

# Client Handbook

## Information about starting Therapeutic Services

August 1, 2019

Sunrise-amanecer inc.

123 S Walnut Circle, Greensboro, NC, 27409

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### Welcome

Welcome & Bienvenidos to Sunrise-Amanecer Inc. we are committed to helping people live full and prosperous lives. We are a behavioral health provider as well as a community partner who serves those struggling with mental health and addiction disorders in the community. We have a team of strong clinicians, volunteers and students ready to help you heal and grow. We appreciate you giving us the opportunity to be of help to you. This handbook details our services and answers most commonly asked questions about therapy

*After you read this if you have any questions, we can talk in person about how this will apply to you. This document is yours to keep. You will return the sections with consent forms and information we need with your signature stating you have received this document. Please read all of it. Mark any parts that are not clear to you. Write down any questions you have, and we will discuss them at our next meeting.*

### About Therapy

We strongly believe you should feel comfortable with the therapist you choose, and hopeful about the therapy process. When you feel this way, therapy is more likely to be very helpful to you

The type of therapy that we all incorporate includes an integration of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (including trauma focused-CBT), Cognitive Processing Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Mindfulness Techniques, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Narrative Therapy, Group and Family Therapies.

An important part of your therapy will be practicing new skills that you will learn in our sessions. Since therapy is individually tailored to each persons individual needs the methods will vary from person to person. The therapy conducted is based on an understanding that you are the expert on your world and therefore you need to play an active role in changing that world. We might ask you to do exercises, keep records, and read to deepen your learning. There are no instant, painless cures however, you can learn new ways of looking at your problems that will be very helpful for changing your feelings and reactions and at times you can learn how to heal from the pain from past experiences to live a fuller life.

Our treatment plans are completed at the time of the assessment or in the first session. They are focused on your individual needs and therefore a review of your treatment plan is fundamental to the shared success of the therapeutic relationship. Therapy then usually comes to an end when goals are met. The process of ending therapy, called "termination," can be a very valuable part of our work.

Stopping therapy should not be done casually, although either of us may decide to end it if we believe it is in your

best interest. If you wish to stop therapy at any time, we ask that you agree now to meet for at least one more session to review our work together. We will review our goals, the work we have done, any future work that needs to be done, and our choices.

### Consultations

If you could benefit from a treatment we cannot provide, we will help you to get it. You have a right to ask about such other treatments, their risks, and their benefits. Based on what we learn about your situation, we may recommend a medical exam or use of medication. If we do this, we will fully discuss the reasons with you, so that you can decide what is best. If you are treated by another professional, we will coordinate services with them and with your medical doctor with your written permission. We then update this release of information every six months to be sure we are still on the right path.

If for some reason treatment is not going well, we might suggest you see another therapist or another professional for an evaluation. As a responsible person and ethical therapist, we cannot continue to treat you if treatment is not working for you. If you wish for another professional's opinion at any time, or wish to talk with another therapist, we will help you find a qualified person and will provide him or her with the information needed. Your wellbeing is critical to us. Therapy is not a friendship. It is a relationship where you can learn and grow to become better able to be your best self.

### What to Expect from Our Relationship

As a professional, we will use our best knowledge and skills to help you. This includes following the standards our trade associations. Many of us in this practice are trained as social workers. Therefore, many of us use the National Association of Social Workers, or NASW code of ethics. In your best interests, the NASW puts limits on the relationship between a therapist and a client, and we will abide by these limits. Let's spend some time explaining these limits, so you will not think they are personal responses to you.

*First, we are licensed and trained to practice clinical social work & addiction counseling—not law, medicine, finance, or any other profession. We are not able to, nor are allowed to advise you from these other professional viewpoints.*

Second, state laws and the rules of the NASW require us to keep what you tell us confidential (that is, just between us). You can trust us not to tell anyone else what you say, except in certain limited situations. We explain what those are in the "About Confidentiality" section of this brochure. Here we want to explain that we try not to reveal who my clients are.

This is part of our effort to maintain your privacy. If we meet on the street or socially, we may not say anything to your or may just give you a polite "hello." Our behavior will not be a personal reaction to you, but a way to maintain the confidentiality of our relationship.

