

Welcome to Counseling

At Positive Pathways, it is an honor to have the opportunity to help you achieve your goals and to help you overcome obstacles impeding your path to happiness and health. To enable your counseling experience to be as productive and motivating as possible, this packet explains services offered by Positive Pathways Counseling.

Treatment is Optional and Not Required: Counseling, psychotherapy and crisis intervention services are not required. We do not work with people who are forced to seek treatment by others. You are free to limit or end treatment at any time. Your wellbeing and stability is important to all staff at Positive Pathways Counseling & Medical Staff that we work closely with. Please make a commitment to attend counseling sessions if you feel you benefit from the services offered during counseling.

Due to the voluntary nature of services offered in counseling, you have the right to terminate services at any time you desire. Positive Pathways has an 'Attempt to Contact' Policy before assuming that a client has decided to opt out of therapy treatment and may attempt to contact a client who has missed a scheduled session. Positive Pathways has this policy due to our investment in ensuring clients are safe, have sufficient support and that they have been offered outside provider referrals should a client desire services from other treatment providers.

Limitations of Services: All clinicians working at Positive Pathways Counseling have been licensed by the Texas State Counseling Association & Board of Examiners to provide services. Should a clinician feel that any issues that a client wishes to address in counseling is outside of that professional's scope of clinical knowledge, specialties or requires more intensive counseling services, we will refer that client to an appropriate provider that can better meet that client's specific needs. A client may resume Positive Pathways counseling services, should they desire, once they have completed more specific or intensive counseling services.

Expectations of Clients: Attending your first counseling session shows that you desire positive change and assistance to learn independent management of difficult life situations. It is client motivation and consistency that enables those positive life changes to move from hopes and dreams into reality. Honesty during client intake assessment and reporting of any changes that occur throughout treatment duration is vital for successful treatment outcomes. **HONESTY IS THE KEY TO FORMULATING A POSITIVE RAPPORT WITH YOUR THERAPIST.**

Legal Issues: Positive Pathways will not provide legal advice and have no service ability to do so. Your counselor can assist you by providing referrals for seeking legal counsel upon your request. It is a policy of this office not to provide assessments or recommendations in support of legal actions such as child custody, competency evaluations, or civil lawsuits. Please notify your therapist immediately if you are or become involved in a legal or criminal matter. If you are needing a counselor to appear in court, you will be required to pay separate fees to compensate your therapist for time it takes to prepare for court, the time it takes to attend court and any paperwork fees incurred. Payment for these services will be made before your counselor appears in court. We are here to advocate for our clients in their best interest and have ethical duties to do so.

Consent of Minors

It is a Positive Pathways Counseling policy to work with children only when parents are also involved. If you are not the medical power of attorney for your child, a consent from the medical guardian must be obtained, as stated by Texas State Laws. When a child has two separate custodial parents, both parents must sign a consent to treatment before we are able to provide treatment services to any minor. Our clinicians will not work with minors who object to involving their parents in some sessions.

Patients under the age of 18 whom are not emancipated should be made aware that their parents have the right to request to examine their child's records at any time during treatment. In an attempt to encourage comfort while sharing information during a therapy session with minors, for children between the ages of 12 to 17, it is a policy to request that parents be informed only on a need-to-know basis (as determined by the treating professional) what children divulge to their counselor during sessions. If this is agreed upon by the parents, a signed limited consent form for minors may be requested upon initial client assessment. At the termination of treatment, parents will be given a summary of the treatment their child received, if requested in writing. Any other communication with the parent and therapist will only include pertinent and essential treatment aspects, and will not provide specifics regarding session content, unless safety concerns have been noted by overseeing clinician. Before giving parents any information, counselors will attempt to discuss their concerns with the child, if possible, and will provide them with the opportunity to disclose concerns to their parents with the support of their counselor to encourage independent voluntary disclosure.

Divorce Decrees, Agreements to Final Orders in Suits to Establish Parentage and Any Agreed Court Orders Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship or Custody: Court orders and legal paperwork are very specific. Our office must have a copy of such paperwork prior to treating a minor. The responsibility to inform the other parent of intentions of pursuing counseling falls on the parent seeking counseling for their child prior to treatment. We feel strongly about parental involvement in counseling. Ideally, both legal parents, and any parental figures, will present during the first counseling session. This will ensure involvement of all parties participate in the counseling process for the good of the minor entering treatment. We know that this is not always possible and will discuss this policy on a case-by-case basis with each client & guardian(s).

