



## **Catholic Counseling Service**

### **Declaration Statement**

Welcome to Catholic Counseling Service, a ministry of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. As a ministry, we operate from a faith based perspective consistent with the policies of our employer, the Roman Catholic Church. Please read the next three pages carefully. In order for you to benefit from your experience, it is important that you fully understand the nature of counseling, your relationship with your counselor, and your responsibilities.

#### ***About our counselors...***

Our counselors are post graduate counselors and graduate counseling students from local universities. The graduate counseling students receive supervision from licensed professionals at Catholic Counseling Service. Mrs. Malise Harold, MA is the Director of Catholic Counseling Service. She may be contacted at (504) 861-6246.

#### ***Areas of service...***

Family, couple, individual, and group counseling are offered. Issues frequently addressed include: career concerns, stress, interpersonal relationship problems, parenting concerns, grief and loss, addictions, and adjustment to unexpected life changes. While we operate from a faith based perspective, yet we leave dialogue of religion and spirituality to the discretion of the client.

#### ***About the counseling relationship...***

The counseling relationship is a confidential, professional relationship. It is different from friendship, although you may experience feelings common in friendship (caring, concern, irritation, anger) as you work with your counselor. It is best to bring these feelings into the counseling sessions so that they may be discussed and resolved. It is not uncommon for clients to want to include their counselor in other areas of their lives. We are prohibited by our code of ethics and standards of practice to engage in dual relationships. This means that your counselor may not see you outside of professional visits, accept gifts, or attend social functions with you. If you meet in public, your counselor will not initiate contact. We may not violate the confidential nature of the relationship.

#### ***What you can expect from therapy...***

You can expect your counselor to help you clarify your challenges, assist you to identify your unique strengths and assets, and support you while you develop a plan to better meet your needs. Counselors operate from a wellness model and integrate a systemic perspective into their work. This means that you will explore the impact family, work, community, and social environments have on you and how these systems may serve as obstacles or support for change and growth. Goals for therapy are

always developed together. The overall objective for therapy is the successful resolution of the problems that are deemed most important.

Please understand that clients must make their own decisions regarding such things as deciding to marry, separate, divorce, reconcile, and how to set up custody and visitation. Your counselor will help you think through the possibilities and consequences of decisions, but our Code of Ethics does not allow counselors to advise you to make a specific decision.

***What your counselor will expect from you...***

Your counselor will expect you to be open and honest about your medical history (including current drug or alcohol use) as well as current or past relationships with other mental health professionals. We suggest that you undergo a complete physical examination, especially if you have not had one within the past year. It is important that your counselor has a complete list of any medications you are taking. Within the first few sessions, you will be asked to discuss a brief family history and lifestyle assessment. The information you provide should be as accurate and complete as possible.

You may develop specific homework assignments with your counselor. You will realize the full benefits of the counseling process if you attend sessions regularly and actively take responsibility for following through on plans made during sessions. During your work with your counselor, you may experience fear, anger, or pain as you explore your concerns or other previously identified issues. Frequently, "things get worse before they get better." Please discuss these feelings in your session and trust the process of healing and growth will take place. If you find that you wish to terminate counseling for any reason, your counselor will provide a list of referral sources.

***Code of Conduct...***

Your counselor is required by state law to adhere to a Code of Conduct for Licensed Professional Counselors and the Louisiana Code of Ethics for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists. This code is determined by the Louisiana Licensing Board and a copy of the code is available upon request. Our code of conduct requires that we maintain records that enable effective planning during the course of your counseling. Records are typically maintained for a period of seven years after the termination of your counseling.

***Confidentiality...***

As in all relationships, there are boundaries and limits. Counselors are required to abide by the professional practice standards for licensed professional counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, and Louisiana law. Client confidences and information are not disclosed to any third party without a client's written consent or waiver except when mandated or permitted by law. Verbal authorization will not be sufficient except in emergency situations. We are required to report to the appropriate authorities if you express an intent to harm yourself or someone else or if you give your counselor reason to suspect the abuse or neglect of a minor child, elderly person (65 or older), or dependent adult. Your counselor may be required to release records if ordered to by a subpoena or other court order. Of course, we will release information if you sign a written release of information form.

When working with a family or couple, information shared by individuals in session when other family members are not present will be held in confidence. Your counselor may ask family members to sign a waiver releasing him/her from this restriction. Although members may refuse to sign a waiver, such refusal may impede or prevent positive outcomes for therapy. A referral to another therapist may be made if it is decided that maintaining confidentiality is an obstacle to counseling. In order to release information to a third party, all members of the therapy unit must sign. For example, without a court order, your counselor cannot release information to a lawyer about either or both spouses seen for marital therapy without the signed, written release of both parties.

Since the Center is staffed with counselors in training, supervisors may view sessions from the viewing room or review videos with counselors. Cases may be discussed in individual or group supervision as well as in consultation sessions.

All counselors and supervisors are bound by ethical guidelines to maintain clients' privacy.

### ***Fees and Payment Procedures...***

You will be expected to make payment at the time of service. Fees are \$50.00 per session for individuals, and are payable to Archdiocese of New Orleans Catholic Counseling Service. In cases of financial hardship, the Director may negotiate a reduction in fees. We require that you give twenty-four hours notice for missed appointments in order to avoid payment for the scheduled session. Future appointments are typically scheduled at the end of each session.

There is a \$15.00 fee for late cancellation (less than 24 hour notice of cancellation) and no-show (missed appointment).

### ***Emergencies...***

Since our clinicians are largely comprised of graduate interns, no one is available for 24 hour care. In the case of an emergency please contact your family physician, call 911, or go to the nearest hospital room.

- The nearest hospital to our Metairie office is East Jefferson General Hospital at 4200 Houma Boulevard, Metairie, LA 70006. The number to their ER is (504) 454-4377.
- The nearest hospital to our Covington Office is Lakeview Regional Medical Center at 95 Judge Tanner Blvd, Covington, LA 70433. The number to their ER is (985) 867-4000.
- The nearest hospital to our New Orleans Office is Ochsner Baptist Medical Center at 2700 Napoleon Ave, New Orleans, LA 70115. The number to their ER is (504) 897-5907.

### ***Potential Risks of counseling...***

The client should be aware that counseling poses potential risks. Studies suggest that therapy involving only one spouse can lead to the dissolution of the marriage instead of improving it. Changes in relationship patterns that may result from family therapy may produce unpredicted and/or possibly adverse responses from other people in the client's social system. In the course of working together, additional problems may surface of which the client was not initially aware. If any concerns arise during the course of therapy, the client is urged to bring these to the session.