Services Agreement, Informed Consent, and Notice of Privacy Practices

Welcome to Lifebridge Counseling, We are excited and honored to provide therapeutic services that aim to improve your health. The information within our Services Agreement and Informed Consent is intended to help you make an informed decision about our services. Additionally, the document contains information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law that provides client rights and privacy protections regarding your protected health information. We encourage you to contact us if you have questions about any of the information outlined.

Philosophy and Treatment: We believe the best therapeutic outcomes occur within a strong, therapeutic relationship, one based on honesty, trust, and acceptance. Our clinicians hold Master's or Doctorate degrees and employ evidence-based treatment interventions. Additionally, Lifebridge Counseling employs Residents and Supervisees who work directly under the VA Board approved supervision of an independently licensed clinician.

Participating in therapy has proven, positive outcomes such as improved relationships, healthy decision-making and problem solving, development of effective communication skills, and a significant decrease in stress. Participating in therapy does present some risks such as but not limited to recalling or discussing unpleasant memories or experiencing unwanted or intense feelings like anger, sadness, doubt, guilt, or fear. The benefits of therapy cannot be guaranteed; however, your willingness to fully engage in the therapeutic process will likely contribute to better outcomes.

Facilities & Hours of Operation: You may contact our administrative staff between 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday. We offer in-person sessions at our Roanoke, Richmond, Wytheville, Chester, and Staunton locations, and we extend tele-health sessions throughout the Commonwealth. Our schedule for in-person and tele-health sessions varies based on clinician availability.

Confidentiality: Your treatment information is protected by federal and state laws, and maintaining your confidentiality is critical to the success of therapy. There are several exceptions to the federal and state laws that protect your health information, which are outlined here:

- Your therapist may request, receive, or provide protected health information when you sign consent for your information to be shared.
- Your therapist is a mandated reporter and required by law to report any suspected child or elder abuse to the Department of Social Services.
- Your therapist is mandated to contact local authorities if he/she assesses that you are an imminent danger to yourself or to someone else.
- Your therapist is required to share information about your participation in treatment if court ordered to testify or to release medical records.
- Your medical information will be released to your healthcare insurance if you elect to use your insurance benefits.
- Your participation in treatment may be shared with a third-party collection agency if you maintain an outstanding account balance for more than 90 days.

Service Rates: Therapy sessions are typically scheduled for 45-60 mins. Due to the comprehensive nature of intakes, these appointments extend beyond 60 mins.

- Therapy Intakes: LPC/LCSW/LMFT - $180
- Therapy Sessions: LPC/LCSW/LMFT - $155

Payment and Account Balances: Lifebridge Counseling requests that you authorize a credit card to be maintained on file to prevent outstanding balances from occurring by completing the Payment Authorization Form. All deductibles, co-pays, coinsurance, or self-pay fees are expected to be paid at the time services are provided. Outstanding balances may result in the termination of services, and balances outstanding for more than 90 days will be forwarded to a collection agency. Any finance charges or collection fees will be added to your outstanding balance.

Cancellations & Missed Appointments: For clients using commercial insurance or self-paying for services, a $75.00 fee will be charged for missed appointments and a $25.00 fee for appointments cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice. Please note that if you elected to use insurance, these charges are not reimbursable by insurance carriers. Please contact us at 540-5238099 as soon as possible if you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment. Our cancelled and missed appointment policy and fees also apply to online cancelling and rescheduling. One or more missed appointments and/or two or more late cancellations may result in termination of services. We understand in rare situations emergencies do occur and will evaluate each situation on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of each clinician.

Third Party Insurance: Your healthcare plan may provide coverage for behavioral health services, including psychotherapy. Lifebridge Counseling accepts most commercial plans and Medicaid MCOs. However, it is important to understand that your therapist is required to provide personal healthcare information including but not limited to a mental health diagnosis and information to substantiate medical necessity for your treatment. Your health insurance carrier has the right to store personal information about your diagnosis and treatment for multiple years and may request to review part or your full medical record at any time. Additionally, records of your mental health diagnosis and treatment may negatively affect your eligibility for future benefits such as but not limited to disability and life insurance. If you elect to use your healthcare insurance, you are giving Lifebridge Counseling permission to file insurance on your behalf.

