



northwest
relationships

TACOMA OFFICE
621 PACIFIC AVENUE, SUITE 300
TACOMA, WA 98402
PHONE: 253-292-1216
FAX: 206-299-3272

SILVERDALE OFFICE
3261 NW MOUNT VINTAGE WAY, SUITE 102
SILVERDALE, WA 98383
PHONE: 360-204-5735
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www.northwestrelationships.com

**PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH NORTHWEST RELATIONSHIPS
NOTICE OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION**

Welcome to the Northwest Relationships. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. It also contains information about our policies and practices to protect the privacy of your health information. Please read it carefully and discuss any questions you may have with your therapist.

When you sign this document, you will be stating that your therapist provided you with this information and it will represent an agreement between us.

Office Locations:

Tacoma Office: Our office is located in the One Pacific Building in Downtown Tacoma. The address is 621 Pacific Avenue, Suite 300, Tacoma, WA 98402. It is located right across the street from the Old Tacoma City Clock Tower at the intersection of S. 7th and Pacific. There is usually ample street parking on S. 7th available for 75 cents an hour.

You will need a code to access the building; it is 6253 after 5:00pm. Enter the main doors on the south side of the building and proceed to the elevators ahead of you on your left. Take the elevator to the third floor and take a left to go down the hall to Suite 300. Please enter and have a seat in the waiting area, and your therapist will be with you at your appointment time. Please do not knock on the office doors, as your therapist may be in session with someone else.

Silverdale Office: Our office is located in the Tower Medical Building near the Target Plaza in Silverdale. The address is 3261 NW Mount Vintage Way, Suite 102, Silverdale, WA 98383. It is located right across the street, behind the strip mall in the Target Plaza parking lot. The entrance to the office is on the lower level of the medical building and faces NW Randall Way.

There is street parking available, as well as an adjacent parking lot. There are a small number of parking spots on the street level and many more on the upper level of the parking lot. The entrance to the upper level of the parking lot is located on NW Mt. Vintage Way to the east of the building. If you park on the upper level, there is a flight of stairs on the west end of the parking lot, which will lead down to the lower level. Our office is located in Suite 102. Please enter and have a seat in the waiting area, and your therapist will be with you at your appointment time. Please do not knock on the office doors, as your therapist may be in session with someone else.

Psychotherapy Services: Psychotherapy varies depending on the therapist, the client and the client's particular situations and goals. There are many different methods I may use to deal with your particular situations and goals. In order for therapy to have the best outcome you will have to invest energy in the process and work actively on things we talk about both during and between our sessions.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. The risks may include experiencing uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, anxiety or frustration when discussing aspects of your life. Psychotherapy has been shown to have benefits that can include better relationships, solutions to specific problems, increased life satisfaction, improved physical health, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. However, there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your situation and needs and we will discuss goals you want to work towards. Your therapist will offer you some information so that you will have an idea of what our work together will be like if you decide to continue the therapy with me. During this time, we can both decide if your therapist is the best person to provide the services you need. Psychotherapy can involve a significant investment of time, energy and money, so it is important that you select a therapist you are comfortable working with. If at any time you have questions about any aspect of the therapy process, please discuss them with your therapist. If you decide that you do not want to continue in therapy with your therapist, please tell him or her if you want their help to find another therapist or other appropriate resources, and he or she will do so.

Sessions: Your therapist will generally schedule 50-minute sessions with clients once per week at an agreed upon time. If you arrive late for an appointment, you will only be able to meet with your therapist for the remaining time of the scheduled 50 minutes. Sometimes your therapist will meet more or less than once per week if that is consistent with a treatment plan on which you both agree.

If you ever need to cancel a scheduled therapy session, please do so at least 24 hours in advance. If you do not cancel a scheduled appointment with at least 24 hours notice or if you fail to attend a scheduled session, you will be expected to pay a \$100 missed appointment fee (or the cost of the session, whichever is less) will be charged for that session, unless your therapist and you both agree that you were unable to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. Insurance companies will not reimburse for canceled or missed appointments so you will be fully responsible for the charges for such sessions.

