

EnGedi Life Care, PLLC
Pamela Bermender MA, LMFT, NCC

ABOUT THERAPY

This notice provides information about therapy at EnGedi Life Care, PLLC (ELC). Please review this carefully.

ABOUT THERAPY

Therapy is the process of solving emotional, social, relational, career, and/or spiritual problems by talking with a professionally trained person to achieve a more fulfilling individual life, personal relationship, or family relationship. The process of change in many ways will be unique to your situation. Who you are as a person will help to determine the ways in which you go about changing your life.

The process of change begins by first clearly defining the problem or issue you are experiencing, and then discussing your thoughts and feelings related to the problem. This helps your therapist to work with you to identify what is most significant about the problem you are experiencing. After your problem or issue is understood, you and your therapist will work together in developing new skills and healthy attitudes about yourself, others, and situations in your life.

While therapy is generally beneficial in helping people address issues in their lives, not everyone benefits from therapy or working with a particular therapist. If at any time during therapy you have questions about whether treatment is working for you, feelings about something the therapist says or suggests, or need clarification of your goals, do not hesitate to bring this up in the session.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

If your therapy experience is to be beneficial, you must be willing to take responsibility for your actions, as well as work towards self-change. In addition to being open and honest, you need to show up for your sessions on time and be an active participant both during and between the sessions.

Making and keeping regularly scheduled appointments is important if your therapy experience is to be beneficial. Failure on your part to make or keep appointments, complete work between sessions, or a refusal to accept responsibility for your actions may affect your therapy experience and the benefits that you receive.

CONFIDENTIALITY

By law and professional ethics, your sessions are strictly private and confidential. Generally, no information is shared with anyone without your written permission. However, there are certain uses or disclosures described in the document "Client Rights and HIPAA Authorizations" that do not require your consent.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Therapy records, notes, verbal conversations, and the like are protected under federal and state confidentiality regulations.

Other than as noted in the document "Client Rights and HIPAA Authorizations," information is only released if all clients that are engaged in the therapy relationship provide written authorization to the same person/entity by each signing a "Treatment Disclosure Authorization" that is provided by ELC for such purposes.

TERMINATING THERAPY

You have the right to terminate or take a break from your therapy at any time without the therapist's permission or agreement. If you decide to exercise this option, you are encouraged to talk with your therapist about the reason for your decision during a final therapy session. This will allow the therapist to bring sufficient closure to your work together.

Your client file is kept active up to six (6) months after your last session, after which the file is archived. Re-engaging in therapy after your file is archived may require completing new client form(s) and possibly a change in fees.

THERAPY FOR A MINOR

If a client is under 18 years of age (the age of majority in Texas) the following applies:

- a. A parent or legal guardian must accompany the client to the first appointment and sign the "Informed Consent to Therapy" on behalf of the client.
- b. If the client is in the custody of a legal guardian, proof of guardianship must be presented before therapy is initiated. A stepparent may only consent to therapy for the client if the stepparent has legally adopted the client and presents a copy of the adoption.
- c. If the client's parents are legally separated or divorced, a copy of the temporary orders or divorce decree indicating the custody agreement must be presented before therapy is initiated. This is waived if both parents are present for the first appointment and sign the "Informed Consent to Therapy". If the decree indicates both parents must agree to treatment, therapy will not be initiated unless both parents sign the "Informed Consent to Therapy".
- d. If the client has received a court-ordered emancipation decree a copy of the decree must be presented before therapy is initiated.

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- e. The therapist will retain in the client's file a copy of any legal document that is presented on behalf of the client.
- f. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the client has the right and responsibility to ask questions about the therapy process, to understand the nature of activities with the client, and to be informed of the client's progress.
- g. The therapist retains the right to use his or her clinical discretion as to what is appropriate to disclose to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s). If the therapist believes it would be helpful to share a specific detail or involve the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in therapy in some manner, the therapist will first discuss with the client for permission to do so or to encourage the client to do so.

APPOINTMENTS

Appointment Scheduling: Clients are accepted by appointment only and appointment times are reserved on a first-request basis. Appointments may be scheduled after a session or by calling the office. Appointments may usually be made up to two-weeks in advance.