Contacting Your Therapist: Lifebridge Counseling's therapists are not able to respond to calls during sessions. Please call our main administrative number at 540-523-8099 and leave a message for your therapist with our Office Manager or on our confidential voicemail box. If you have an urgent situation that requires immediate intervention, please call 911 or refer to the emergency service resources provided later in this document.

Participation: In order to achieve the best possible outcome in therapy, it is important that you participate fully and consistently. A therapist may cancel or terminate services due to nonadherence with your treatment plan, inconsistent attendance, or for aggressive or destructive behaviors or gestures.

Treatment Services for Minors: Prior to initiating services for a minor (17 and younger), parental consent is required by at least one custodial parent. Below outlines additional information about parental consent based on varying legal and marital statuses:

- One parent's consent is sufficient when both biological parents are married.
- When parents are divorced, the parent with legal custody of the minor must consent.
- When parents are separated or share joint, legal custody, the consent from both parents is requested.

Court Appearances – If you are involved in a legal matter and your therapist is court ordered to appear in court, Lifebridge Counseling charges you a minimum $600 fee regardless of the party who requests testimony. This fee is applied for the therapist's court appearance, travel, and time spent preparing and is not contingent upon delivery of a testimony. This fee is expected to be paid in full prior to the scheduled court date. If your therapists' time involved in the court proceeding, preparation, and travel exceeds 4 hours, you will be charged an additional rate of $150/hour. Your insurance will not reimburse for these charges. It is also important to note that a subpoena alone may not be sufficient in requiring your therapist to appear in court.

Concerns: Providing excellent therapeutic services is of our highest priority. If at any time, you experience concerns about the services you are receiving please discuss these with your therapist. You may also contact our administrative office at 540-5238099 and ask to speak to the Clinical Manager.

Professional Fees: If you request a letter to be written or forms to be completed on your behalf for court involvement or for any other reason, a minimum fee of $100 will be charged. If the time involved to complete your request exceeds 1 hour, you will be charged an additional fee of $100/hour. We respond to medical records requests promptly in accordance with state and federal laws and charge a minimum administrative fee of $15.00 per request.

Crisis Intervention and Emergencies: Lifebridge Counseling does not provide crisis intervention services outside of scheduled sessions. If you are experiencing thoughts or behaviors that place yourself or someone else in harm, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. Additional emergency service resources are available below:

• National Suicide Prevention Line: 800-273-8255	Warmline of Virginia: 888-843-4564 (hours vary)
• https://vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory/	Text JASON to 741741

Lifebridge Counseling 5673 Airport Road Roanoke, VA 24012

Privacy Officer: Tracy Harmon
Office: (540) 344-7700

Your Information. Your Rights. Our Responsibilities.

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get to this information. **Please review it carefully.**

Your Rights

You have the right to:

- Get a copy of your paper or electronic medical record
- Correct your paper or electronic medical record
- Request confidential communication
- Ask us to limit the information we share
- Get a list of those with whom we've shared your information
- Get a copy of this privacy notice
- Choose someone to act for you
- File a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated

Your Choices

You have some choices in the way that we use and share information as we:

- Tell family and friends about your condition
- Provide disaster relief

- Include you in a hospital directory
- Provide mental health care
- Market our services and sell your information
- Raise funds

Our Uses and Disclosures

We may use and share your information as we:

- Treat you
- Run our organization
- Bill for your services
- Help with public health and safety issues
- Do research
- Comply with the law
- Respond to organ and tissue donation requests
- Work with a medical examiner or funeral director
- Address workers' compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests • Respond to lawsuits and legal actions

Your Rights

When it comes to your health information, you have certain rights. This section explains your rights and some of our responsibilities to help you.

Get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record

- You can ask to see or get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record and other health information we have about you. Ask us how to do this.
- We will provide a copy or a summary of your health information, usually within 30 days of your request. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee.

