins, so that your time will be used best. If needed, other payment or fee arrangements must be worked out before the end of your first meeting otherwise normal payment for services will apply.

We realize that our fees involve a substantial amount of money, please note that they are well in line with similar professionals' charges. For you to get the best value for your money, you must work hard and well with your counselor. We will assume that our agreed-upon fee-paying relationship will continue as long as we provide services to you. We will assume this until you tell your counselor in person, by telephone, or by certified mail that you wish to end treatment. You have a responsibility to pay for any services you receive before you end the relationship with your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider.

Because we expect all payment at the time of your meetings, if payment is owed we will send you an invoice of the unpaid balance and will expect prompt payment in order for your services to continue. Also, if you are covered by insurance you can request a statement from your health insurance carrier. It will show all of your meetings, the charges for each, how much has been paid, and how much (if any) is still owed. Depending on your financial circumstances and total medical costs for any year, psychotherapy may be a deductible expense; consult your tax advisor.

If you think you may have trouble paying your bills on time, please discuss this during your first appointment. Payment plans are available for classes, groups and programs only. All other services, with an unpaid balance, will be brought to your attention each session until it exceeds \$ 100.00. If it remains unpaid, and there is no written agreement on a payment plan, your services with J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC will discontinue. In addition, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC may use legal or other means (courts, collection agencies, etc.) to obtain payment for this outstanding balance.

If there is any problem with our charges, billing, your insurance, or any other money-related issues, or if any problems arise during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments, please bring it to our attention immediately.

Mediation and Arbitration: All disputes arising out of or in relation to this agreement to provide psychotherapy services shall first be referred to mediation, before, and as a precondition of, the initiation of arbitration. The mediator shall be a neutral third party chosen by agreement of J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC and client (s). The cost of such mediation, if any, shall be split equally, unless otherwise agreed upon. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, any unresolved controversy related to this agreement should be submitted to and settled by binding arbitration in Voorhees, NJ in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association, which is in effect at the time the demand for arbitration is filed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event that your account is overdue (unpaid) and there is no agreement on a payment plan, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC can use legal means (court, collection agency, etc.) to obtain payment. The prevailing party in arbitration or collection proceeding shall be entitled to recover a reasonable sum as and for attorneys' fees. In the case of arbitration, the arbitrator will determine that sum.

Telephone consultations, conversations and/or sessions: We believe that telephone consultations are sometimes suitable. If so, we will charge you our regular consultation fee, prorated over the time needed. In regards to a telephone conference with other professionals as part of your treatment, if this is needed then you we will let you know and you will be billed for these at the same rate as for regular therapy services. If you are already an established client/patient and need to speak with your treatment provider over the phone, please note after 15 minutes we will have to apply regular session charges. Telephone conversations, site visits, report writing and reading, travel time, etc. will be charged at the same rate, unless indicated and agreed upon otherwise. If you are concerned about any of this, please be sure to discuss it with your J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC provider in advance so a policy can be set that is comfortable for both you and your provider. Of course, there is no charge for calls about appointments or similar business.

Extended sessions: Occasionally it may be better to go on with a session, rather than stop or postpone work on a particular issue. When this extension is more than 10 minutes, your counselor will tell you prior, because sessions that are extended beyond 10 minutes will be charged on a prorated basis.

Psychosocial Assessments & Evaluations: Psychosocial assessment and evaluations fees will include the time spent with you and the time needed to write a report on the findings. The amount of time involved depends on the questions the assessment or evaluation is intended to answer, fee will vary.

Court Appearances and Subpoenas: The fee is \$200 per hour. The fees for court appearances and subpoenas include travel time and time spent in court. Travel time begins when the counselor leaves and returns to the office from court. We recommend you to discuss with your legal representative who will be responsible for these fees prior to the counselor's appearance in court.

Other services: Inquire about our other services, programs and their prices with your counselor if they are not outlined within this document.

Health Insurance Coverage

Many health insurance plans will help you pay for counseling and other services we offer. Because health insurance is written by many different companies, we cannot tell you what your plan covers. Please call the member service number on the back of your health insurance card for detail about your coverage. Clients who carry insurance need to remember that professional services are rendered and charged to the clients and not to the insurance companies. Unless agreed upon differently, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC will provide you with a copy of your receipt on a monthly basis, which you can then submit to your insurance company for reimbursement if you so choose. Not all issues/conditions/problems, which are dealt with in psychotherapy, are reimbursed by insurance companies. It is your responsibility to verify the specifics of your coverage. If your insurance does not reimburse you for your treatment it is your responsibility to pay for any J.C-H. Psychological Solutions services rendered on your behalf.