Third, in your best interest, and following the NASW's standards, we can only be your therapist. we cannot have any other role in your life. we cannot, now or ever, be a close friend to or socialize with any of our clients. we cannot attend your family gatherings, such as parties or weddings. We cannot be a therapist to someone who is already a friend. We cannot have a business relationship with any of our clients, other than the therapy relationship.

*If you ever become involved in a divorce or custody dispute, we want you to understand and agree that we will not provide evaluations or expert testimony in court. You should hire a different mental health professional for any evaluations or testimony you require. This position is based on two reasons: (1) My statements will be seen as biased in your favor because we have a therapy relationship; and (2) the testimony might affect our therapy relationship, and we must put this relationship first. As your therapist, we will not celebrate holidays or give you gifts and we may not receive any gifts from you.*

### About Confidentiality

*We will treat with great care all the information you share with us. It is your legal right that our sessions and records about you be kept private. That is why we ask you to sign a "release-of-records" form before we can talk*

*about you or send records about you to anyone else. In general, we will tell no one what you tell us. We will not even reveal that you are receiving treatment from our practice. In all but a few rare situations, your confidentiality (that is, our privacy) is protected by federal and state laws and by the rules of our profession. Here are the most common cases in which confidentiality is not protected:*

1. If you were sent to us by a court or an employer for evaluation or treatment, the court or employer expects a report from us. If this is your situation, please talk with us before you say anything you do not want the court or your employer to know. You have a right to tell us only what you are comfortable telling.
2. Are you suing someone or being sued? Are you being charged with a crime? If so, and you tell the court that you are seeing us, then we may then be ordered to show the court records. Please consult your lawyer about these issues.
3. If you make a serious threat to harm yourself or another person, the law requires all of our therapists to try to protect you or that other person. This usually means telling others about the threat. We cannot promise never to tell others about threats you make.
4. If we believe a child has been or will be abused or neglected, we are legally required to report this to the authorities.

There are two situations in which we might talk about part of your case with another therapist. We ask now for your understanding and agreement to let us do so in these two situations.

First, when your assigned therapist is away from the office for a few days, we will have a trusted fellow therapist “cover” for you in times of crisis. This therapist will be available to you in emergencies. Therefore, he or she needs to know about you. Of course, this therapist is bound by the same laws and rules as your assigned therapist and is bound by law and ethical responsibility to protect your confidentiality.

Except for situations like those described above, our team will always maintain your privacy. We also ask you not to disclose the name or identity of any other client being seen in this practice. Our office staff makes every effort to keep the names and records of clients private. We will never use your name on the telephone if clients in the office can overhear it. All staff members who see your records have been trained in how to keep records confidential. If your records need to be seen by another professional, or anyone else, we will discuss it with you. If you agree to share these records, you will need to sign an authorization form. This form states exactly what information is to be shared, with whom, and why, and it also sets time limits.

It is our office policy to destroy clients’ records 15 years after the end of our therapy. Until then, we will keep your case records in a safe and locked place.

If we must discontinue our relationship because of illness, disability, or other presently unforeseen circumstances, we ask you to agree to transferring your records to another therapist who will assure their confidentiality, preservation, and appropriate access. As part of cost control efforts, an insurance company will sometimes ask for more information on symptoms, diagnoses, and my treatment methods. It will become part of your permanent medical record. We will let you know if this should occur and what the company has asked for. Please understand that we have no control over how these records are handled at the insurance company. Our policy is to provide only as much information as the insurance company will need to pay your benefits. You can review your own records at any time. We will provide you with your medical record within 5 business days upon formal request to prepare a formal release of your medical record with a Clinical Leader to ensure all information is clearly stated and does not endanger the person and their current mental state. In very rare situations, we may temporarily remove parts of your records before you see them. This would happen if we believe that the information will be harmful to you or is information from a group or a family therapy session where more than one of Sunrise-Amanecer Inc’s clients are involved. We will review and process this with you upon receipt of the medical record.