Ask us to correct your medical record

- You can ask us to correct health information about you that you think is incorrect or incomplete. Ask us how to do this.
- We may say "no" to your request, but we'll tell you why in writing within 60 days.

Request confidential communications

- You can ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address.
- We will say "yes" to all reasonable requests.

Ask us to limit what we use or share

- You can ask us not to use or share certain health information for treatment, payment, or our operations. We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say "no" if it would affect your care.
- If you pay for a service or health care item out-of-pocket in full, you can ask us not to share that information for the purpose of payment or our operations with your health insurer. We will say "yes" unless a law requires us to share that information.

Get a list of those with whom we've shared information

- You can ask for a list (accounting) of the times we've shared your health information for six years prior to the date you ask, who we shared it with, and why.
- We will include all the disclosures except for those about treatment, payment, and health care operations, and certain other disclosures (such as any you asked us to make). We'll provide one accounting a year for free but will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee if you ask for another one within 12 months.

Get a copy of this privacy notice

- You can ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically. We will provide you with a paper copy promptly.
- **Choose someone to act for you**
- If you have given someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information.
- We will make sure the person has this authority and can act for you before we take any action.

File a complaint if you feel your rights are violated

- You can complain if you feel we have violated your rights by contacting our Privacy Officer, Tony Marbury: 804-4403700
- You can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting **www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/.**
- We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Your Choices

For certain health information, you can tell us your choices about what we share. If you have a clear preference for how we share your information in the situations described below, talk to us. Tell us what you want us to do, and we will follow your instructions.

In these cases, you have both the right and choice to tell us to:

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in your care
- Share information in a disaster relief situation
- Include your information in a hospital directory

If you are not able to tell us your preference, for example if you are unconscious, we may go ahead and share your information if we believe it is in your best interest. We may also share your information when needed to lessen a serious and imminent threat to health or safety.

In these cases, we never share your information unless you give us written permission:

- Marketing purposes
- Sale of your information
- Most sharing of psychotherapy notes

In the case of fundraising:

- We may contact you for fundraising efforts, but you can tell us not to contact you again.

Our Uses and Disclosures

How do we typically use or share your health information?

We typically use or share your health information in the following ways.

Treat you

We can use your health information and share it with other professionals who are treating you.

Run our organization

We can use and share your health information to run our practice, improve your care, and contact you when necessary.

Bill for your services

We can use and share your health information to bill and get payment from health plans or other entities.

How else can we use or share your health information?

We are allowed or required to share your information in other ways – usually in ways that contribute to the public good, such as public health and research. We have to meet many conditions in the law before we can share your information for these purposes. For more information see: www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html**.**

Help with public health and safety issues

We can share health information about you for certain situations such as:

- Preventing disease
- Helping with product recalls
- Reporting adverse reactions to medications
- Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or domestic violence
- Preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone's health or safety

Do research

We can use or share your information for health research.

Comply with the law

We will share information about you if state or federal laws require it, including with the Department of Health and Human Services if it wants to see that we're complying with federal privacy law.

Respond to organ and tissue donation requests

We can share health information about you with organ procurement organizations.

Work with a medical examiner or funeral director

We can share health information with a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director when an individual dies.

Address workers' compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests We can use or share health information about you:

- For workers' compensation claims
- For law enforcement purposes or with a law enforcement official
- With health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law
- For special government functions such as military, national security, and presidential protective services

Respond to lawsuits and legal actions

We can share health information about you in response to a court or administrative order, or in response to a subpoena.

Our Responsibilities

- We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information.
- We will let you know promptly if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your information.
- We must follow the duties and privacy practices described in this notice and give you a copy of it.



- We will not use or share your information other than as described here unless you tell us we can in writing. If you tell us we can, you may change your mind at any time. Let us know in writing if you change

Changes to the Terms of this Notice

- This notice is effective beginning 10/1/2021. We can change the terms of this notice, and the changes will apply to all information we have about you. The new notice will be available upon request.