

Desert Sage Health, PLLC

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Practice Policies

Welcome! This document contains information about the background of our providers, professional services offered, risks and benefits of therapy, fees and business policies, as well as information about the privacy of your protected health information and storage, transfer and access to your health records. Please note that Desert Sage Health, PLLC is the parent company of West Valley Family Development Center, which is a DBA. Please read the following information carefully and ask us if you have any questions.

Professional Services

All of the therapists at Desert Sage Health look forward to meeting with you and helping you achieve a better quality of life. If you ever have any questions about your therapist or concerns about your treatment, then please do not hesitate to contact the Clinical Director, Stefanie Kool, Psy.D. or the Office Manager, Paul Kool, to discuss your concerns. We want to ensure that you are working with your therapist in the most efficient and effective manner.

We strive to provide the best services possible, and feel grateful to have the job that we do. We try to accommodate new patients in a timely manner while also providing the same superior services to our existing clientele. Please be on time for your scheduled appointments. Also, please be courteous to the next client by not running over on your time. Therapy is completely voluntary and you may choose to terminate at any time. To best serve your needs, it is important that you cooperatively provide accurate and current information about the issue for which you are seeking help.

Our practice is set up to provide outpatient psychotherapy services. We are not set up as a crisis center and are not equipped to take a walk-in crisis client without a scheduled appointment. Certainly, we will always try to accommodate an established client in need of the soonest availability. However, depending on the urgency of the situation and our availability, we may need to direct you to a crisis center or hospital to best serve you during a particular circumstance, with the understanding that when the crisis settles then you would resume outpatient psychotherapy. Please keep the following numbers available should the need arise:

- 911 Medical/life threatening emergency
- 602-222-9444 Crisis Line - Individual/Family Crisis
- 602-263-8900 Domestic Violence Hotline
- 480-784-1500 Suicide Crisis Hotline
- 888-767-2445 Child Abuse Hotline

Generally, we have reception services available Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. Please call the office during this time to schedule an appointment. Therapists are also available for appointments outside of these designated times. If you need to speak to any of the providers and the receptionist is not available to personally accept your call, please leave a voicemail and your call will be returned within 24 hours or the next business day. If you are in a life threatening crisis and need immediate assistance, you will be directed to call 911 or to go to the nearest crisis center.

Fees for Services with Licensed Providers

Standard rates for services provided by a licensed doctor of psychology are as follows:

- Intake Interview (90 minutes) \$200
- Individual Therapy (45 minutes) \$150
- Individual Therapy (60 minutes) \$200
- Couples or Family Therapy (45 minutes) \$150
- Couples or Family Therapy (60 minutes) \$200
- Group Therapy \$50
- Psychological Testing, Scoring, Report Writing \$200 per hour
- Letter or Records Preparation, Attendance at Meetings, Consultations with other professionals, and Phone Calls are prorated per 15 minutes and charged at a rate of \$200 per hour.
- Desert Sage Health does not participate in court ordered treatment and does not provide letters for court services and/ or legal issues. If Desert Sage Health Employee is subpoenaed for legal consultations or depositions, the patient is billed on a case by case basis depending on the complexity of the case.

Standard rates for services provided by a master's level licensed provider are as follows:

- Intake Interview (90 minutes) \$175
- Individual Therapy (45 minutes) \$130
- Individual Therapy (60 minutes) \$175
- Couples or Family Therapy (45 minutes) \$130
- Couples or Family Therapy (60 minutes) \$175
- Group Therapy \$40
- Letter or Records Preparation, Attendance at Meetings, Consultations with other professionals, and Phone Calls are prorated per 15 minutes and charged at a rate of \$175 per hour

There are several insurance companies that the licensed providers of Desert Sage Health have contracted with to be "in-network." Those rates for services are negotiated with the insurance company and may be lower rates than the standard rates. The contracted rate applies only to psychotherapy and testing services covered by the insurance company. Other services, such as writing letters, phone calls, attendance at meetings, consultations with other professionals you have authorized, and preparation of records are billed at the above rate.

