

2018

Practice Policy and Procedures

Intake

Welcome to my practice. I offer medication management as well as psychotherapy (weekly, or more frequently depending on nature of treatment). To schedule the first appointment with me, patients call my office phone number and we will then schedule a telephone appointment. This telephone session is at no cost. It gives me an opportunity to speak with the patient, clarify what I offer as well as my fee. The other purpose is to see if the patient is appropriate for a consultation with me before scheduling it.

The consultation session is 60 minutes long with the fee paid at the end of the session. If you are using insurance, the copay varies by insurance company. During this session, we will discuss history as well as reason for desiring treatment. I will require contact information for previous treatment providers and often family. We will discuss the results of the consultation in a separate 30-45 minute follow up session. The cost of the second session is the same as regular session cost, rather than the consultation price. At this time, I will make recommendations about treatment with me, either with medications, therapy, or both. I may also recommend that the treatment I offer is not appropriate for the patient. In these cases, I will recommend the appropriate treatment and help in any way I can to get referrals. A consultation with me does not guarantee or imply continued treatment.

Cancellation Policy

For cancellation, I require a full week (7 days) notice for the session not to be billed. The cost of a missed session that is cancelled within 7 days of the appointment is the same as the full price of a session. If you are using insurance, the missed appointment fee is equal to what insurance would normally pay me. This is unless we have made other arrangements.

Communication

I do not provide treatment in any other way than in person. Telephone communication between sessions, however, is sometimes necessary and is a usual part of treatment. For example, a medication needs to be renewed before the next scheduled session, or to cancel or reschedule a session, or even an unusual personal emergency. I use an answering service. All messages for me are taken by the virtual receptionist and emailed to me. Please keep this in mind when considering privacy issues.

WIKTORIA BIELSKA, M.D.

PSYCHIATRY

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The best way to communicate with me is to call my office phone or email me. I respond to voice messages and emails usually within 24 hours. The office phone number accepts calls on weekends as well and I do receive voicemails on weekends. I generally don't return phone calls or emails on weekends unless it is truly urgent.

There are some weekends when I am not in New York. For those weekends, my voicemail greeting will indicate as such. If this is the case, I will leave emergency contact information for either a covering psychiatrist or me.

If you need more rapid attention for your own or someone else's safety, do not delay while waiting for me to return your telephone call. *Please call 9-1-1 or report to the nearest hospital emergency room.*

I do not usually bill for phone calls. However, if an issue you called me for requires more than fifteen minutes, then I will bill a prorated rate based on the usual session rate.

Prescriptions:

I do not generally write prescriptions outside of our appointment times or accept calls or emails asking for refills. At the time I write a prescription, we agree on a time that the patient returns for a follow up. I will prescribe enough medication to last until our next appointment. It is the patient's responsibility to ensure attending an appointment prior to medications running out. Sometimes emergencies arise etc. and some flexibility is necessary. However, putting me in a position to practice unsafe medicine by writing a prescription without an evaluation could become grounds for terminating treatment.

Policy about Controlled Substances

It is now the law in New York State that if I prescribe you a controlled substance, I must consult a database which shows your history of controlled substance prescriptions. If I find that you are obtaining controlled substances from another doctor, this is grounds for the termination of our treatment relationship. The exception to this is if you obtain treatment for pain and are prescribed an opiate, a type of medication outside the scope of my practice.

Confidentiality

All information shared by the patient is confidential. The only exception to this is as follows:

1. Threats of harm to self or others
2. Abuse of a child, vulnerable adult, or developmentally disabled person
3. A court order to release information
4. Subpoena of treatment records by an attorney. If you do not want this information released, you must obtain a protective order from the court within fourteen (14) days.

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5. If you will be applying your health insurance benefits, we may be required to provide information to your health plan, including some or all of your record of treatment, in order for your carrier to pay for services. By signing the Acknowledgement of Receipt of Office Policies and Procedures form you consent to release of that information to your health plan. *Psychotherapy notes are handled separately under HIPAA and have additional protections.*
6. If you are party to child custody litigation at any time in the future, the court may order release of information about your treatment in this office.
7. In some instances, as provided by the state law of New York, information about your healthcare may be exchanged with other healthcare professionals involved in your treatment.

In circumstances other than these, I will not release information about your treatment without your authorization.

My session notes are written in a secure EMR (electronic medical record). I do not communicate with family members, other providers, etc. without explicit written permission. For the purposes of the initial consultation, I require contact with other entities. Outside of the consultation, it is rare that I would accept or initiate contact with family or friends, even with the patient's explicit permission. The only exception to this is in the case of an emergency.

Patient Records

An electronic record (file) is kept of services you receive in this office. You have a right to see the record and receive a copy of it upon request. You may ask that factual errors in the record be corrected. You may authorize in writing that copies of the record be released to entities you designate, at your expense, according to charges stipulated by the state law of New York. Under certain circumstances where seeing the record may put a patient or other person at risk, I may redact certain information in the record and/or require that you review the record in consultation with another healthcare provider. You may receive an accounting of non-routine uses and disclosures of your record.

You may receive a free copy of your record and a free accounting of non-routine disclosure(s) each year. Please contact Vālant Medical Solutions™, Inc. to obtain these documents. They will require your request to be in writing:

Vālant Medical Solutions, Inc.
P.O. Box 21405
Seattle, WA 98111-3405

If you have questions, please contact Vālant Medical Solutions at (206) 774-0532.

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Fee and payment

I require payment at the time of each appointment. I accept cash, checks, or credit cards. If you are using your insurance, the copay is due at each session. If you are not using insurance, the full fee is due at the time of the appointment.

Unpaid Bills

It is important that you discuss with me any financial hardship that you may have. Doing so may allow us to arrive at a mutually agreeable payment plan that allows the continuation of your treatment. If this cannot be accomplished, seriously delinquent accounts may be referred to a collection agency and we may have to terminate our relationship as provider and patient. Information necessary to effect collection will be released to the collection agent. Should it become necessary to file suit in this context, you agree to pay reasonable attorney fees. A service fee of 5% will be charged on balances more than thirty (30) days past due.