Telehealth Sessions: Some sessions may be conducted remotely via our HIPAA protected telehealth platform. Teletherapy is technical in nature and it is important to know that there may be problems with Internet connectivity, which is the fault of neither the online therapist at Northwest Relationships, PLLC nor you, the client. Internet availability may be limited or disrupted by things such as server maintenance, upgrades, or other problems (such as software or hardware malfunction) or natural or man-made disasters (such as terrorist acts, Internet viruses, and so forth). These types of problems are beyond the control of Northwest Relationships or you, the client. If something like this were to occur, any scheduled appointments would be rescheduled by your online therapist at no additional cost to you.

Although Northwest Relationships, PLLC has taken a significant number of steps to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of online communication(s) between you and your therapist, these actions, in whole or in part, cannot guarantee the security of Internet transmissions. By consenting to online treatment, you are agreeing to release and indemnify Northwest Relationships, PLLC from all suits, claims, and other actions originating from psychotherapy provided through Northwest Relationships, PLLC.

COVID-Related Health and Safety Procedures

For individuals who wish to receive in-person therapy sessions, there are some restrictions in place in order to promote health and safety in the office during the COVID19 pandemic. In an effort to protect our staff and clients at Northwest Relationships, we will be requiring proof of vaccination to schedule in-person sessions beginning in July 2021. **In order to schedule an in person session, please contact our office manager at info@northwestrelationships.com to send in your proof of vaccination and schedule your in person session.** Unvaccinated individuals will be able to access regular therapy services via telehealth, but will be unable to schedule in person sessions at this time. There are some important considerations for individuals who wish to access in-person sessions:

Co-pays

- Some insurance companies do not charge co-pays for telehealth sessions, but may charge co-pays again for in-person sessions. Please check with your insurance company to find out whether or not this applies to your plan.

Limited In Person Appointment Availability

- Please note that most clinicians are only in the office in a limited capacity- in other words, your therapist might only be available for in-person sessions just 1 or 2 days per week, while the remaining days may be held for telehealth only appointments. Some clinicians may be electing to stay entirely remote during the pandemic and will not be offering in person session availability.
- Please ask your therapist and/or check with our office manager (info@northwestrelationships.com) to verify therapists' availability for in person sessions.

Office Safety and Health Measures

- NWR staff will be screened daily and will not attend work if they have a fever, have other symptoms of COVID-19 or have recently been in direct contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. Please note that if a therapist is unable to see clients in person due to experiencing any of the above symptoms, your session may be rescheduled as a teletherapy session or cancelled.
- Per state regulations, masks will be required by everyone upon entry into the building and office suite and must be worn during sessions.
- All billing will be handled electronically. You will receive an electronic invoice for co-pays, deductibles, or session balances following each session.
- Offices and common areas will be cleaned throughout the day. Common areas and surfaces will be disinfected and wiped down after each session. Coffee maker and water cooler will NOT be available for public use at this time.
- Session start times will be staggered for in person sessions to minimize people in the office suite at any given time.
- Office and waiting area furniture has been rearranged in an effort to promote social distancing.

Arriving to Session

- In an effort to minimize traffic in the office, please do not arrive early to your session. Please come no more than 5 minutes prior to your session time and wait in the waiting area outside of your therapist's office.
- Please limit client companions to individuals whose participation in the appointment is necessary based on the client's situation (e.g., parents, children, partner, or other guardian/companion of a vulnerable adult). In other words, if your participation is not needed in a session, please stay at home or wait outside or in your vehicle.

Professional Fees: The out-of-pocket fees for therapy sessions vary depending on providers' credentials:

- o Ph.D. rate:
 - Jennifer Sampson, PhD, LMFT, CST: \$280 for an initial 50-minute intake and \$250 for each subsequent 50-minute session
 - Zain Shamoon, PhD, LMFTA: \$185 (intake), \$150 (50-minute session)
 - o Master's Rate:
 - LMFT: \$185 for an initial 50-minute intake and \$150 for each subsequent 50-minute session ;
 - LMFTA: \$125 for an initial 50-minute intake and \$100 for each subsequent 50-minute session ;
 - o Therapist-in-training (intern) Rate:
 - Sliding scale rate based on income; \$40 intake, \$40-\$80 regular session
- Other professional services:
- o \$250 per hour (Ph.D. rate)
 - o \$175 per hour (M.S. rate).
 - o Other services include case study, research, report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 15 minutes, attendance at meetings or consultations with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and time spent performing any other professional service that you may request. It is important to know that consulting agencies/professionals may also charge for time for services.

