



2250 Morriss Road, Suite 205, Flower Mound, TX 75028
940-222-0446

Informed Consent for Counseling Services

Welcome to Forte Counseling Center and thank you for choosing us for your counseling needs. It is our aim to offer you excellence in service and to offer you caring, professional assistance. Our office does not discriminate on the basis of race, nationality, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation or religion. You have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. You have the right to have your civil and legal rights protected. Please feel free to ask/express any questions or concerns that you may have to assist in your understanding of the counseling processes and protocols.

A standard counseling appointment lasts 45-50 minutes. It is our aim within counseling to help you move toward a healthier mindset and the goals that you have determined for counseling services. We recognize that we cannot change life's difficult circumstances, but counseling can be helpful in offering support, working on communication skills, exploring strengths, working on improving cognitions and behaviors, gaining insight, planning, and healthy expression of emotions. We use a variety of psychotherapeutic techniques including cognitive-behavioral, psycho-educational, brief, trauma-informed, Biblical counseling, hypnosis, family systems, coaching, solution-focused, and eclectic therapy. Therapy services can vary greatly from counselor to counselor and the appointment frequency may depend on each client's needs. The therapist will discuss with you a plan of care based on your unique needs, if possible, and may discuss approximately how many sessions they foresee being necessary to work toward your goals so that you can make the most of this investment in you. The first few sessions are generally used for evaluation of the client and their current situations/reasons for therapy. The therapist may use testing instruments as part of his/her evaluation (depression or anxiety inventories, for example). The evaluation may result in a psychological diagnosis. You may choose to decline any services or testing offered.

Licensed therapists at Forte Counseling Center have attained a Master's Degree from an accredited institution in a Counseling field and have completed all the steps to attain a license from the state of Texas. If an LPC Intern/Associate is offering services, they have completed their degree, have passed the state exam, and are being supervised for the number of hours required by their particular licensure. They are required to inform you who their supervisor is and will have to receive guidance on their counseling services. We strive to follow the rules and ethics set out by the state guidelines. You are always welcome to talk to the manager of Forte Counseling Center, Erica Rivers, LPC-S for any concerns you may have. Additionally, any complaints of a licensee can be made to the **BHEC** (the state oversight board) at:

333 Guadalupe St., Tower 3, Room 900, Austin, TX 78701.
Phone: 512-305-7700; Toll free (24 hour): 800-821-3205

Counseling can be a helpful, encouraging, and/or difficult process as it involves change. It may involve facing aspects of life and self that are not easy. Many times the growth process is challenging and it can involve risk to undertake and make changes in one's life. It has been our experience that the most successful therapy results generally come when a client is open to working on his or her life issues and is actively engaged in the change process, taking ownership for his/her choices along the way. A counseling relationship is different than a friendship. It is important to note that for your protection, the Texas law states that no dual relationship between a counselor and a client can exist.

Forte Informed Consent

Confidentiality: Counseling services are confidential and no information will be released to other parties without the client's written consent, unless it is required by the law to disclose. Exceptions include the following:

- Risk or threat of suicide or homicide by the client
- Neglect or abuse of a child, handicapped, or elderly individual
- Abuse of a patient in a mental health facility or by a mental health practitioner
- Court cases required by law or subpoena by a court, including custody cases or criminal prosecutions
- Non-payment of fees by client
- Licensing board complaints by client
- To supervisees if the provider is an intern/associate
- Any exception required by law
- To another therapist/counselor/psychologist/psychiatrist if the client is currently under their care
- To the client's personal representatives if the client is deceased

At times, in order to provide the best quality care, it may be necessary for a therapist to consult another therapist/counselor about a client's case. No identifying information will be given regarding the client and minimal information will be used. If there are any questions regarding confidentiality, please bring them to the therapist.

Our office will attempt to preserve confidentiality when contact is made via telephone. Should you wish to send and/or receive texts or emails, we advise that you limit your communication to that not related to counseling issues and would not pose a liability as electronic formats may be subject to interception by those other than the intended party. By signing below, you authorize or decline designated forms of communication and accept any risks to confidentiality:

May leave voicemail: Yes No Phone number: _____

May contact via text: Yes No Phone number: _____

May contact via email: Yes No Email address: _____

In the case of participation in group therapy sessions, the group members are informed to and encouraged to keep group sessions confidential; however, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Also, please refrain from communicating electronically to avoid breaches in confidentiality and to allow trust within the group.

