

Howie Brownell, MS, LMFT
820 Jordan Street, Suite 475
Shreveport, LA 71101
(318) 200-0686/(318) 424-4271
Fax: (318)424-8194

STATEMENT OF PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Please read this statement of practices and procedures carefully and retain a copy for your records. It contains important information about your therapist, what you can expect from the process of therapy, and how to make the most of your experience in therapy. At the beginning of your first session, you will be asked if you have any questions about the information contained in this document. As a client, you have the right to a clear understanding of the process of therapy as outlined. If you have any questions, please ask. **Your signature on the last page of this document signifies that you have read and understand the information contained therein, and that you consent to treatment.**

The Therapist's Qualifications

Education: Mr. Brownell holds a Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy from Harding University. Mr. Brownell also earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Harding University.

Licensure: Mr. Brownell is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Number MFT262.

This license is administered and regulated by the Louisiana Licensed Professional Counselor's Board of Examiners, 8631 Summa Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70809 (Phone number: 225-765-2515). For more information about this license or to ask about filing a complaint, you may contact the Board by mail, telephone, or you may log on to the website at www.lpcboard.org.

Professional Organizations: Mr. Brownell is a clinical member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Experience: Mr. Brownell has worked as an individual, marital, and family therapist in various contexts since 1998. Among these are church counseling centers, part of a comprehensive treatment program administered by Brentwood Behavioral, LLC and as a therapist and facilitator at The Center for Families, a non-profit mental health agency in the Shreveport-Bossier area.

Areas of Expertise and Style of Practice

Mr. Brownell specializes in the practice of marriage and family therapy and is experienced in working with problems of childhood and parenthood, marital difficulties, and adult difficulties that may be related directly or indirectly to disturbances in family relationships.

Whether working with an individual, couple, or family, Mr. Brownell works from an ecosystemic perspective, which means that he accepts a client's immediate relationships and larger social context as being important factors in solving life's problems.

Specifically, Mr. Brownell works from a structural/strategic orientation, which means that a well-defined plan for achieving identified goals or solving specified problems is developed in collaboration with the client. He also utilizes Bowen Theory. The theoretical ideas of Bowen Theory are in line with structural/strategic but also examine the influence of intergenerational factors on the client relationships. The emphasis in therapy is placed on assisting the client in finding workable solutions and accessing the resources necessary to enact those solutions in a time-limited framework. Therapy focuses on providing insight into the “historical roots” of problems only as it is ***absolutely necessary*** to the resolution of the problem as it finds expression in the “*here-and-now*.” In many instances, problems are most efficiently solved without dwelling on “*historical causes*” at all.

Types of Clients Served

Mr. Brownell has experience working with adults, teenagers, and children of all ages. When working with teenagers and children, Mr. Brownell strongly prefers to work with the whole family. Unwillingness or inability of family members to participate in therapy may result in referral.

Ethical Code of Conduct

The quality and provision of psychotherapy for families/couples is governed by state law and ethical guidelines. These laws and guidelines are designed to protect the consumer.

As a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Louisiana, Mr. Brownell is bound by law to adhere to the Code of Ethics for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists. Copies of this code of ethics is available upon request.

Legal Requirements

Confidentiality: By law, Mr. Brownell is prohibited from releasing any information regarding your therapy to any third party without a signed release that reflects your informed consent. Electronically submitted or reproduced releases without an original signature (fax, email attachment, photocopy) or verbal permission from the client to release information may be accepted, but only in the case of an emergency.

General Exceptions to Confidentiality: There are certain conditions and circumstances that require confidentiality to be broken by the therapist. Specifically, it must be reported to authorities when:

1. The therapist has reasonable suspicion of child abuse, elder abuse, or the abuse of a mentally handicapped person.
2. The therapist is convinced that the client is indicating serious, imminent physical harm to himself/herself (suicide) or to some other specific person (homicide). In the latter case, the therapist has a duty to warn the individual who is being threatened and to contact the appropriate authorities.

There are other circumstances that may limit the rule of confidentiality. Certain types of litigation, such as child custody, may result in a court-ordered release of information without your consent.

Exceptions to Confidentiality When Using Insurance: If a client uses an HMO, PPO, EAP, or other insurance plans to pay for services, he or she may have already signed a waiver of confidentiality with the providing company so that the therapist can submit claims or reports for the purpose of reimbursement. If the client did NOT sign such a waiver, the right of the insurance provider to have access to information that would otherwise be privileged may be implied in the consumer/provider agreement. In any event, **signing this document will authorize the therapist to submit the necessary information about your case to your health care provider for the purpose of reimbursement.** If you have questions about the policies and procedures of your health care provider with regard to confidentiality, please check with them directly.