It is the policy of Northwest Relationships not to participate in litigation. We will provide documentation of your participation in therapy upon request, but will not participate in court proceedings or make recommendations for the court. If your case is currently court-involved or court-ordered, we require that you sign releases to speak to the referring party. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require our participation, you will be expected to pay for your therapist's professional time even if they are called to testify by another party. Because of the complexity and difficulty of legal involvement, therapists charge \$500 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

Billing and Payments: You will be expected to pay the full fee, or your full copayment/coinsurance amount if you are using insurance, at the time of each session unless we agree otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage that requires another arrangement. We accept payments by check, cash, or credit card. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. If you make a payment by check and your check does not clear due to insufficient funds or any other reason, you will be expected to reimburse us in full for any related bank fees that we are charged as a result.

"Good Faith Estimate": Under the law, health care providers need to give patients who don't have insurance or who are not using insurance an estimate of the bill for medical items and services.

- You have the right to receive a Good Faith Estimate for the total expected cost of any non-emergency items or services. This includes related costs like medical tests, prescription drugs, equipment, and hospital fees.
- Make sure your health care provider gives you a Good Faith Estimate in writing at least 1 business day before your medical service or item. You can also ask your healthcare provider, and any other provider you choose, for a Good Faith Estimate before you schedule an item or service.
- If you receive a bill that is at least \$400 more than your Good Faith Estimate, you can dispute the bill.
- Make sure to save a copy or picture of your Good Faith Estimate.

For questions or more information about your right to a Good Faith Estimate, visit www.cms.gov/nosurprises or call 253-292-1216.

Insurance Reimbursement: You should be aware that your contract with your health insurance company requires that we provide it with information relevant to the services that we provide to you. We are required to provide a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes we are required to provide additional clinical information such as

treatment plans or summaries or copies of your entire Clinical Record. In such situations, we will make every effort to release only the minimum information about you that is necessary for the purpose requested. This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, we have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information database. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above [unless prohibited by contract]. We will provide you with a copy of any report we submit if you request it. By signing this Agreement, you agree that we can provide requested information to your carrier.

Contacting Your Therapist

Between Appointments: The best way to contact your therapist is by telephone. This includes clinical emergencies. You may call at any time and leave your number on Northwest Relationships' confidential voicemail (253-292-1216 or 360-204-5735). If you are in crisis and you cannot immediately reach your therapist, please contact the Pierce County Crisis Line at: 1-800-576-7764 or dial 911.

Email: Your therapist prefers to use email only to arrange or modify appointments. If you send your therapist an email regarding an appointment and do not hear from him or her within 24 business hours, please call and leave a voicemail. Please do not email your therapist content related to your therapy sessions, as email is neither completely secure nor confidential. Email, text messaging, and other forms of electronic communications are not effective means for communicating with your therapist in the event of a clinical emergency. *Any emails that are sent to or received by you become part of your client file.*

Social Media: At Northwest Relationships, we are committed to maintaining proper boundaries that include, but are not limited to, protecting the confidentiality of our therapeutic relationship. Therefore, we do not accept "friend" or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site. Please do not attempt to contact your therapist by using text messages and/or messaging on sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked In, etc. It is our practice not to respond to such contacts from clients.