If you will be using an insurance benefit for your services then we will be calling your insurance carrier to verify benefits and obtain coverage information. Verification of benefits is not a guarantee of coverage. We will provide you with the information gathered from the verification process, but you as the customer are ultimately responsible for verifying your own coverage, obtaining authorizations if needed, and paying deductibles, co-insurance, or co-pays as dictated by your plan.

Payment is expected when services are rendered. As a courtesy, we will submit claims to your insurance carrier if we are contracted with them. If your insurance policy includes deductibles, co-insurance, or co-pays then we are not allowed to change your contract with your insurance company. This means that we are not allowed to adjust or waive your set deductible, co-insurance, or co-pay amounts. In addition, these fees are due upon receipt of services, not after your insurance company processes your claim. Please also note that by using your insurance you are authorizing Desert Sage Health to release any medical or other information necessary to process your claims.

Services with Supervised Providers

All services rendered by supervised providers are under the direct supervision of a licensed provider. Each resident, intern, or graduate student meets with their supervisor weekly for a minimum of 1 hour of face-to-face individual supervision. During this time, cases are reviewed and professional development issues are discussed.

Fees for Services with Supervised Graduate or Pre-Doctoral Interns

At times DSH has Graduate Students or Pre-Doctoral Interns providing services, which are provided at a reduced rate. Offering reduced rate services to the community is a great way for people without insurance to receive quality care. It is also a great way for people with high deductibles and high co-pays to opt to not use their insurance benefit and also receive quality care. Their fees may be adjusted at the discretion of Desert Sage Health based on financial need. Please talk with your therapist if you have a special financial situation and would like to request an adjustment in your fee. To qualify for an adjusted rate proof of financial hardship will be required.

Fees to see a graduate student or pre-doctoral intern, are as follows:

- Individual, Couple, or Family Therapy \$45
- Group Therapy \$15

Broken Appointment Fees for All Providers

If you are unable to keep an individual, couples, or family therapy appointment, please call our office as soon as possible to cancel and reschedule your appointment. If there is less than 24 business hours notice of a cancellation, you will be responsible for the customary broken appointment fee of \$50. This fee applies for individual, couples, or family therapy services provided by all providers, licensed and supervised. If there are two instances of late cancellation or broken appointments within a two month period then your therapy goals will be reassessed between you and your therapist. Additionally, if there are two broken appointments in a row with no notice all future sessions will be cancelled until your balance is paid.

There is no fee for not attending a scheduled group therapy session. However, if it is determined that your participation in a therapy group is too inconsistent for you to gain benefit then you may be asked by your therapist to no longer participate and your therapy goals will be reassessed between you and your therapist.

If you accrue broken appointment fees for any type of service, then those fees will need to be paid prior to being scheduled for any subsequent therapy or testing sessions.

Unpaid Balances

By signing below, you are agreeing that you understand if you have an unpaid balance with Desert Sage Health, PLLC and do not make satisfactory payment arrangements, your account may be placed with an external collection agency. You will be responsible for reimbursement of any fees from the collection agency, including all costs and expenses incurred collecting your account, and possibly including reasonable attorney's fees if so incurred during collection efforts.

In order for Desert Sage Health, PLLC or their designated external collection agency to service your account, and where not prohibited by applicable law, you agree that Desert Sage Health, PLLC and the designated external collection agency are authorized to (i) contact me by telephone at the telephone number(s) I am providing, including wireless telephone numbers, which could result in charges to me, (ii) contact me by sending text messages (message and data rates may apply) or emails, using any email address I provide and (iii) methods of contact may include using pre-recorded/artificial voice message and/or use of an automatic dialing device, as applicable.

Custody Policy

Before a minor is seen at DSH, staff takes steps to ensure proper consent is received. For minors under joint or sole custody, court documentation must be provided on details of custody. It is required that all court documents are provided to DSH in their entirety. If additional court determinations are made while a minor is in treatment, DSH must be notified before the minor is seen again for a session.

