

CHOICES GWINNETT

Information, Authorization & Consent to Treatment

Thank you for selecting Choices Gwinnett. Debbie is looking forward to working with you. This document is designed to inform you about what you can expect regarding policies such as confidentiality and emergencies while in treatment at Choices Gwinnett. Providing this document is part of an ethical obligation to the counseling profession and is part of Debbie's commitment to you to keep you informed. The therapeutic relationship is a collaborative one. Questions, comments, or suggestions regarding your course of therapy are welcome at any time.

Debbie Durand, NCC, LPC

Debbie received her Master's in Education in Community Counseling from the State University of West Georgia in Carrollton Georgia in 2001. She is a Nationally Certified and Licensed Professional Counselor. She has experience working with children and adults. Debbie has worked as an outpatient counselor in community mental health, an inpatient social worker, a crisis assessment counselor, and a family intervention counselor. She has experience working with many issues including Depression, Anxiety, Grief, and Trauma. Debbie incorporates EMDR when requested and appropriate in trauma therapy. Debbie counsels utilizing approaches that fit each individual and situation often using Cognitive Behavioral therapy. Debbie works with adult clients to help them reduce or eliminate unwanted symptoms.

Theoretical Views & Client Participation

Psychotherapy can be beneficial but may also come with some risks. Clients may experience uncomfortable feelings because they are discussing troubling subject matter. Psychotherapy can be beneficial and worth the work involved to have a reduction of distress as you work toward more positive life experiences. Some clients need only a few sessions to achieve their therapeutic goals, while others may require extended sessions. If it is decided that this therapeutic relationship is not meeting the goals of treatment, both parties have the right to terminate therapy.

For therapy to be most successful, it is important for you to take an active role. This means working on the things we talk about between sessions. This also means avoiding any mind-altering substances like alcohol or non-prescription drugs for at least forty-eight hours prior to your therapy sessions. Honesty with Debbie during therapy is essential for you to receive the greatest benefits.

Debbie strives to help clients learn coping skills and problem-solving strategies to enhance quality of life. Please let Debbie know as your goals and needs change. Debbie is committed to helping you progress and receive maximum benefits from your therapy.

Confidentiality

Debbie will keep everything you say completely confidential, with the following exceptions:

- You direct her to talk to someone else and you sign a "Release of Information" form
- She determines that you are a danger to yourself or to others
- You report information about the abuse of a child, elderly person, or a disabled individual who may require protection
- She is ordered by a judge to disclose information

- You file a complaint or lawsuit and while defending herself; she inadvertently discloses personal information

Please note that in couples' counseling, there is not an agreement to maintain confidentiality between partners. Also, from time to time Debbie may consult with other licensed therapists about your case to get another professional opinion. However, Debbie will never use your name and will always disguise your identity. The purpose for these consultations is strictly to provide you with the best possible care. If you have any questions about confidentiality, please ask.

Debbie is required to keep your identity secret. Therefore, she may not address you first if you happen to meet in public. If you address her first, she may briefly speak to you as an acquaintance. She must decline any social invitations. Debbie will not be able to function as a friend to you like your other friends after you have completed your therapy. Once your therapist always your therapist! These guidelines are not meant to be discourteous in any way, they are meant for your long-term protection.

Structure and Cost of Sessions

The fee for psychotherapy of \$120.00 per 55-minute session is agreed upon. It is not feasible to do Therapy by telephone. If you need to talk to your therapist between sessions this may indicate that you need extra sessions. The fee for each session is due at the beginning of the session. Cash, check, MasterCard, Visa, and Discover are accepted. If insurance is being filed as a courtesy to you, Debbie must have a valid copy of your insurance card. Please present this card before your first session begins. You will be billed for any deductibles that have not been met.

Debbie accepts Aetna and Blue Cross Blue Shield for insurance payments. It is the client's responsibility to ensure that Debbie Durand is listed as an **in-network** provider on their insurance plan. Additionally, you should be aware if you have met your deductible, of the co-payment required, as well as how many visits are allowed per year as all policies are different. Call the number on your insurance card to verify coverage. If your insurance is filed and is returned as "No-Payment", the client will be billed for the remainder of the balance at regular session pricing.

Cancellation Policy

Your appointment time is especially reserved for you. You are responsible for keeping track of your appointments. If you are unable to keep an appointment, you must notify Debbie at least 48 hours in advance. (Please call Debbie if you are experiencing illness or an emergency and will miss your appointment as early as you are aware you will miss. **Please do not come to therapy if you are sick and contagious**). If such advanced notice is not received, you will be financially responsible for the session you missed at the regular session fee, this must be paid before the next session can take place.