Please note that health care providers/insurers may require or allow the transmission of information electronically (fax, email attachment, through a website, or verbally by phone) through systems which may NOT be secure. Further, the therapist cannot be responsible for the treatment of confidential information by the health care provider after it has been transmitted or submitted. *Note that some health care providers may sell or otherwise provide information to other insurers/providers or third parties without the permission of the client or therapist.*

Clinical Situations that Affect Confidentiality: Special clinical situations may exist that require informed consent of the client in order for information to be released. For example, in couple, family, or group therapy, information cannot be released to a party outside the treatment context about any certain individual without the written consent of **ALL** parties being treated. Information shared by individuals in a private session where other family members are not present must be held in confidence (except for the mandated exceptions already noted) unless that individual signs a release of information. Note, however, that maintaining confidentiality for individual sessions during couples or family therapy could impede or even prevent a positive outcome to therapy.

While the therapist himself is bound by confidentiality in a marital, family, or group setting as described above, *the therapist cannot be responsible for information shared by family or group members with others outside the treatment context.*

Electronic Transmission of Data: The therapist cannot control and is not responsible for the unauthorized interception of data by a third party when it is being transmitted electronically by cell phone, email, fax, or other wireless or electronic device. The client does this at his/her own risk.

The Client-Therapist Relationship

Therapist Responsibility: It is the responsibility of the therapist to provide quality services that fall in delivery and scope within the legal and ethical guidelines referred to above, to provide clear and complete information about his clinical practices and procedures so that the client can provide informed consent to treatment, and, as is within his reasonable ability, to provide a safe, trusting context for the therapy process.

Client Responsibility: The client is responsible for acquainting himself/herself with basic information regarding office practices as explained within this document. In addition, client responsibilities include:

1. Prerearranging any authorization with his/her insurance provider or HMO (if the client plans to file a claim) and presenting any authorization or claim numbers to the therapist/secretary before the first session.
2. Presenting to the therapist/secretary before the first session any material necessary to filing HMO or insurance claims, such as Insurance Coverage or Military ID Card.
3. Filling out the intake form provided completely and accurately, including current medications.
4. Keeping agreed-upon appointment times consistently and promptly.

NOTE: Appointments not cancelled within twenty-four hours are subject to a fee.

5. Informing the therapist of any change in status, such as address or telephone number.
6. Informing the therapist of a clinical relationship with any other mental health professional while therapy with Mr. Brownell is on-going so that provisions can be made to avoid any ethical or therapeutic conflict.

Ethics dictate that clients make their own decisions about such things as deciding to marry, separate, divorce, reconcile, or setting up child custody. The therapist will help the client think through possible options and potential consequences, but ethics disallow the therapist from offering advice to the client in making specific decisions.

It is strongly suggested that clients undergo a routine physical as a prelude to therapy if there has been no physical in the past year. Many emotional or psychological difficulties can be the result of some physical problem.

What To Expect

Therapy sessions are typically fifty (50) minutes to one hour in length. The first session is usually spent in gathering information about the history and on-going character of the problem(s) that the client wishes to work on in therapy.

Sessions thereafter are usually scheduled one time a week, and are devoted to establishing mutually agreed upon goals for therapy and developing strategies to meet those goals. The number of sessions could also be affected by requirements by health care providers.

The length of the therapy process depends on the nature and severity of the presenting problem. However, most problems are successfully resolved in eight (8) to ten (10) sessions.

At the end of sessions, "homework" may be assigned to the client. This homework is an important part of the process of therapy; therefore, clients are strongly encouraged to complete these assignments to maximize the effectiveness and the efficiency of their counseling experience.

Routine Business Procedures/Practices

Client Contact: Mr. Brownell schedules client sessions Monday through Friday. Times are available from 9:00am to 6:30pm Monday through Thursday, and 9:00am to 5:30pm on Friday. Special times including weekend times are also available.

Mr. Brownell corresponds through confidential voice mail and will return your calls at his earliest possible convenience.