If you belong to a health maintenance organization (HMO) or preferred provider organization (PPO), or have another kind of health insurance with managed care, decisions about what kind of care you need and how much of it you can receive will be reviewed by the plan.

We will provide information about you to your insurance company only with your informed and written consent. We may send this information electronically through our patient billing system, by mail or by fax. Our office will try its best to maintain the privacy of your records. However, as was indicated in the laminated copy of the *HIPAA Notice of Privacy* document you were given to read, you must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk.

Telephone and Emergency Procedures

Office hours are Monday-Friday 9:00am to 9:00pm and Saturdays at 10:00am – 3:00pm. After hour sessions are conducted at the therapist's discretion. If you need to contact J. C-H. Psychological Solutions between sessions please leave a message with the administrative staff or on our confidential voicemail at (512) 206-4263 or (979) 575-4336 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC staff check messages a few times during daytime office hours. However, there will be times when your therapist is in the office and unable to take phone calls due to providing services to other clients. Also, your provider may be out of town. We cannot promise that your therapist will be available at all times. So, please be patient. Messages left Friday after hours will be returned on Monday.

If an emergency situation arises, indicate it clearly in your message and if you need to talk to someone right away please contact one of the following emergency agencies:

Psychiatric Emergency Services (911) OR

National 24-hour Crisis (Texas) Suicide Prevention Hotline (1-800-273-TALK (8255)) OR

Psychological Emergency Services

Open 24/7

56 East Avenue

Austin, TX 78701

Take Capital Metro Transit Bus Routes 17, 21 or 22

P: 512-472-HELP (4357)

F: 512-703-1390

Crisisinfo@atcic.org

Please do not use e-mail or faxes for emergencies. J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC staff do not always check e-mail or faxes daily.

Client Grievance Procedures

It is the policy of J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC, PLLC that every effort shall be made to resolve a client's grievance in a fair and equitable manner, and that all client grievances will be investigated and resolved promptly in accordance with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

1. All staff members shall be aware of a client's needs and shall pay close attention to those situations that could lead to a grievance situation. Clients may grieve directly to any staff member. Clients may grieve about any violation of client rights or DSHS standards.
2. Staff members shall make every effort to resolve the grievance informally by discussing the situation or circumstances with the client.
3. Staff members who are involved shall not be included in acceptance, investigation or decision-making concerning the grievance.
4. Clients who are not able to resolve their grievances by discussion must put their grievance in writing including date and signature.
5. J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC, will provide pens, paper, envelopes, postage and access to a telephone upon request in order to file a complaint. J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC, shall provide assistance to clients who cannot read or write or have difficulty reading and writing.
6. The Director will acknowledge receipt of the grievance within 24 hours and investigate the grievance and interview the client as necessary.
7. A written report of the investigation and initial disposition shall be made to the client by the Director or designee within seven days.
8. A client who is still dissatisfied may appeal the decision to the governing authority and a written report of the decision will be forwarded to DSHS with a written response given to the client within 30 days.
9. There shall be no retaliation, formal or informal, against a grieving client.
10. J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC, shall retain full records of all grievances in a confidential file for three years, but not in a client's case file.
11. Clients may submit their grievance at any time directly to any of the following departments:

Department of State Health Services Office
Office of the Attorney General
1100 West 49th Street Consumer Protection Division
Austin, TX 78756 (800) 832-9623

Office of Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division
P O Box 12548
Austin, TX 78711-2548 (512) 463-2185

Texas State Board of Medical Examiners
(for reporting complaints against licensed physicians)
1812 Center Creek Drive, Ste. 300
Austin, TX 78754

Texas Department of Human Services Hotline:
(800) 252-5400
DARS Service Number: (800) 628-5515

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Civil Rights
50 United Nations Plaza, Room 322
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 556-8730 / TDD (415) 556-858

In order to provide fair access to Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment provided by J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC, J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC staff do not unlawfully discriminate against clients, or potential clients, due to race, ethnicity, sexual identity, gender, disability, age or creed in receiving program services.

A client, who believes he/she has been unlawfully discriminated against in receiving program services, is directed to file his/her grievance with either the J.C-H. Psychological Solutions, PLLC Director or the Texas Department of State Health Services.