### About Our Appointments

the first appointment is our Diagnostic Assessment this is the point where we ensure all information is given to our

clients as well as the signing of any releases of information and a consent to treatment. The first session is about 1 ½ hours long as it includes the review of all administrative information as well as the clinical information the client’s life. Following this, we will usually meet for a 50-60 minute session once or twice a week, then less often as you make progress. We can schedule meetings around your and your assigned therapist’s schedules so that it is convenient. We will tell you at least a month in advance of vacations or any other times we cannot meet.

*An appointment is a commitment to our work. We both agree to meet here and to be on time. Your session time is reserved for you. If we are ever unable to start on time, we ask for you to give us a call ahead. A cancelled appointment delays our work. We will consider our meetings very important and ask you to do the same. When you must cancel, please give us a 24-hour advanced notice. If you start to cancel sessions, we will have to charge you for the lost time unless we are able to fill it.*

We will not charge you for the first missed appointment. However, after two missed appointments that are not emergency oriented, then we will have to charge you a \$50.00 no show fee. If the problem persists reasonable accommodations can be made. This is determined by our CEO, not by the therapist working with you. Please note, missed appointments can not be billed to insurance this immediately becomes the client’s responsibility.

Any client who misses three sessions in a row without appropriate notice or warning will be considered an inactive client and a review by our CEO & Clinical Director will be necessary to re-open therapy. Your assigned therapist will meet with leadership of the organization to determine the best course of action and send you communication by whatever method you have requested. Clients who have been terminated from care for this reason will also have to meet with the CEO and/or Clinical Leader before we can resume therapy with you going forward.

We request that you do not bring children with you if they are young and need babysitting or supervision, which we cannot and do not provide, children are welcome in the therapy space but often derail progress in the session as most parents are not comfortable discussing their mental health symptoms in front of their children. We do have some toys and reading materials suitable for older children who do not need supervision. We cannot be responsible for any personal property or valuables you bring into this office. We understand for some families this is an issue. Please discuss this with your assigned therapist if you have questions.

### Fees, Payments, and Billing

Payment for services is an important part of any professional relationship. This is even more true in therapy; one treatment goal is to make relationships and the duties and obligations they involve clear. Regardless of insurance payor source, it is important that you are aware that you are responsible for seeing that our services are paid for. Meeting this responsibility shows your commitment and dedication to therapy. Payment for therapy is expected the same day unless other arrangements have been made in advance.

#### Standard Fees

Our current regular fees are as follows. Fees are subject to change without notice.

Service	Rate
Diagnostic Assessment	\$150.00
Individual Therapy	\$100.00
Couples and Family Therapy	\$120.00
Non-Medical Urine Drug Screen	\$40.00
Copy of Records or Documentation Services	\$35.00

Please pay for each session at the time of the session, unless we are in network with your insurance provider, If we are in network with your insurance provider they have already negotiated a different rate for our therapeutic services. We accept cash, personal checks, and credit cards (Visa, Discover, American Express, and Master Card). We accept PayPal and Square as credit card method of payments.

#### Group Fees

Psychoeducational, therapeutic, addiction treatment. IOP and family groups will be offered as the need and expertise of our agency allows. The fees for these groups is dependent of the nature of the group and the duration it will last. Clients can stay up to date on what groups we offer by looking at the website.

### **Sliding Fee Schedule**

In order to qualify for a sliding scale for therapeutic services you must submit an application that will be provided to you at the time of the assessment. Our Sliding fee schedule is at lowest 60.00 for individual session, 80.00 for couples and family sessions. On a case by case basis we are able to determine hardship and reduce rates for a limited time based on job loss or major life events. We do not want payment to be a significant barrier to receiving competent and quality care. We have an array of services to be able to meet services needs in other ways. If the solutions available are not enough we will facilitate any referrals that need to be made.

### **Policy for receiving therapy with Clinical Interns**

If you are interested in obtaining therapeutic services with a Masters level student under supervision of one of our licensed therapists the rate is set at a lower rate with the understanding that the student is developing their skills and will require to use details of the session in their class projects removing any identifying information.

