

Bridge the Journey, LLC
100 PostMaster Drive Unit 2282
McDonough Ga, 30253-9998
470.765.8550

This form is called a Consent for Services (the "Consent") with Bridge the Journey, LLC. I ask that you read and sign this Consent before you start therapy. Please review the information. If you have any questions, contact me at info@bridgethejourney.com.

THE THERAPY PROCESS

Therapy is a collaborative process where you and your provider will work together on equal footing to achieve goals that you define. This means that you will follow a defined process supported by scientific evidence, where you and your provider have specific rights and responsibilities. Therapy generally shows positive outcomes for individuals who follow the process. Better outcomes are often associated with a good relationship between a client and their Provider. To foster the best possible relationship, it is important you understand as much about the process before deciding to commit.

Therapy begins with the intake process. First, you will review your Provider's policies and procedures, talk about fees, identify emergency contacts, and decide if you want health insurance to pay your fees depending on your plan's benefits. Second, you will discuss what to expect during therapy, including the type of therapy, the length of treatment, and the risks and benefits. If your Provider is practicing under the supervision of another professional, your Provider will tell you about their supervision and the name of the supervising professional. Third, you will form a treatment plan, including the type of therapy, how often you will attend therapy, your short- and long-term goals, and the steps you will take to achieve them. Over time, you and your Provider may edit your treatment plan to be sure it describes your goals and steps you need to take. After intake, you will attend regular therapy sessions at your Provider's office or through video, called telehealth. Participation in therapy is voluntary - you can stop at any time. At some point, you will achieve your goals. At this time, you will review your progress, identify supports that will help you maintain your progress, and discuss how to return to therapy if you need it in the future.

Physical Health: Findings show a strong connection between physical and psychological/emotional health. As a part of the initial evaluation, you will be asked to give the name of your primary care physician, describe your medical history, and list all medications you are currently taking. It is recommended that you have a physical examination if you have not had one within the last year.

Client Responsibility: In order to receive the full benefit from the counseling relationship, it is essential that you contribute honest effort into the counseling process. If you are currently receiving services from another mental health professional, please inform us of this.

IN-PERSON VISITS & SARS-CoV-2 ("COVID-19")

When guidance from public health authorities allows and your Provider offers, you can meet in-person. If you attend therapy in-person, you understand:

- You can only attend if you are symptom-free (For symptoms, see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>);

- If you are experiencing symptoms, you can switch to a telehealth appointment or cancel. If you need to cancel, you will not be charged a late cancellation fee.

- You must follow all safety protocols established by the practice, including:

- Following the check-in procedure;
- Washing or sanitizing your hands upon entering the practice;
- Adhering to appropriate social distancing measures;
- Wearing a mask, if required;
- Telling your Provider if you have a high risk of exposure to COVID-19, such as through school, work, or commuting; and
- Telling your Provider if you or someone in your home tests positive for COVID-19.
- Your Provider may be mandated to report to public health authorities if you have been in the office and have tested positive for infection. If so, your Provider may make the report without your permission, but will only share necessary information. Your Provider will never share details about your visit. Because the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, your ability to meet in person could change with minimal or no notice. By signing this Consent, you understand that you could be exposed to COVID-19 if you attend in-person sessions. If a member of the practice tests positive for COVID-19, you will be notified. If you have any questions, or if you want a copy of this policy, please ask.

TELEHEALTH SERVICES

To use telehealth, you need an internet connection and a device with a camera for video. Your Provider can explain how to log in and use any features on the telehealth platform. If telehealth is not a good fit for you, your Provider will recommend a different option. There are some risks and benefits to using telehealth:

• Risks

- Privacy and Confidentiality. You may be asked to share personal information with the telehealth platform to create an account, such as your name, date of birth, location, and contact information. Your Provider carefully vets any telehealth platform to ensure your information is secured to the appropriate standards.

- Technology. At times, you could have problems with your internet, video, or sound. If you have issues during a session, your Provider will follow the backup plan that you agree to prior to sessions.

- Crisis Management. It may be difficult for your Provider to provide immediate support during an emergency or crisis. You and your Provider will develop a plan for emergencies or crises, such as choosing a local emergency contact, creating a communication plan, and making a list of local support, emergency, and crisis services.

• Benefits

- Flexibility. You can attend therapy wherever is convenient for you.