Contacting Our Office

Positive Pathways strives to offer exemplary care and additional support to our clients outside of therapy sessions and attempt to provide clients with access to their therapist should additional support be requested. We encourage utilizing this resource as a tool for difficult times encountered outside of therapy that may impede achievement of treatment goals. The Positive Pathways Primary Therapist is Whitney Scheef, MA, LPC, CCTP and can be contacted via call or text to **(682) 206-9205**. Should you reach the voicemail message when calling, please leave a detailed message and you will be contacted back as soon as possible within 24-48 business hours, with office holidays as the only weekday exception.

Positive Pathways takes pride in our ability to provide easy access to our clinicians with rapid response times. With this in mind, it is not always possible to guarantee a therapist's immediate availability for every request made, and we are not equipped to handle any immediate crisis-situation. Therefore, **IF FOR ANY REASON YOU FEEL YOU ARE IN AN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS THAT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE RESPONSE, ALWAYS CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY & GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM.** Please note that the services offered at this facility are outpatient and not emergency services.

Intake Assessments

Intake appointments typically take 60 – 90 minutes. Follow-up appointments will be 50 minutes in length. You may make a prior request for a longer or shorter session length via phone call to the Positive Pathway office. Positive Pathways prides itself on providing counseling services tailored to clients' individual support needs and we strive to accommodate requests for session length extension or additional services needed by our clientele.

SCHEDULING SESSIONS

Appointments for counseling sessions are scheduled by calling **(682)206-9205**. This number is not used for important information to be sent via texts and please do not send texts regarding counseling or personal issues that should be addressed in session as it is not possible for your identity to be confirmed via text. Text contact will therefore be very limited and will not be used to address confidential therapy issues to protect your privacy. Written information should be delivered to your therapist via email or during your 50-minute therapy session.

PLEASE NOTE: Appointment cancellation or rescheduling is required to be done VIA PHONE CALL TO YOUR PROVIDER. PLEASE LEAVE A VOICE MESSAGE REGARDING CANCELLATION AND STAFF WILL PROMPTLY GET BACK TO YOU. While you may text to contact your therapist, if you do not received confirmation that your therapist has received this text message within 2 hours, PLEASE FOLLOW UP WITH A CANCELLATION PHONE CALL. Appointment cancellation MUST be confirmed by contacting Positive Pathways **1 full business day (24 hours) in advance of your scheduled appointment time**, or the appointment will be charged at our regular counseling rates. Please note that automated appointment reminders are provided to assist in appointment notification and our system should not be relied upon by clients to remind them of appointment times. It is the client's responsibility to attend their appointments at schedule date/time with or without automated office reminder assistance. **YOU MAY NOT CANCEL APPOINTMENTS VIA EMAIL.** THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE. A DIRECT CONTACT TO OUR OFFICE IS REQUIRED SHOULD YOU CANCEL YOUR APPOINTMENT.

Positive Pathways has a 24-hour cancellation policy for counseling sessions. If you cannot make your scheduled appointment, please contact the office a minimum of 24 hours prior to your scheduled appointment time. We understand that unforeseen issues happen that do not always enable 24-hours notice to be provided for rescheduling appointments. Positive Pathways will allow contingencies for this policy on a case-by-case basis; however, forgetting appointments, work-related issues and social events are not given contingency to our 24-hour cancellation policy. *NOTE: Illness will be excused with a doctors' note provided with the date of appointment and excuse written by doctor confirming illness to avoid no show charges. Clients will be billed the full amount of the session price for missing appointments without providing 24-hours notice.*

FEES & PAYMENTS

Payments are accepted upon client's arrival to each counseling session by your counselor. We accept payment forms that fit client preferences via cash, credit card, FSA spending account card, check or money order made out to Positive Pathways Counseling or to Whitney Scheef, MA, LPC, CCTP. PLEASE BRING A COPY OF YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE AND A CREDIT/DEBIT CARD TO YOUR INITIAL APPOINTMENT TO KEEP ON FILE, WHICH IS USED FOR APPOINTMENT BILLING & IDENTITY CONFIRMATION PURPOSES. A \$50.00 charge is required for all returned client checks in addition to the amount of the payment itself. Should this situation occur, Positive Pathways will not accept this client's checks for session payment as a form of payment for sessions in the future.