In Case of an Emergency

Choices Gwinnett is an outpatient facility, and it is set up to accommodate individuals who are reasonably safe and resourceful. If at any time this type of therapy does not feel like sufficient support, please discuss this with Debbie so additional resources can be recommended or you can be referred to someone who can better meet your needs. Generally, phone calls are returned with 24-48 hours. If you have a mental health emergency, you are encouraged not to wait for a call back, but to do one or more of the following:

- Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room
- Call an Inpatient Mental Health facility

Professional Relationship

Psychotherapy involves a professional relationship. Because of the nature of therapy, your relationship with your therapist must be different from most relationships. It may differ in how long it lasts, the objectives, or the topics discussed. It is limited to the relationship of therapist and client **only**. If we were to interact in any other ways, we would then have a “multiple relationship” which could prove to be harmful to you in the long run and is, therefore, unethical in the mental health profession. All therapy professions have rules against such relationships to protect clients and therapists.

A multiple relationship can set up conflicts between your therapist’s interests and your (the client’s) best interests, possibly not putting the clients’ needs first. To offer all clients the best treatment, Debbie’s judgment needs to be solely focused. Therefore, she may not participate in any of the following relationship examples, Debbie **CANNOT**:

- Be your supervisor, teacher or evaluator
- Be a therapist to her own relatives or friends
- Provide therapy to former friends and colleagues
- Have any kind of business relationship with you or from you, or trade or barter your services (things like tutoring, repairing, legal advice, dentistry, etc.) or goods for therapy
- Give legal, medical, financial or any other type of professional advice in an area in which she has not received specialized training
- Have any kind of romantic or sexual relationship with a former or current client, or any person close to a client

Your relationship with your therapist is different from a relationship with a friend. Friends may see your position only from their personal viewpoints and want to find quick solutions to your issues. Short-term solutions may not be in your long-term best interests. Friends may need for you to follow their advice. A therapist helps you identify choices and helps you choose what is best for you. A therapist helps you learn coping skills and make self-enhancing decisions. A therapist’s responses to your situations are based on their education and training regarding relationships and methods of change.

Court Appearances

Debbie does not appear in court on behalf of clients. If in a rare instance she has to appear, the fee for appearing is \$1000.00 per day as Debbie is not able to attend to the needs of other clients while she is in court.

Statement Regarding Ethics, Client Welfare & Safety

As much as therapists would like to guarantee specific results regarding your therapeutic goals, we are unable to do so. However, together we will work to achieve the best possible results for you. Please also be aware that changes made in therapy may affect other people in your life (e.g., an increase your assertiveness may not always be welcomed by others). Debbie’s intention is to help you manage changes in your interpersonal relationships as they arise, but it is important for you to be aware of this possibility.

Insurance companies require Debbie to provide a clinical diagnosis to describe the nature of your concerns, these diagnoses come from the DSM-5. Insurance companies may request treatment plans or summaries but rarely request session notes. I will ask for your signed release of information before I release anything to anyone including an insurance company. Your insurance company may require authorization to pay for therapy, it is your responsibility to obtain this or you may be responsible for the full amount for sessions and they could deny payment. You will be responsible to pay the negotiated rate until your deductible is met.

Professional Records

Psychotherapists have a requirement to keep records of the psychological services provided such as: notes regarding dates and times of therapy, therapeutic concerns, treatment goals and progress, your diagnosis, your treatment history, records received from other providers and billing information. Professional records could be misinterpreted by untrained readers. If you request your records, It is recommended you review them with Debbie to discuss the contents first. You can request your records be made available to another provider, in writing and will need to sign a release of information.

Parents and Minors

Privacy is vital for success in therapy. For clients 15 years of age and older, Debbie can share general information about treatment progress. If there is a safety concern Debbie may need to disclose information to the parents or others to keep the client safe.

Debbie is sincerely looking forward to working with you. If you have any questions about any part of this document, please ask. Please sign your name below indicating that you have read and understand the contents of this form, you agree to the policies of your relationship and you are authorizing Debbie to begin treatment with you.

I have received my HIPPA Rights. I have read and understand the policies above. I request that payment of insurance company benefits be made to Debbie Durand/Choices Gwinnett for services provided. I authorize the release of any information needed for the processing of this or any related claim/s. **I accept payment responsibilities if my insurance denies payment. I consent to therapy with Debbie Durand, NCC, LPC.**

Client Name (Please Print)

Date

Client Signature