

CHOICES GWINNETT
2095 Hwy 211 NW Suite 2F-321
Braselton, GA 30517

Information, Authorization & Consent to Treatment

Welcome to Choices Gwinnett, Debbie is pleased that you selected her practice for your treatment and is looking forward to working with you. This document is designed to inform you about what you can expect from your therapist, policies regarding confidentiality and emergencies, and several other details regarding your treatment here at Choices Gwinnett. Although providing this document is part of an ethical obligation to our profession, more importantly, it is part of Debbie's commitment to you to keep you informed of your therapeutic experience. Your relationship with Debbie is a collaborative one. She welcomes any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding your course of therapy at any time.

Background Information

The following information regarding my educational background and experience is an ethical requirement of my profession.

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 adults, adolescents, and children. 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 been in her private practice over 13 years in her Dacula office. She has experience working with many issues including Depression, Anxiety, Grief, and Trauma. Debbie uses EMDR therapy when needed during trauma therapy. EMDR therapists work to reprocess traumatic experiences for clients. Debbie counsels utilizing approaches that fit each individual and situation. Cognitive Behavioral therapy is often used and a trauma approach is utilized if that is what is required and requested. Debbie works with adult clients to help them reduce or eliminate unwanted symptoms. Additionally, Debbie has completed her course work for a Doctor of Psychology from California Southern University. She will start the dissertation process in November 2020.

Theoretical Views & Client Participation

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 is most successful when it is a collaborative effort. take an active role. Working on the things we talk about during and between sessions and avoiding any mind-altering substances like alcohol or non-prescription drugs for at least forty-eight hours prior to your therapy leads to the

most benefits for clients. Debbie will want to know your true feelings about the problematic situations you present in therapy.

Debbie believes everyone has the capacity to change and grow if they truly desire to do so. Her intention is to help clients learn coping strategies to enhance quality of life. Please let Debbie know as your goals and needs change. She committed to helping you heal, grow and receive the maximum benefits from your therapy.

Confidentiality

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

1. You direct her to talk to someone else and you sign a "Release of Information" form
2. She determines that you are a danger to yourself or to others
3. You report information about the abuse of a child, elderly person, or a disabled individual who may require protection
4. She is ordered by a judge to disclose information
5. You file a complaint or lawsuit against your therapist and while defending herself; she may disclose personal information

Please note that in couples' counseling, she does not agree to maintain confidentiality between partners. Also, from time to time she may consult with other licensed therapists about your case to get another professional option. However, she 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.

Structure and Cost of Sessions

We agree to provide therapy for the fee of \$130.00 per 55-minute session. If you need to talk to Debbie between sessions this may indicate that you need extra sessions. The fee for each session is due at the beginning of the session, on the day of service. Cash, check, MasterCard, Visa, and Discover are accepted. **Filing insurance is a courtesy** to you, she must have a valid copy of your insurance card. Please present a completed packet of paperwork before an appointment can be scheduled. **You are responsible for and will be billed for any deductibles that have not been met, copays, fees for letters, and anything the insurance company denies for any reason. To prevent unpaid balances from being sent to collections, please pay them as soon as you are made aware of any. Unpaid balances may be sent to collections after two written notices are sent.**

Debbie accepts Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance. **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 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

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. If such advance 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. Debbie is always not available, if at any time out-patient support is not sufficient, please discuss this with Debbie so she can coordinate additional resources or transfer your case to someone who can meet more severe needs. Debbie strives to return phone calls with 24-48 hours. If you have a mental health emergency, do not wait for a call back, but to do one or more of the following:

- Call your personal physician
- Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room

Professional Relationship

Psychotherapy is a professional service Debbie provides, because of the nature of therapy, your relationship with Debbie must be different from other relationships. It may differ in how long it lasts, the objectives, or the topics discussed. It may also be limited to the relationship of therapist and client **only**. If she were to interact in any other ways, a “dual relationship” is created which could prove to be harmful to you and is, therefore, unethical in the mental health profession. All therapy professions have rules against such relationships to protect clients and therapists. A dual relationship is not allowed because it can potentially set up conflicts between Debbie’s interests and your best interests if it made your needs secondary. All of Debbie’s attention is to be solely focused on you. Therefore, she may not participate in any of the following relationship examples:

- She cannot be your supervisor, teacher or evaluator
- She cannot be a therapist to his/her own relatives or friends
- She cannot provide therapy to former friends and colleagues
- She cannot 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
- She does not give legal, medical, financial or any other type of professional advice in an area in which she has not received specialized training
- She cannot have any kind of romantic or sexual relationship with a client, or any person close to a client

There are also significant differences between therapy and friendship. Friends may see your position only from their personal viewpoints and experiences. Friends may want to find quick and easy solutions to your problems so that they can feel helpful. These short-term solutions may not be in your long-term best interests. Friends do not usually follow up on their advice to see whether it was beneficial. They may need to have you follow their advice. A therapist offers

you choices and helps you choose what is best for you. A therapist helps you learn how to solve problems and identify what you want to do. A therapist’s responses to your situation are based on their education, training and experience as methods of change.

Debbie is required to keep your identity secret and 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. Your therapist must decline any social invitations. Your therapist cannot function as a friend to you like your other friends after you have completed your therapy. These guidelines are not meant to be discourteous in any way, they are meant for your long-term protection.

Court Appearances

We will not appear in court on behalf of any of our clients. If a client files a complaint, relevant information regarding that client may be disclosed regarding defending a claim. In the unlikely event a court appearance is mandated, payment of \$300.00 per hour, including travel time and preparation time is due before an appearance.

Statement Regarding Ethics, Client Welfare & Safety

Debbie is not allowed to grantee specific results regarding your therapeutic goals. However, when working collaboratively, therapeutic progress is often achieved. 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 intends to help you manage changes in your interpersonal relationships as they arise, but it is important for you to be aware of this possibility. Debbie looks 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 with us 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 Choices Gwinnett for services provided. I authorize the release of any information needed for processing of this or any related claim/s. **I accept payment responsibilities if my insurance denies payment for any reason.**

Client Name (Please Print)

Date

Client Signature