

THE FAMILY CENTER –FAMILY COUNSELING OF COLUMBUS

INFORMED CONSENT

Before a counselor can provide services to you, you must give your **consent for treatment**. In order to give consent, you should make an informed decision after having reviewed your rights as a client, the responsibilities you will carry as a client, and most importantly, the nature of the treatment you are consenting to. Please read the following carefully; it will offer an explanation regarding the counseling services offered, the counseling process, and any risks or benefits of the counseling provided. Once you have reviewed the material, your signature below represents your informed consent. If you have any questions, discuss them with your counselor.

Counseling Services Offered

The Family Center provides assessment, evaluation, and short-term, goal directed counseling services for life stage issues, relational problems, adjustment problems, emotional and behavioral problems, and other personal or interpersonal concerns. The type of counseling provided can be described alternately as brief therapy, problem-focused counseling, or solution-oriented counseling. Licensed, or license eligible, Masters-level mental health professionals and counseling interns provide all services, and work under the close supervision of fully licensed clinicians. Most clients report that they feel satisfaction and success in meeting their goals within a limited number of sessions. Anyone living in the Chattahoochee Valley and surrounding areas is eligible for services to include children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families. All services are provided on a sliding fee scale, based on your income, family size, and ability to pay. While fees are charged, no one will be denied service because of an inability to pay, and the agency does provide mechanisms for fees to be reviewed and adjusted when needed.

During your initial assessment, your counselor will work with you to define concrete goals and objectives to help insure that your counseling is focused and aimed at achieving your goals in a brief time frame. In the event that you or your counselor feel that your needs could be better met through another therapeutic approach, the options for treatment will be discussed with you and referral made where appropriate.

The Family Center does not offer long-term psychotherapy, provide primary treatment for chronic mental illness, or prescribe medication. If those services or interventions are needed a referral will be made to a more appropriate provider. Employees of The Family Center are also not able to engage in any form of manual restraint, mechanical restraint, or any other form of physical behavioral management for out-of control behavior. At any time someone at the agency is deemed to be posing a physical threat of violence or is at risk for harming themselves or others in the building, 911 will be contacted in order to insure that all clients and employees are safe. The Family Center is not a crisis stabilization program or an emergency treatment facility. As such, we do not offer 24-hour emergency service or back up. In the event you are experiencing a significant crisis or emergency (i.e. suicidal, etc.), outside the normal hours of operation, you are advised to go immediately to the nearest hospital emergency department. **The normal hours of operation are:**

Monday - Wednesday – Friday: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Tuesday – Thursday: 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM

These hours are subject to change.

The Family Center will provide services without discrimination and regardless of grievances or complaints filed. However, The Family Center will discontinue services in the event of ongoing failure to pay agreed upon fees, threatening or violent behavior towards agency personnel or property, lack of client participation in agreed upon treatment plans, or when clinically contraindicated.

Domestic Violence Services and Protections for Victims of Domestic Violence

Clients should be aware that The Family Center does provide counseling services to both victims of domestic or family violence, as well as to perpetrators of domestic / family violence. We acknowledge that for someone who has been a victim, it may be uncomfortable or even frightening to be in the facility at the same time an offender may be present. For that reason, we make every effort possible to ensure that victims and offenders are not present at the same time, and that there is no interaction between victims and offenders.

The Counseling Process: Benefits and Risks

Effective counseling can improve your ability to handle or cope with marital, family, and other interpersonal concerns. Counseling can also enhance your own awareness of personal needs, feelings, goals, and other individual concerns. Some of the benefits of counseling may include, but are not limited to, increased maturity, improved self-esteem, and increased personal happiness. Additional benefits of counseling may be seen when specific problems are resolved. In working to achieve these potential benefits however, counseling will require you to make efforts to change, and may at times lead to significant emotional discomfort. Remembering and resolving unpleasant events can arouse intense feelings of fear, anger, depression, frustration, and the like. Seeking to resolve interpersonal or relationship problems between family members, marital partners, and other persons can similarly lead to some discomfort, as well as changes in the relationships that were not originally intended. It is important to realize that sometimes relieving anxiety or pain means temporarily increasing the anxiety and pain. It is important to inform your counselor of such experiences so that he or she is aware and can help you to manage the process.

Consultation and Supervision

Ethical and professional guidelines require that mental health professionals seek consultation with other professionals in order to insure that sound clinical judgement is used when providing services to clients. Likewise, it is recommended that all clinicians seek clinical supervision in order to better serve their clients. It is customary practice for counselors to engage in such case consultation; further, it is agency policy that all cases will be supervised by the Clinical Director. Typically supervision or consultation will be used when dealing with complex or difficult cases, when there are ethical dilemmas, or whenever a counselor would benefit from a "second opinion". During the course of your counseling, your counselor will discuss your case with other professionals in order to receive supervision and/or consultation. When utilizing consultants or a supervisor, your counselor will not reveal your identity or any identifying information. The only information discussed will be that information that is important to explore when making clinical decisions. Your case will not be discussed with a consultant unless there is compelling reason to obtain professional guidance. All professionals used as supervisors or consultants are bound by the same laws and ethics regarding privacy and confidentiality.

CONSENT FOR TREATMENT

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the above information concerning the type of counseling provided at The Family Center, and the potential benefits and risks of counseling. I also understand that my counselor will discuss my case with other professionals and that this is not a violation of my right to confidentiality. After considering the nature of the counseling offered and possible outcomes, my rights, and my responsibilities, I hereby give my informed consent to receive counseling services at The Family Center. I understand that I may withdraw from counseling at any time.

Client/Guardian Signature

Date

Witness

Date