Making/Breaking Appointments: sessions are by appointment only. Session availability is limited. Typically, appointments are made with Mr. Brownell after each session. However, appointments can be made, changed, or cancelled by phone. Note that an appointment cancelled or changed with less than 24 hours notice may result in a full charge for that session. Also note that excessive “no shows”, cancellations, or reschedules on the part of the client could result in referral.

Standard Fees: Mr. Brownell’s fee for a fifty (50) minute therapy session is \$85 dollars.

Health Care Coverage: If the client has a traditional health care insurance policy that covers services provided by an LMFT, then information will be provided to the client to file a claim for reimbursement. This information, called a “superbill”, is provided to all clients and acts as a receipt of payment and a reminder for the date and time of the next appointment.

NOTE: Mr. Brownell does not accept all health coverage plans, even though they may cover his services.

When filing for reimbursement, the client is still responsible for payment at the time services are rendered. The client is responsible for any fees not covered by a traditional insurance policy. Sessions of greater length are subject to additional charge. Full payment for services rendered is expected after each session. Inability to pay full fee or nonpayment of fees may result in referral. If there are any questions, please feel free to ask Mr. Brownell at the start of your session.

Church Client Fees: Clients may be members in good standing of a church that maintains a contract with Mr. Brownell. If this is the case, your initial consultation may be free of charge, and a portion of your fee may be covered for you. Please consult Mr. Brownell for details.

Fees for Court Appearances, Depositions, and Documentation: If compelled to appear in court, time used to prepare for, travel to, and appear in court will be charged at the rate of \$200.00 per hour. Additional fees will be charged for duplication and/or submission of documentation, such as case notes or existing reports, at the rate of \$10.00 per page.

Mr. Brownell charges an initial \$1,000.00 retainer for court appearances payable at the time a subpoena is received. When the retainer is used up, the client will be billed another \$1,000.00 to retain Mr. Brownell’s services, if necessary. Portions of the retainer are refundable at Mr. Brownell’s discretion. Mr. Brownell bills \$700.00 for a deposition, payable at the time the subpoena is received.

A simple report to be submitted to the Court that is not part of a deposition or court appearance is billed at a flat fee of \$300.00 per submission, payable at the time of request or subpoena.

Routine Report and Documentation: Routine reports for purposes other than court can be provided at the client’s request upon receipt of a signed waiver of confidentiality. A flat fee of \$150.00 is charged for routine reports. Routine documentation may also be provided upon the client’s request and upon receipt of a

signed waiver of confidentiality. If such documentation is ten (10) pages or less, there is no fee. For six (6) or more pages, the fee is \$10.00 per page.

As the result of special arrangement, a fee may be charged for telephone contact at the rate of \$1.50 per minute.

Routine Telephone Contact: Mr. Brownell prioritizes his face-to-face consultation with his clients and does NOT take phone calls while he is in session. His time to return phone calls is limited. Mr. Brownell will return phone calls in the order in which they were received and as time allows.

There is typically no charge for routine telephone contact. However, Mr. Brownell reserves the right to bill for phone calls over ten minutes or that become more frequent than one time per week at the rate of \$1.50 per minute.

Potential Risks

As a client works to make changes through participation in marital or family therapy, relationships with other individuals in the client's social system who may benefit from those changes may resist change. Further, changes in relationship patterns that may result from family therapy may produce unpredicted and/or adverse responses from other people in the client's social system.

Research suggests that working on marital issues in therapy with only one spouse can have a detrimental effect on the quality of the marriage and can lead to dissolution of the marriage.

As the result of mental health counseling, a client may realize that he/she has additional issues which may not have surfaced prior to the information of the counseling relationship.

In Case of Emergency

When an emergency arises and an immediate emergency response is required, clients are instructed to call the Willis-Knighton Behavioral Medicine Unit located at 2510 Bert-Kouns Industrial Loop in Shreveport, telephone number 318-212-5200. Clients may also contact Brentwood Behavioral located at 1006 Highland Avenue in Shreveport, telephone number 318-678-7500. Emergency services are available at both facilities twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Client's Statement of Understanding/Consent to Treat

My signature below signifies that I have read and understand the information contained in this document and agree to treatment under these terms. If I am the parent or guardian of an individual that I am bringing to treatment that is not capable of providing informed consent because of age or handicap, I agree to print their names below. My signature indicates that I am responsible for their welfare, have considered their best interest, and agree to treatment under these terms on their behalf.

I understand that I accept responsibility for informing anyone I invite to therapy from this point on about the information contained in this document as it may apply to them.
