

**Linda Santoro, RN, Ph.D., LLC • (302) 454-1010
500 Creek View Road • Suite 109 • Newark, DE 19711**

Client Information and Office Policies

Welcome to my office. In order to make your visits here most helpful, I'd like to clarify what you might expect to receive from counseling as well as reviews my office policies. Please feel free to talk with me about questions or concerns you have.

What is counseling and how does it help?

Counseling is designed to help people solve problems in living by improving insight and awareness, leading to changes in thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Our initial focus together will be to build trust and to clarify the concerns that you bring. By building a good working relationship with you, I then hope to offer you the support, skills, and direction you need to make your desired changes. Therapy is a collaborative process in which we will determine your goals within the first few sessions and periodically reevaluate them. Ideally, therapy ends when we mutually agree that our work is complete. Although you have the right to end therapy at any time, I ask that we meet for a final session to allow for discussion of concerns, progress, and closure.

Therapy is a highly individualized experience that offers many *benefits*. A good therapy experience helps you to understand yourself better, to develop self-care and interpersonal skills, and to integrate both past and present life experiences, leading to improved coping abilities and more satisfying relationships. Like any new experience, therapy also involves some *risk*. The risks associated with counseling may include becoming aware of uncomfortable feelings and situations, some of which may not be changed to your satisfaction. Every therapeutic experience is unique, and it is vital that you feel free to discuss concerns about your progress or our work together. If you don't feel counseling with me is the best way to reach your goals, you always have the right to seek a second opinion from another therapist.

In my experience, there are three ways you can maximize the benefit of our work together:

- Be honest with yourself and with me.
- Between our sessions, do the work we agree that you need to do.
Changing one's thoughts, feelings and behaviors requires practice. Your efforts between appointments are essential to achieving your goals and sustaining change.
- Challenge yourself to talk about things that are hard to discuss.
Issues kept hidden tend to "grow in the dark." Bringing them into the light of day is a big step toward making them manageable.

Reaching me by phone

When you call my office, you will reach my confidential voice-mail. I check for messages several times during weekdays and once or twice during the course of a weekend. Be sure to let me know when the best times are for me to reach you and I will return your call. Always leave me your phone number, even if you think I have it. When I am away, I will inform you of coverage arrangements in advance.

Confidentiality

The information that you share with me is confidential. This means that information about you cannot leave my office without your permission. I am aware of how difficult it can be to share the details of your life and I respect the privacy of such disclosures. Should you want me to share information with another professional or family member, I will ask you to sign a form permitting me to do so. The exceptions to confidentiality are as follows:

- 1) As in all states, Delaware has a mandatory child abuse reporting law. This law requires that I make a report to the Department of Social Services whenever I have reason to suspect child abuse. Your permission for such a report is not required.
- 2) If there is a clear intention on your part to do serious harm to yourself or someone else, I will share that information appropriately in an attempt to prevent that harm from occurring.
- 3) There have been instances in which therapy records have been subpoenaed into court by an attorney. I will make every attempt to protect your records and not release them, but in the instance of a court-ordered subpoena (i.e. from a judge or equivalent), I would be held in contempt of court if I did not provide records and/or opinion for the court.

Emergencies

I make every attempt to be available to a client who is experiencing a crisis in her or his life. Emergency or extra appointments can be made during my regular office hours. Should you experience a psychological emergency in the evening, on a weekend, or holiday you may contact the Wilmington Hospital Psychiatric Crisis Team at (302)428-2118 or the Rockford Needs Assessment Program at (302) 996-5480. **In the case of a clinical emergency for which you need immediate assistance, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.**

Information about my credentials

I received my nursing degree from the University of Connecticut in 1979 and my Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania in 1992. I have been a Licensed Psychologist with a private practice in Delaware since 1992. I am a member of the American Psychological Association and the Delaware Psychological Association.

Client's signature/date: _____

I have read the materials presented in this disclosure statement. My signature indicates that I understand the information and agree to the conditions of therapy that are either stated or implied here. I understand that I have the right to not sign this form and can choose to discuss my concerns before therapy begins. I understand that once therapy begins, I still retain my right to withdraw consent to participate in therapy at any time.