Phone contact: We are often not immediately available by phone because we may be out of the office, assisting another client during business hours, or it may be after business hours. Calls may be answered by our office manager or may go to voicemail when they are unavailable. Our office manager will make every effort to return your call as soon as possible (usually within a few hours and almost always within 24 business hours). If you are difficult to reach, please leave times you will be available. If you want the person returning your call to use discretion when calling you or leaving a message for you, please let them know in advance. If you are in an emergency situation, you should immediately call your local emergency services at 911 or call or go to the nearest hospital emergency room and tell them what is happening. You can also call the office and leave a message for your therapist. Your therapist will get back to you as soon as they possibly can in such situations, but they may not be able to get back to you immediately. Therefore, if you cannot wait for your therapist to return your call because of your situation, you should immediately call 911 or the nearest emergency room and tell them what is happening.

Professional Records: The laws and standards of mental health professions require that your therapist keeps treatment records. You are entitled to examine and/or receive a copy of your records if you request it in writing unless your therapist believes that seeing them would be emotionally damaging, in which case they will send them to a mental health professional of your choice. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to people who are not mental health professionals. Therefore, if you want to see your records, we recommend that you review them with your therapist so they can discuss the content with you. We reserve the right to charge you for the cost of copying and sending your records if you request them at \$0.50 per page.

CONFIDENTIALITY/PRIVACY OF YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

Your therapist is required by law to do the following: 1) To maintain the privacy of protected health information. "Health information" refers to your name, address, date of birth, social security number, insurance information, and other identifiable data. 2) To provide you with this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices regarding health information about you. 3) To follow the terms of this notice that is currently in effect. Described as follows are the ways your therapist may use and disclose Health Information that identifies you.

Use of Electronic Means to Contact You: Unless otherwise specified, your therapist may use Health Information (e.g., your telephone number, email) to contact you by telephone or voice-mail in order to return a message or relay information to you. This is a restricted use if you specifically state not to make such contact—for example, if you want your therapist to contact you via your home or cell phone numbers but not via the telephone at your place of employment. Northwest Relationships may contact the individual to provide **appointment reminders** or information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

With your Written Consent: Your therapist can disclose Health Information with your written consent, or in the case of death or disability, your personal representative's consent.

To Assist Us with Healthcare Operations: Your therapist can notify the identified emergency contact if it is determined that the client's safety may be at risk.

As Required by Law: Your therapist will disclose Health Information when required to do so by federal, state, or local law, including disclosure to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Public Safety: Your therapist may use and disclose Health Information when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or to the health and safety of the public or another person. However, disclosures in these regards will be made only to someone who may be able to help prevent the threat and only will involve discussion about issues relevant to the threat.

Health Oversight: Northwest Relationships must comply with the orders of its licensing authority, the Washington State Department of Health. If your records are subpoenaed by the Secretary of DOH related to a complaint or report related to the regulation of Health Care Professionals, we are required to release your records.

Consultation with Other Professionals: Your therapist can consult with colleagues regarding your status during clinic staff case conferences. Your therapist may disclose Health Information to supervisors, consultants, business associates that consult with or provide services for Northwest Relationships. Your therapist may coordinate care with other health professionals (such as sharing information with a consulting physician who has been asked to examine your health information). "Business associates" may refer to other persons or companies that Northwest Relationships may contract with in order to help with business. For instance, the IT/Computer Consultant, the company that helps Northwest Relationships with the Office Billing program, or individuals who may help with Transcription. All of Northwest Relationships business associates are obligated to protect the privacy of your information as well as others' and are not allowed to use or disclose any information other than what they need to perform their functions for Northwest Relationships.

Lawsuits and Other Disputes: If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, your therapist may disclose Health Information in response to a court order if signed by a judge. Any other disclosures of Health Information in response to subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, must have your written permission.

Law Enforcement/Protective Services: As a mandated reporter, your therapist may be required, by law, to release Health Information to appropriate law enforcement or protective services officials as it relates to certain injuries, actions, or situations, involving children, teenagers, and vulnerable adults.

National Security: Your therapist may disclose your Health Information under certain circumstances to authorized federal officials for national security and intelligence activities. For example, threats to the life of the President of the United States or other authorized persons or heads-of-state.