Termination terms: A client may terminate services at any time of their own will. It is recommended that you discuss termination with your therapist prior to ending therapy. Sometimes, the therapist may decide in his/her professional judgment that a referral is necessary and an appropriate attempt at a referral will be made. At times it is clear that the counseling relationship is not having a beneficial effect on a client and the therapist is then obligated to terminate services. After approximately two (2) months without a scheduled appointment or contact with the therapist, the therapist will consider services have been terminated and a termination letter may or may not be sent, depending on the therapist's judgment per individual client. Please feel free to contact the therapist at any point in time to reschedule/continue appointments or to ask for a referral.

Records will be kept for seven (7) years after termination of therapy. If your therapist dies or becomes incapacitated, it will be necessary for another licensed mental health professional at Forte Counseling Center to care for your files and records.

Fees: Clients are responsible for the payment of all provided services. Payment is expected by the end of the session and occasionally may be taken prior to the session provided. Payment may be made with cash,

check, HSA cards, or most credit cards and a \$30 fee will be charged on any returned checks or credit card charge backs. Except where a different fee has been arranged, the standard fee for 45-50 minutes of service with a Licensed Counselor is \$140. The fee for meeting with a Licensed Intern or Associate is \$95. Sliding scale payments are available on a limited basis. Please talk to your counselor if there is financial need. It may be necessary from time to time to change fees. If a fee change will be implemented, current active clients will be notified 30 days prior to the change by a posted notice on the office wall, an e-mail, and/or verbally.

Late cancellation fee: If you book an appointment and do not give at least 24 hours advanced notice of a cancellation, you will be charged a \$50 fee. A voicemail, e-mail, or text is sufficient notice of cancellation. If a client fails to pay twice the missed session fee, the therapist has the discretion to not schedule the client until the missed session fees have been paid.

If a therapist at Forte Counseling Center receives a subpoena to court where your records and/or the therapist's testimony is legally required, payment will be expected, not dependent on which attorney called for the subpoena. For court testimony, the therapist will require a minimum charge of \$375 for a Licensed Intern and \$700 for a Licensed Counselor to be paid before the appearance in court for up to four hours of testimony/waiting. From there, an hourly charge of \$140 for a Licensed Counselor or \$95 for a Licensed Intern will be charged accordingly.

HIPAA information is made available for our clients in the waiting room and on our website at www.fortecounselingcenter.com. Signing this form acknowledges that HIPAA information has been made available to you.

Online counseling services: Some of our therapists may offer online (telehealth) services when deemed appropriate for the client. Please do not use a public computer for counseling services and ensure that you are in a private location where you will not be overheard by anyone. Bear in mind that technology has glitches and can entail lag times, connection disruptions, or other disturbances that can affect the quality of discussion. Please inform your therapist if you feel misunderstood or if a disruption has occurred. Hearing you and responding appropriately is very important for the counseling process. Please call your therapist if the connection is disrupted.

It is up to the client to create technological safeguards for their own technology use (i.e. e-mails, computers, etc.). The therapist has a right to his/her privacy and restricts the use of any copies or recordings the client makes of their communications. Clients must seek permission of the therapist before recording any portion of the session. Posting any portion of said sessions on ANY internet website or social media (example: Instagram, Facebook or Snapchat) is expressly denied. Therapists will do their best to safeguard security through the use of encrypted tools, HIPAA compliant platforms, and security settings/passwords, when possible. Unfortunately, there are risks including hackers and technology difficulties which may be out of our control. Please discuss any concerns with your therapist and we will do our best to present as many options for safe and secure therapy as is possible.

Crisis situations: Forte Counseling Center is a wellness center offering outpatient counseling services and is *not* an emergency clinic. In the event of an emergency, please call 911 or contact a 24-hour help resource number or go to a hospital.

In the event that I reasonably believe that you are in danger, physically or emotionally, to yourself or another person, you consent for me, Forte counseling center personnel, or any therapist therein, to contact the following people in addition to medical or law enforcement personnel:

Name

Phone Number

By signing this Informed Consent, I agree to the terms and content therein. I have read, understand, and have had an opportunity to ask questions about the content of this form and about therapy services. I am voluntarily agreeing to participate in counseling services and I recognize that I can stop these services at any point in time.

If signing for a minor, I have read and understood the agreement, give consent to therapy for the child, and I have the proper legal status to give consent to therapy for the child. I freely give my consent or the

consent for my minor child _____ to enter into counseling services with and acknowledge that in order to receive the best care possible, a therapeutic relationship needs to be developed with the acknowledgements on this form.

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

Therapist/Intern (printed name): _____

Intern Supervised by (if applicable): _____

Therapist/Intern Signature: _____ Date: _____