Type of session	Rate
Individual Therapy	25.00
Family or Couples Therapy	35.00
Crisis Therapy	50.00

### **Telephone consultations**

If it is necessary for telephone consultations to be used in our therapy, we will charge you our regular fee, prorated over the time needed. If we need to have long telephone conferences with other professionals as part of your treatment, you will be billed for these at the same rate as for regular therapy services. If you are concerned about all this, please be sure to discuss it with us in advance so we can be clear with you on this policy. Of course, there is no charge for calls about appointments or similar business. Typically, anything over 15 minutes is billed for in our practice, We bill telephone services in 15 minute increments.

### **Email & Text messaging**

On occasion clients will send messages to us via text or email. These routine business communications are not charged. If this becomes a consistent means of communication, we need to discuss this with you. As the use of technology grows in the larger society we endeavor to keep up. On occasion and with consultation from the CEO and/or Clinical Director we can use these means of communication consistently.

### **Video Sessions**

Online video sessions can only be conducted in our practice over VSee. This platform meets HIPPA compliance laws. These sessions are billed at the standard session rate. These sessions are no longer than office or home-based sessions. Only independently licensed clinicians can use this option with the approval of the CEO. Not all insurance carriers reimburse for this method of care. Also, not all clinical issues are best cared for in this method. If this is something you are interested in, please let your assigned therapist know and they can give you more information to see if it is the best fit for you.

### **Extended Sessions**

Occasionally sessions will go longer than the allotted 50-60 minutes. When this happens, it is because the work at hand needs to continue rather than stop or postpone the work on that issue. When this extension is more than 15 minutes, we will tell you, because sessions that are extended beyond 15 minutes will be charged on a prorated basis. Sessions rates are divided into 15 minute increments.

## Court Appearances

If we are required to be in court to testify on your behalf and/or provide records we will bill this at a daily rate of \$500.00 and only when our therapists are formally subpoenaed. This is not the same fee as the report preparation that we may also be required to do on your behalf.

## Records

If records are requested and there is not a release of information in place or we are subpoenaed by the courts for records, we will charge a rate of \$140.00 an hour to pull records together on your behalf.

## Comments about Fees

If you make a written request to us, we will send you a statement at the end of each month. The statement can be used for health insurance claims, as described in the next section. It will show all of our meetings, the charges for each, how much has been paid, and how much (if any) is still owed. At the end of treatment, and when you have paid for all sessions, we will send you a final statement for your tax records.

Depending on your financial circumstances and total medical costs for any year, psychotherapy may be a deductible expense; please consult your tax advisor. Cost of transportation to and from appointments and fees paid may be deductible from the client's personal income taxes as medical expenses. If you think you may have trouble paying your bills on time, please discuss this with us. We will also raise the matter with you so we can arrive at a solution. If you have an unpaid balance at our next scheduled meeting, We will bring this to your attention and we will need to reach an agreement before the session begins. Fees that continue unpaid after we have terminated our therapy relationship will be turned over to small-claims court or a collection service.

*If there is any problem with our charges, our billing, your insurance, or any other money-related point, please bring it to our attention. We will do the same with you. Such problems can interfere with our work. They must be worked out openly and quickly in order for us to continue to serve you. We understand that money anxieties can be quite debilitating. We ask that you communicate with us and let us help you. Paying for care can be as much a part of the process of growth as the care itself.*

## If You Have Traditional (or “Indemnity”) Health Insurance Coverage

Because our clinicians are recognized behavioral healthcare specialists, many health insurance plans will help you pay for therapy and other services we offer. Because health insurance is written by many different companies, we cannot tell you what your plan covers. Please read your plan's booklet under coverage for “Outpatient Psychotherapy” or under “Treatment of Mental and Nervous Conditions.” Or call your employer's benefits office to find out what you need to know.

If your health insurance will pay part of our fee, we will help you with your insurance claim forms. However, please keep two things in mind:

1. We had no role in deciding what your insurance covers. Your employer decided which, if any, services will be covered and how much you have to pay. You are responsible for checking your insurance coverage, deductibles, payment rates, copayments, and so forth. Your insurance contract is between you and your company; it is not between us and the insurance company.
2. You—not your insurance company or any other person or company—are responsible for paying the fees we agree upon.