DSH has the following policies:

- Either parent/legal guardian is allowed to schedule appointments or accompany the minor, unless defined otherwise by court order/documentation.
- Both parents/legal guardians are entitled to have access to the minor's records according to AZ ARS 25-403.06 unless otherwise provided by court order or law.
- We will collect full payment (deductibles, co-payments, etc.) at the time of service from the parent accompanying the child. If a divorce decree or custody agreement requires the parent/guardian not present to pay a part of or the full bill, the authorizing/accompanying parent/guardian is responsible for collecting payment from the other parent/guardian. We will not collect payment from the other parent/guardian not present.
- DSH will not call to inform the other parent of appointments or to ask for consent prior to treatment.
- DSH will not tolerate appointment scheduling/cancelling patterns between parents.

It is both parent's/legal guardians' responsibility to communicate with each other about the minor's care, appointments, and other important information. Additionally, if issues between parents disrupt our practice or impede the care of the minor, we reserve the right to discharge your family from further treatment at our facility and will provide you referrals for continued care.

Communication with Desert Sage Health

All communication including invoices, superbills, and written communication with your provider will take place on the client portal. If you would prefer communication sent through the U.S. Mail please notify us immediately so we can make the requested change.

Protocol for the Secure Storage, Transfer and Access of Your Records

In Accordance with Arizona House Bill 2786, we are required to inform you of how your records will be securely stored and transferred and how you may access your records. When treatment is terminated, records are kept on site, in a secure area, for a minimum of two years, after which time, the records may be moved to a secure off site location. Should Desert Sage Health close or sell to another company then there will be a public notice issued at least 30 days prior to such a transaction. The notice will contain information about how your records will be transferred to a third party and if there is any change in procedure of how to access your records. Your records will be maintained by Desert Sage Health for a period of at least seven years after the termination of treatment. If the client is a minor during treatment, then records will be maintained for a period of seven years after the 18th birthday of the client. After the minimum record maintenance period then records will be destroyed by means of shredding of documents, unless you wish to claim the records for your own property. If you would like copies of or access to your records then you must submit a request in writing. Request for copies or access will be granted within 30 days of receipt of such request, unless there is reason to believe that release of such

records may be harmful to your emotional wellbeing or otherwise not in your best interest. You will be charged a reasonable copy fee for copies and professional time required to satisfy your request.

Discharge Procedures

You are free to choose whether to continue participation in your assessment or treatment process. Should you decide that you no longer need additional services or if you have not made any contact with our office for 60 days, we will discharge you and close your file. Should you need services at a later time, we will remain available to provide treatment, provide you with a referral, or discuss your case with the provider assuming your care. Please know that if you return for treatment, you will be considered a new patient which will necessitate an intake interview. If you would like us to provide information about your case to an assuming therapist then you will need to sign a release records request.

In Case of Fire or Natural Disaster

Should you be in the building when a fire or natural disaster occurs, then immediately exit the room you are in and follow the exit signs to the nearest safe exit.

Social Security Number and Personal Information Privacy Policy

Desert Sage Health is dedicated to protecting the personal security and privacy of all clients. In the ordinary course of its business, and for a variety of legitimate business reasons, the Company may collect and store personal information about its clients, including but not limited to social security numbers ("SSN"), in hard copy or digital storage. Desert Sage Health takes measures to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of SSNs, including without limitation:

- Protecting the confidentiality of SSNs;
- Prohibiting unlawful or unauthorized disclosure of SSNs;
- Limiting the number of people with access to SSNs;
- Properly disposing of documents (hard copy or digital) that contain SSNs; and
- Disciplining any associate who violates this policy.