- Ease of Access. You can attend telehealth sessions without worrying about traveling, meaning you can schedule less time per session and can attend therapy during inclement weather or illness.
- Recommendations
 - Make sure that other people cannot hear your conversation or see your screen during sessions.
 - Do not use video or audio to record your session unless you ask your Provider for their permission in advance.
 - Make sure to let your Provider know if you are not in your usual location before starting any telehealth session.

CONFIDENTIALITY and RECORDS

Confidentiality: Information shared by you in the counseling relationship is kept strictly confidential. We do not disclose client confidences and information to any third party, except under the following circumstances, and in accordance with state law: 1) The client signs a written release of information, indicating informed consent of such release, 2) The client expresses intent to harm him/herself or someone else, 3) There exists reasonable suspicion of abuse/neglect against a minor child, elderly person (60 years or older), or a dependent adult, or 4) A court order is received directing the disclosure of information. It is our policy to assert privileged communication on behalf of the client and the right to consult with the client if at all possible, except during an emergency, before mandated disclosure. We will endeavor to apprise clients of all mandated disclosures as conceivable.

Minors and Parents/Guardians: Clients under 18 years of age who are not emancipated (and their parents) should be aware that the law allows parents to examine their child's treatment records, unless the provider believes that doing so would endanger the child, or we agree otherwise. However, because privacy in therapy is often crucial to successful progress, particularly with teenagers, it is our general approach that during treatment the therapist will provide parents only with general information about the progress of the child's treatment, and his/her attendance at scheduled sessions...unless the therapist feels that the child is in danger and/or is a danger to someone else, in which case, we will notify authorities and/or parents or guardian of the concern. Before providing parents with sensitive information, the therapist will discuss the matter with the child, if possible, and do his/her best to therapeutically handle any objections he/she may have.

The state of Georgia has a very good track record in respecting this legal right. If for some unusual reason a judge were to order the disclosure of your private information, this order can be appealed. We cannot guarantee that the appeal will be sustained, but we will do everything in our power to keep what you say confidential. In the event of the incapacity or death of Bridgette Reed, LMFT. Amanda Jones-Bynum, LMFT will become the records custodian and will handle the psychotherapy files according to HIPAA-compliant standards. Please note that in couple's counseling, your therapist does not agree to keep secrets. Information revealed in any context may be discussed with either partner. In working with a minor child, the parent/guardian will be informed of serious health and safety threats and provided with updates and parenting

support, but it is expected that the confidentiality of the therapeutic sessions be respected. Files will be maintained for 7 years after termination of the counseling relationship, at which time the file will be destroyed.

RECORD KEEPING

Your Provider is required to keep records about your treatment. These records help ensure the quality and continuity of your care, as well as provide evidence that the services you receive meet the appropriate standards of care. Your records are maintained in an electronic health record provided by TherapyNotes. TherapyNotes has several safety features to protect your personal information, including advanced encryption techniques to make your personal information difficult to decode, firewalls to prevent unauthorized access, and a team of professionals monitoring the system for suspicious activity. TherapyNotes keeps records of all log-ins and actions within the system.

COMMUNICATION

You decide how to communicate with your Provider outside of your sessions. You have several options:

- Texting/Email

- Texting and email are not secure methods of communication and should not be used to communicate personal information. You may choose to receive appointment reminders via text message or email. You should carefully consider who may have access to your text messages or emails before choosing to communicate via either method.

- Secure Communication

- Secure communications are the best way to communicate personal information, though no method is entirely without risk. Your Provider will discuss options available to you. If you decide to be contacted via non-secure methods, your Provider will document this in your record.

- Social Media/Review Websites

- If you try to communicate with your Provider via these methods, they will not respond. This includes any form of friend or contact request, @mention, direct message, wall post, and so on. This is to protect your confidentiality and ensure appropriate boundaries in therapy.

- Your provider may publish content on various social media websites or blogs. There is no expectation that you will follow, comment on, or otherwise engage with any content. If you do choose to follow your Provider on any platform, they will not follow you back.

- If you see your Provider on any form of review website, it is not a solicitation for a review. Many such sites scrape business listings and may automatically include your Provider. If you choose to leave a review of your Provider on any website, they will not respond. While you are always free to express yourself in the manner you choose, please be aware of the potential impact on your confidentiality prior to leaving a review. It is often impossible to remove reviews later, and some sites aggregate reviews from several platforms leading to your review appearing other places without your knowledge.

Legal Proceedings:

If the therapist is subpoenaed to testify or submit records to the court, a fee will be assessed. For a written report, a fee of \$150.00 will be charged. Because appearing in court requires

canceled a full day of clients, you will be billed per day, for each day the therapist is required to report. The fee for the full day is \$800.00. You will be billed \$50.00/per hour for preparation time. If the court appearance is more than 20 minutes away from the office at which you typically attend sessions, mileage will also be assessed.