Appointment Change/Cancellation: Your appointment time is set aside for you and is unavailable to other clients. Therefore, if you are unable to keep a scheduled appointment, you should call the office to cancel or reschedule as soon as possible and no later than 24-hours prior to your appointment time. Only cancellation to the appointment notification or by a phone call to the office is acceptable as other means of cancellation can be missed or lost, resulting in a possible fee.

Late-Cancellation or Missed Appointment Fee: See "Fee and Payment".

Late Arrival: Arriving on time is important for a productive therapy experience. If you arrive late for an appointment, you are still responsible for the full session fee even if the time you spend with your therapist is less because of a late arrival.

Appointment Reminders: Appointment reminders are provided as a courtesy, and you must explicitly request ELC to provide them. Should you not receive a requested reminder for any reason you are still responsible to remember your appointment.

FEES AND PAYMENT

Pamela's Fee Schedule:

Sessions: \$120.00 a session hour.

Depositions and Court Appearances \$250 non-refundable preparation fee; \$500 per half-day appearance.

Report Preparation, Phone Calls, Travel Time: Prorated in 15- minute intervals at the standard session-hour rate. Payment is due prior to a report being released.

Late-Cancellation or Missed Appointment: \$60.00 fee is assessed if you do not cancel or reschedule an appointment at least 24-hours prior to your appointment time or fail to show up for a scheduled appointment.

Payment Due: Payment for the current session and any outstanding invoices, including any late or missed appointment fee, is due before your session starts.

Forms of Payment: Cash, credit/debit cards, HSA/FSA cards are accepted forms of payment.

Insurance: For information about using insurance, please see the document "About Insurance", available on our website.

Failure to Pay: Failure to pay for the fees associated with your therapy services will result in the termination of this therapy relationship. As well, unpaid balances may be turned over to a collection agency and/or credit-reporting agency.

Court Appearances, Depositions: Court testimony or deposition requires a subpoena and advanced payment of fees. These fees include local travel expenses and possibly meals. All fees must be paid no later than four (4) business days (M-F) in advance of the deposition or court appearance. In the event the deposition or court appearance is cancelled; cancellation must be by phone; client forfeits any advanced preparation fee; client is charged 5% of the appearance fee if cancellation is received no later than three (3) business days (M-F) before the event; client forfeits all advanced fees if cancellation notice received less than three (3) business days (M-F) prior to the scheduled event.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Ethical Guidelines: Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists follow the Code of Ethics of the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) which includes the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists, as well as following the ethical guidelines of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (AAMFT).

Gifts: As a rule, your therapist neither gives gifts to, nor accepts gifts from, clients or relatives of clients.

Social Media: Your therapist neither invites nor accepts invitations from clients or relatives of clients to connect through social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

Therapist Vacation: You are given reasonable notice before your therapist goes on vacation. Refer to "After Hours Emergencies" if you need assistance during this time.

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Child Care: Childcare is not provided. Children under the age of 15 not in a session, must always be supervised by an adult while in the office.

Drinks and Food: Only non-alcoholic drinks are allowed in the office area and therapy rooms. No food is to be eaten in the office area or therapy rooms.

Pets and Animals: No pets or animals are allowed in the office area or therapy rooms unless the animal is a certified therapy or service animal.

HIPAA Notice: Please see document “Client Rights and HIPAA Authorizations”, available on our website.

Electronic Communication Notice: Electronic communication (e.g., email, text-message, voice mail, etc.) is not a private means of communication and may

be seen or heard by a third party. If you need to transmit information securely to your therapist, please use the therapist’s HIPAA-compliant portal.

CONTACTING ENGEDI LIFE CARE

Between Sessions: Call or text the office at 512-201-0741 or use the contact form at ELC website (elctherapy.com).

After Hours Emergencies: ELC does not offer crisis counseling; for emergencies call 988 (mental health hotline) or 911, or visit your nearest emergency room.

Phone Messages: If your phone call is not answered, you may leave a voice message.

Mailing Address: EnGedi Life Care PLLC, 1107 FM 1431, Ste 273, Marble Falls, Texas 78654.