Your assigned therapist will inform you of the insurance panels they are paneled with to ensure you are receiving the best care fitting your insurance and financial situation

## If You Have a Managed Care Contract

If you belong to a health maintenance organization (HMO) or preferred provider organization (PPO), or have another kind of health insurance with managed care, decisions about what kind of care you need and how much of it

you can receive will be reviewed by the plan. The plan has rules, limits, and procedures that we should discuss. Please bring your health insurance plan's description of services to one of our early meetings, so that we can talk about it and decide what to do.

We will provide information about you to your insurance company only with your informed and written consent. We may send this information by mail or by fax. Our office will try its best to maintain the privacy of your records, but we ask you not to hold us responsible for accidents or for anything that happens as a result.

We are members of some health insurance plans or panels. If we are a member of your health insurance panel, we have a contract with them to provide certain services for certain fees and you will not have to submit any paperwork to them. If we are not a paneled provider for your insurance company, we will supply you with an invoice for services with the standard diagnostic and procedure codes for billing purposes, the times we met, our charges, and your payments. You can use this to apply for reimbursement. On occasion, your insurance carrier and particular plan will set specific rates that may differ from our private pay rates. We are obligated to charge you what your plan rates.

### If You Need to Contact Us

We cannot promise that we will be available at all times. Although we are in the office most days, we do not take phone calls when we are with a client. You can always leave a message on our confidential voice mail and we will return your call as soon as we can. Generally, we will return messages daily except on weekends and holidays. Please remember we are not a crisis counseling center. We will do our best to help address crises when they arise but we are not available 24/7.

### Crisis Situations

If you have an emergency or crisis, call and leave a voice mail if we do not answer. If you have a behavioral or emotional crisis and cannot reach us immediately by telephone, you or your family members should call one of the following community emergency agencies:

- Cone Health Behavioral Health 24/7 HelpLine at 336-832-9700
- 1-800-711-2635
- 911
- If you or someone else feels that you are a danger to yourself or someone else, you should immediately call The Guilford Center's Crisis Emergency Unit at 336-641-4993.

### Client Voice

As a professional therapist, we naturally want to know more about how therapy helps people. To understand therapy better, we must collect information about clients before, during, and after therapy to ensure we are providing the best quality of care and experience for our clients. Therefore, we are asking you to help us by filling out some questionnaires about different parts of your life-relationships, changes, concerns, attitudes, and other areas. We ask your permission to take what you write on these questionnaires and what we have in our records and use it in research or teaching that we may do in the future. If we ever use the information from your questionnaire, it will always be included with information from many others. Also, your identity will be made completely anonymous. Your name will never be mentioned, and all personal information will be disguised and changed. After the research, teaching, or publishing project is completed all the data used will be destroyed. All information shared will include a separate consent to release that information.

If, as part of our therapy, you create and provide to us records, notes, artworks, or any other documents or materials, we will return the originals to you at your written request but will retain copies.

### Statement of Principles and Complaint Procedures

It is our intention to fully abide by all the rules of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and by

those of state license.

Problems can arise in our relationship, just as in any other relationship. If you are not satisfied with any area of our work, please raise your concerns with us at once. Our work together will be slower and harder if your concerns with us are not worked out. We will make every effort to hear any complaints you have and to seek solutions to them. If you feel that we have treated you unfairly or have even broken a professional rule, please tell us. You can also contact the state or local association of clinical social workers and speak to the chairperson of the ethics committee. He or she can help clarify your concerns or tell you how to file a complaint. You may also contact the National Association of Social Workers and they will help provide you with guidance.

It is our policy that we do not discriminate against clients because of any of these factors: age, sex, gender identity and/or expression, marital/family status, race, color, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, place of residence, veteran status, physical/emotional disability, health status, sexual orientation, or criminal record unrelated to present dangerousness. If you feel that we have overlooked an area that needs to be listed or that we are not attending to your concerns in the right way, please bring this to our attention. This is a professional commitment, as well as being required by federal, state, and local laws and regulations. We will always take steps to advance and support the values of equal opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic/ cultural diversity. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please bring this matter to our attention immediately.