FEES AND PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

All initial intake/history appointments are \$80 per 45 minute session. Your therapist agrees to provide psychotherapy for the fee of \$99 per 60-minute session, \$80 per 45- minute session, \$50 per 30- minute session and \$125 per 45-60 minute session for couples therapy. Doing psychotherapy by telephone or electronic-mail is not ideal, and needing to talk to your therapist between sessions may indicate that you need extra support. Telephone consults are billed at \$25 per 15-minute call; excessive electronic-mail consults will also be billed. If telephone or electronic-mail consults occur frequently, you and your therapist will need to explore adding sessions or developing other resources you have available to help you. The fee for each session will be due in full at the conclusion of the session.

Cash and personal checks are accepted for payment, and we will provide you with a receipt of payment. The receipt of payment may also be used as a statement for insurance if applicable to you. Please note that there is a \$25 fee for any returned checks. Insurance companies have many rules and requirements specific to certain plans. Unless otherwise negotiated, it is your responsibility to find out your insurance company's policies and to file for insurance reimbursement. We will be glad to provide you with a statement for your insurance company and to assist you with any questions you may have in this area

You should also know about the following:

- No-Show and Late Cancellation Fees
 - If you are unable to attend therapy, you must contact your Provider 24 hours before your session. Otherwise, you may be subject to fees outlined in your fee agreement. Insurance does not cover these fees.
- Balance Accrual
 - Full payment is due at the time of your session. If you are unable to pay, tell your Provider. Your Provider may offer payment plans or a sliding scale. If not, your Provider may refer you to other low- or no-cost services. Any balance due will continue to be due until paid in full. If necessary, your balance may be sent to a collections service.
- Administrative Fees
 - Your Provider may charge administrative fees for writing a letter or report at your request; consulting with another healthcare provider or other professional outside of normal case management practices; or for preparation, travel, and attendance at a court appearance. These fees are listed in the fee agreement. Payment is due in advance.
- Insurance Benefits
 - Before starting therapy, you should confirm with your insurance company if:
 - Your benefits cover the type of therapy you will receive;
 - Your benefits cover in-person and telehealth sessions;
 - You may be responsible for any portion of the payment; and

- Your Provider is in-network or out-of-network.
- Sharing Information with Insurance Companies
 - If you choose to use insurance benefits to pay for services, you will be required to share personal information with your insurance company. Insurance companies keep personal information confidential unless they must share to act on your behalf, comply with federal or state law, or complete administrative work.
- Covered and Non-Covered Services
 - When your Provider is in-network, they have a contract with your insurance company. Your insurance plan may cover all or part of the cost of therapy. You are responsible for any part of this cost not covered by insurance, such as deductibles, copays, or coinsurance. You may also be responsible for any services not covered by your insurance.
 - When your Provider is out-of-network, they do not have a contract with your insurance company. You can still choose to see your Provider; however, all fees will be due at the time of your session to your Provider. Your Provider will tell you if they can help you file for reimbursement from your insurance company. If your insurance company decides that they will not reimburse you, you are still responsible for the full amount.
- Payment Methods
 - The practice requires that you keep a valid credit or debit card on file. This card will be charged for the amount due at the time of service and for any fees you may accrue unless other arrangements have been made with the practice ahead of time. It is your responsibility to keep this information up to date, including providing new information if the card information changes or the account has insufficient funds to cover these charges.

In Case of an Emergency

The office of Bridge the Journey, LLC is considered an outpatient practice, and we are set up to accommodate individuals who are reasonably safe and resourceful. We are not available at all times, especially when we are with other clients or outside of business hours. If at any time this does not feel like sufficient support, please inform your therapist, and he or she can discuss additional resources or transfer your case to a therapist or clinic with 24-hour availability. Generally, your therapist will return phone calls within 24-48 business hours. If you have a mental health emergency, we encourage you not to wait for a call back but to do one or more of the following:

Please save the following emergency phone numbers to your cell phone:

Local 24-Hour Crisis Line: (770) 422-0202

National Suicide Hotline: (800) 784-2433, or (800) 273-TALK

COMPLAINTS

If you feel your Provider has engaged in improper or unethical behavior, you can talk to them, or you may contact the licensing board that issued your Provider's license, your insurance company (if applicable), or the US Department of Health and Human Services..