Initial Intake Assessment- \$145.00 The Initial session is a crucial point in establishment of trust and gaining an understanding of the issues bringing you to counseling. This session also enables the formulation of your initial treatment diagnosis. Initial Treatment Plan begins during the initial session and continues to progress along with treatment sessions.

Individual Counseling Session- \$105.00 Individual sessions include 50-minute one-on-one coaching with a licensed professional counselor in the privacy of the Positive Pathways Counseling office. Alternative treatment service settings outside of the Positive Pathway Counseling Office may be suggested by your counselor for therapeutic purposes, or upon client request, however this is to be discussed with your counselor on an individual client basis.

After hours crisis Psychotherapy Session- \$150.00 Crisis sessions provided face-to-face, skype, or telephone include 50-minute one-on-one coaching with a licensed professional counselor that have been scheduled outside of Positive Pathway's normal office hours of operation with short-notice therapist attention as soon as possible (this service is not always available).

Brief Interventions via Telephone, Email or Service Coordination (exceeding 7 minutes or 2 email limit permitted)- \$25.00 per 15-minute interval. This fee will be billed on the day the contact occurred using the payment form provided during your initial visit, and for after-hours calls the charge will be billed the following day. Your Counselor will provide you with an invoice of the contact during your next office visit per client's request for statement.

Documentation/Paperwork Requests- \$50.00 per 30 min interval. Positive Pathways asks that clients allow at least 14 days from initial paperwork request for paperwork completion from the Positive Pathways Office staff or counseling director, Whitney Scheef, MA, LPC. We always attempt to complete paperwork and other paperwork requests from clients as quickly as possible. We reserve the right, at any time, to refuse to complete paperwork we feel could ethically conflict with our office adherence to ethical guidelines provided by the Texas State Board for Examiners of Licensed Professional Counselors, American Counseling Association ethics, or Positive Pathways Policies to provide ethically sound and quality counseling and psychotherapy services

Positive Pathways Does not currently contract with any insurance providers. We are accept direct client payment for services; however we are willing to provide documentation and superbill statements to assist you in reimbursement of services through your insurance company should this be offered by your insurance company.

CLIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The therapeutic process may be very different for different people involving varying durations of skills training treatment. As a client, you may choose to end the therapeutic relationship at any time and/or request therapy referral(s). A client may also request termination of services and/or outside referrals at a time mutually agreed upon by you and your counselor. I encourage all clients to participate in a termination session(s) in order to complete the therapeutic process; however, it is not required if client should decline participation in discharge process.

_____ (initial) I understand the 24-hour cancellation policy at Positive Pathways Counseling & understand that it states that if I neglect to cancel my appointment via phone call at least 24 hours prior to my scheduled session, I will be responsible for paying the charge for my session.

_____ (initial) I understand and authorize Positive Pathways Counseling to keep my billing information on file and agree to authorize Positive Pathways to use this information to charge for sessions that have been scheduled with my therapist that I did not attend and have not provided 24-hours advanced notice of my appointment cancellation via telephone.

_____ (Initial) I understand the HIPPA Privacy Practices used by Positive Pathways Counseling office and have been provided with Notice of my Rights as a client, information regarding what to expect from my therapist, and have a full understanding of my confidentiality and limitations to confidentiality rights.

In signing below, I _____ (Print Name) acknowledge that I have read and understand the information included in this form as a new client of Positive Pathways Counseling services. I give my voluntary, informed consent for services provided by Positive Pathways Counseling and, by signing my name below, I show that I fully understand that I am voluntarily entering into counseling services, accepting of the fees for services and agree to all of the Positive Pathway Counseling office procedures and policies.

Signature of client/client's legal representative

Date Signed

Signature of Witness to Client Signature

Date Signed

Witness to Client's Signature: Whitney Scheef, MA, LPC, CCTP