

Tim Courtois

Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor

PRACTICE POLICIES

The purpose of this form is to explain some of the basics of how I run my practice—regarding communication with me outside of counseling sessions, fees and payment, and a few other things that will be relevant to you.

I. Communication Policies

Contacting Me

The most effective ways to reach me within a reasonable amount of time are by phone (734-531-8109) (including text message) and email (talktotim@timcourtois.com). It is my goal to respond to messages within 48 hours, though this may not always be possible. When I am out of town or on vacation, responses will be more delayed.

Emergency Contact

For emergencies, you should call 911, or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988). You can contact me to inform me of an emergency that has happened to you or to ask for an extra session on short notice. But I cannot guarantee a timely response.

Confidentiality

I take your trust and privacy very seriously. In accordance with laws and with my “Notice of Privacy Practices”, everything you discuss with me is confidential except when you give me permission to disclose it, or when disclosure is required by law. (Additional rules apply for minors. If you are a minor, please discuss this with me.) I have a responsibility to store any private information about you using methods that are compliant with legal guidelines.

Social Media

In compliance with codes of ethics for professional counselors, I refrain from engaging with current clients through social media.

Electronic Communication

You may choose which forms of communication you want to use with me. Within reason, you may also choose which forms of communication you prefer I use with you.

Remember that many modern forms of communication (email, text messaging, cell phones, videoconferencing, etc.), in their typical form, do not come with any guarantee of confidentiality. There is a reasonable chance that a third party could gain access to information that is communicated. (E.g. it could be seen by: people who have access to the devices you use; an employer if you use your work email to communicate with me; third parties on the internet such as server administrators; etc.) It is your responsibility to be mindful about the kinds of communication you choose.

Seeing Each Other Outside of Counseling

There is some possibility that we will bump into each other in a public setting outside of counseling. In such situations, I take a “you-first” approach to protect your confidentiality and to let you choose what you want to happen. This means that I will not initiate contact with you, but you may initiate with me if you choose to do so. If you have questions or concerns about such situations—before or after they occur—please discuss this with me.

II. Fees and Payment

Cost

My fee is \$170 per 50-minute counseling session. Longer sessions may be scheduled upon request at a rate of \$85 for each additional 30 minutes.

When To Pay

Payment is due at the time of each session. Automatic credit card payments through your stored credit card information on SessionsHealth are preferred. Cash or check (made out to "Tim Courtois LLC") are also acceptable. Failure to pay may result in discontinuation of treatment.

Insurance

I do not take insurance because I have found that the involvement of insurance companies is detrimental to the care I am able to provide. I am grieved that financial limitations may limit some peoples’ ability to receive counseling, and also that “health insurance” is so often detrimental to people’s mental and physical health—not to mention their financial well-being.

In rare cases, some insurance companies will reimburse you directly for the cost of counseling. You may talk with your insurance company to find out if this is the case for you. (Godspeed as you try to get a clear answer from them!) I am able to provide you

with receipts that you can turn in to your insurance company, and am willing to cooperate with you to a reasonable extent to help you to receive coverage.

Estimate of total costs

The government mandates that I provide you with a “good faith estimate” of the cost of counseling. If I meet with someone 40 times over the course of a year (e.g., a regular one-hour weekly slot, with occasional cancellations for vacations, holidays, etc.), the cost for that year would be \$6,800. Your cost will be more or less depending on how much time you choose to spend in therapy.

Lateness and 24-Hour Cancellation Policy

If you fail to give 24 hours notice to cancel an appointment, you will be charged the full agreed upon fee for that session (unless your failure to give proper notice is due to circumstances beyond your control). If you arrive late to a session, your session will still end at the scheduled time, and your fee will not be discounted.

III. Other Policies

Frequency of Sessions

In most cases, sessions will be scheduled weekly, because that is what tends to be most effective. It is my responsibility to inform you of any schedule changes or vacations with appropriate advance notice.

Ending Counseling

You have the right to end therapy at any time. I encourage you to discuss your desires about ending counseling openly with me. I also recommend “closure” sessions at the end of therapy.

Counseling involves the building of a trusting relationship between client and counselor. An abrupt end to such a relationship has a tendency to detract from the work that has been done together, while closure sessions offer the possibility of honoring and preserving what has transpired.

Legal and Ethical Concerns

Reality being what it is, I cannot guarantee any particular result from counseling. Counseling is an unpredictable, wild venture into the unknown territory of your heart and the universe; you are choosing to take full responsibility for the risk of any distress that may arise.

If you ever feel I have violated ethics or laws, I welcome you to discuss this with me so that we can resolve any concerns. You also have the right to file a complaint with the licensing board of the state in which you reside. For Michigan, you can do this at www.michigan.gov/bpl. (Click on "File a complaint".) For North Carolina, you can do this at <https://www.ncblcmhc.org/>. (Click on "Complaints".)

Counseling Via Videoconferencing

I strongly recommend in-person counseling rather than video counseling. There is no way that a conversation mediated through a screen can substitute for the "medicine" that comes from being in one another's real presence. And yet, video counseling can sometimes be helpful or necessary.

Remember that video sessions come with the risk of technological difficulties. If a few minutes of a video session are interrupted by such difficulties, the full fee will still be expected. If a significant percentage of the session is unable to be completed, you will be charged according to the amount of the session completed, at my discretion. If technological issues happen consistently, I reserve the right to discontinue the option of video counseling and make appropriate recommendations.

Testimony and Court-Related Activity

I do not offer reports or records suitable for court proceedings, nor do I provide testimony in legal matters as part of my services. In signing this form you agree that, should you be involved in legal proceedings, you will not seek to use the record of your counseling as evidence or to compel my testimony.