In general, the law protects the privacy of all communication between a client and a therapist. Your therapist can only release information about your treatment to others if you sign a written authorization form. You can revoke any such authorizations at any time in writing. However, in the following situations your authorization is not required for me to release information:

- 1) Therapist's duty to warn another in the case of potential suicide, homicide or threat of imminent, serious harm to another individual.
- 2) Therapist's duty to report suspicion of abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults.
- 3) Therapist's duty to report prenatal exposure to cocaine, heroin, phencyclidine, methamphetamine, amphetamine or their derivatives, THC, and excesses and habitual use of alcohol.
- 4) Therapist's duty to report the misconduct of mental health or health care professionals.
- 5) Therapist's duty to provide a spouse or parent of a deceased client access to their child or spouse's records.
- 6) Therapist's duty to provide parents of minor children access to their child's records. Minor clients can request, in writing, that particular information not be disclosed to parents. Such a request should be discussed with the therapist.
- 7) Therapist's duty to release records if subpoenaed by the courts.
- 8) Therapist's obligations to contracts (e.g. to employer of client, to an insurance carrier or health plan.)

Please be advised that Washington Law does not contain a "testimonial privilege" for therapists. This means that under certain circumstances, your therapist could be required to testify under oath about information you may have provided during consultations. We will make reasonable efforts to notify you before such is scheduled to occur. If you would like further clarification, please ask your therapist.

While your therapist is not an attorney, please discuss any questions or concerns you have about confidentiality with him or her at any time. If you have specific legal questions about the laws regarding confidentiality, the exceptions, and how it may relate to your situation, please seek formal legal advice from an attorney.

SAFETY

For the safety of clients and therapists, weapons are not permitted in the Northwest Relationships office buildings. If you have a weapon with you at the time of your therapy appointment, the therapy session will be terminated. Similarly, we cannot see clients who are under-the-influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Sessions will be canceled immediately and a late cancellation fee of \$100 (or the cost of the session, whichever is less) will be charged.

COMPLAINTS

All of the staff of Northwest Relationships are accountable for their work with you. The Counselor Credentialing Act serves to provide protection for public health and safety to empower citizens of the state of Washington by providing a complaint process against those counselors who would commit acts of unprofessional conduct. Your therapists will provide you with a list of actions that could be considered unprofessional conduct. If you are concerned that any of our therapists, administrative staff, or professional staff have violated your privacy rights, treated you unethically, or unprofessionally, or you disagree with a decision made about access to your records, you may send a written complaint to Northwest Relationships, Attn: Privacy Officer, 621 Pacific Ave, Suite 300, Tacoma, WA 98402 (253-292-1216); and/or the Washington State Department of Health, PO Box 47869, Olympia, WA 98504-7869; and/or the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC, 20201. You will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint.

Other Client Rights: If you want, your therapist will discuss with you more details about any of the following:

- You have the right to request and receive from me confidential communication of your protected health information by alternate means or at alternative locations. For example, you can request that your therapist send any correspondence to an address other than your home address if you don't want a family member to know that you are in therapy with your therapist.
- You have the right to request that your therapist change information in your record. Your therapist requires such requests in writing along with your reasons for your requested changes. He or she may deny your request.
- You generally have the right to receive an accounting of any disclosures your therapist has made of your protected health information, which did not require your authorization. If you want, your therapist will discuss with you more details about this process.
- If you are concerned that your therapist has violated your privacy rights or you disagree with a decision your therapist made about access to your records, your therapist would like you to inform him or her as soon as possible so we can try to resolve your concerns. If you prefer to discuss your concerns with someone else, you may contact one of the owners of SAVI, PLLC, Jennifer Sampson, Ph.D. (jennifer@northwestrelationships.com) or Jason Victor, M.S. (Jason@northwestrelationships.com).

Conclusion and Signatures: I reserve the right to change my policies, practices and procedures described in this document. I will notify you in writing of any significant changes. By signing below you are indicating that you have received and read the information in this document, you have discussed the contents with me to your satisfaction, and you agree to abide by its terms during the course of our professional relationship. If you would like a copy of this document, please ask your therapist for one.

Client 1 - Print Name

Signature

Date

Client 2 - Print Name

Signature

Date

Therapist - Print Name

Signature

Date