Desert Sage Health employees with access to SSNs, will maintain the security and confidentiality of every document containing the SSN. This means all files containing SSNs will be locked, and that any access to digital files containing all or any part of an associate or client SSN will be password protected. Desert Sage Health restricts access to any document displaying a SSN to those with a legitimate business need to access those documents who are acting consistent with Desert Sage Health policy and in accordance with their assigned job tasks. Documents containing a SSN will be disposed of in a manner that maintains their confidentiality. Desert Sage Health shall not communicate a client's personal information to the general public. "Personal information" shall include SSN, home address or telephone number, personal electronic mail address, Internet identification name or password, last name prior to marriage, or drivers' license number. Nothing in this policy is intended to modify a client's right to access their own personnel file, as permitted by Desert Sage Health 's policies and state law. Nor does this policy prohibit the use of a client's SSN or personal information where the use is authorized or required by state or federal statute, rule, regulation, court order, or pursuant to legal discovery or process. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Violators may also be subject to civil and criminal penalties authorized by applicable state or federal law.

Social Media and Telecommunications

Due to the importance of your confidentiality and the importance of minimizing dual relationships, our staff does not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). We believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when you meet with your therapist.

Patient Staff Relationship Policy

Desert Sage Health values the importance of minimizing dual relationships; therefore, all employees of Desert Sage Health do not participate in any relationship outside of our facility with current or former clients. This standard is based on American Psychological Association's ethical standards. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when you meet with your therapist.

Audio/ Visual Recordings

Desert Sage Health does not allow any audio or visual recordings in therapy sessions. If you have cognitive or memory difficulties please share your concerns with your therapist to discuss possible solutions.

Electronic Communications

We cannot ensure the confidentiality of any form of communication through electronic media, including text messages. Services by electronic means, including but not limited to telephone communication, the Internet, facsimile machines, and e-mail is considered telemedicine. Under the California Telemedicine Act of 1996, telemedicine is broadly defined as the use of information technology to deliver medical services and information from one location to another. If you and your therapist chose to use information technology for some or all of your treatment, you need to understand that: (1) You retain the option to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting the right to future care or treatment or risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. (2) All existing confidentiality protections are equally applicable. (3) Your access to all medical information transmitted during a telemedicine consultation is guaranteed, and copies of this information are available for a reasonable fee. (4) Dissemination of any of your identifiable images or information from the telemedicine interaction to researchers or other entities shall not occur without your consent. (5) There are potential risks, consequences, and benefits of telemedicine. Potential benefits include, but are not limited to improved communication capabilities, providing convenient access to up-to-date information, consultations, support, reduced costs, improved quality, change in the conditions of practice, improved access to therapy, better continuity of care, and reduction of lost work time and travel costs. Effective therapy is often facilitated when the therapist gathers within a session or a series of sessions, a multitude of observations, information, and experiences about the client. Therapists may make clinical assessments, diagnosis, and interventions based not only on direct verbal or auditory communications, written reports, and third person consultations, but also from direct visual and olfactory observations, information, and experiences. When using information technology in therapy services, potential risks include, but are not limited to the therapist's inability to make visual and olfactory observations of clinically or therapeutically potentially relevant issues such as: your physical condition including deformities, apparent height and weight, body type, attractiveness relative to social and cultural norms or standards, gait and motor coordination, posture, work speed, any noteworthy mannerism or gestures, physical or medical conditions including bruises or injuries, basic grooming and hygiene including appropriateness of dress, eye contact (including any changes in the previously listed issues), sex, chronological and apparent age, ethnicity, facial and body language, and congruence of language and facial or bodily expression. Potential consequences thus include the therapist not being aware of what he or she would consider important information, that you may not recognize as significant to present verbally the therapist.

Documentation Policy

Desert Sage Health does not complete paperwork, forms or documentation for short-term disability, leave of absences, or legal matters.

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BY SIGNING BELOW, I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN DESERT SAGE HEALTH'S PRACTICE POLICIES.

Patient Name

Date

Patient Signature

Guardian of Patient's Name

Date

Signature of Guardian