

Therapy Services Disclosure Statement

**Melissa Carlson, LCSW
FL#SW8174**

The following information is designed to let you know about my educational and professional background, and to ensure that you understand our professional relationship. I am committed to providing you with quality, professional counseling, and your questions or comments are welcome.

Education and Credentials

I received the Master of Social Work degree from Syracuse University (Syracuse, NY) in 1994, and took the licensing exam to be certified as an LCSW – Licensed Certified Social Worker.

In 1995 I enrolled in a specialized professional training program with the organization now called Sensorimotor Psychotherapy in Boulder, Colorado. I completed that program in 1997. Sensorimotor processing is especially useful for character analysis, assessing and working with personality development and changes, and in trauma work. Using this somatic model has become an enriching and meaningful background to my work with clients.

I provide counseling services that adhere to the highest standards of professional ethics, research, and applied knowledge. I work with adults (people over 18) on an individual basis, as well as in couples for relationship issues. I enjoy working with couples who are experiencing difficulties in their committed relationship and want to stay together, as well as with those who need to part and wish to do so as well as possible.

I have experience working with people who are in the midst of grief, depression, and anxiety, among other issues, which can strike for a number of reasons. In all areas of my practice I am committed to assisting those of my clients who desire a faith-based approach to draw upon religious and spiritual resources for their personal healing and growth.

My Therapeutic Orientation and Process

I am trained to view the problems people face in life through the lens of the systems in which they find themselves. Examples of systems are families, couples, colleagues at work, members of a church group or congregation, an academic class, and so on. Becoming aware of how we “do what we do” is a crucial life task; that awareness will lead you to needed changes as well as to a greater appreciation of your strengths. This perspective allows people to see which systems influence them for the better, and which systems trigger difficulties that they may choose to look at more closely.

I have augmented my systems outlook with the somatic training I received in Colorado, as well as with workshops and trainings in psychodynamic psychotherapy, narrative therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy. I also have experience using the techniques of emotional freedom therapy (EFT) for defusing traumatic memories. EFT is also useful for treating personality traits that are no longer helpful.

During your first three or four sessions I will carefully assess the issues that concern you, and will choose the appropriate combination of methods so I can help you meet the goals we set

together as efficiently as possible. **Your active involvement in setting and realizing goals is vital to your success.** My role as your therapist is to offer my knowledge, training and expertise in guiding the process of your therapy. Your **role is equally vital to your success and involves your commitment to prepare for, attend, and participate fully in all of your sessions.** Together we will establish a therapeutic understanding that specifies the goals, issues, potential benefits and risks, commitments, costs, and other factors pertaining to our work together.

Through periodic evaluations for therapeutic progress we will monitor and adjust our therapeutic strategy as needed to insure the therapy remains properly focused and effective. As with any successful form of therapeutic intervention, there are both benefits and risks associated with counseling. Risks may include experiencing uncomfortable levels of feelings such as sadness, guilt, shame, anxiety, anger, frustration, or conflicts with others. Some changes may, in fact, seem to lead to your feeling worse in the short run. With your faithful commitment to the therapeutic process, however, you should see the desired benefits of relief, healing and growth that you seek.

Confidentiality

I regard the information you share with me with the greatest respect, so I want to be as clear as possible about how it will be handled. Generally, I will tell no one what you tell me. The privacy and confidentiality of our conversations, and my records, are your privilege and are protected by state law and my profession's ethical principles, in all but a few circumstances: 1) If I believe you intend to hurt yourself or another person; 2) if I believe a child or elderly person has been or is in danger of being abused or neglected; 3) if a judge subpoenas my records – a rare but possible circumstance if you are involved in or become involved in litigation; 4) if I speak with my professional consultant about your case. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) requires that all clinical social workers participate in individual or group consultation to ensure the objectivity and quality of the therapy. Such consultation is thematic in nature and no personal identifying information is used; and 5) Please be aware that if you are using insurance benefits to cover all or part of the cost of counseling, your insurance company may review my records without asking your permission in advance. It's in the fine print of your agreement with them, and it's part of the agreement I must have with them in order to provide you with the benefits you've paid your insurance company to provide. Otherwise, I will not disclose anything about your therapy or even that you are in therapy without your written permission, provided in advance.

Explanation of Dual Relationships

Although our sessions may be very intimate psychologically and spiritually, it is important that you be assured that we have a professional relationship rather than a social one. Our contact will be limited to the sessions you arrange with me; no social or business relationship is possible. I respect your privacy, so generally I will not speak to you in public unless you speak first.

Length of Sessions

Your counseling sessions will be provided in a professional manner consistent with accepted ethical standards. Sessions are 45-50 minutes long. We will schedule your sessions by mutual agreement. If you are unable to keep an appointment please call my cell phone (941-323-4423) to cancel at least 24 hours in advance. If I do not receive 24 hours notice you will be responsible for paying the full session fee, since insurance companies do not reimburse me for missed sessions.

Fees/Method of Payment

In return for a fee of \$115 for the initial session and \$105 for each subsequent session, I agree to provide counseling services for you. I prefer that you pay at the beginning of the session, by cash or personal check; accepting a credit or debit card is possible at some office locations. If your circumstances change and you become unable to pay the full fee, please talk this over with me.

Insurance Reimbursement

If you wish to seek reimbursement from your health insurance company Samaritan will submit claims for you. You are expected to pay co-pays or deductibles at the time of your session. It is your responsibility to determine whether or not your company will reimburse you and at what rate.

Telephone Availability

You may use my cell phone number on a limited basis – 941-323-4423 - to arrange appointment cancellations/reschedules, and for brief questions. Please use text messaging when possible. If you have not gotten a response from me within 24 hours, please try again – occasionally cell phones are not as reliable as we would like them to be – I may not have gotten your message. **Please call Bayside Center for Behavioral Health – 941-917-7760 – for truly urgent or emergency behavioral health issues.**

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE CAN ALSO BE OBTAINED 24 HOURS A DAY BY CALLING 911 OR YOUR LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Complaint Procedures

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of my work please inform me immediately. This will make our work together more efficient and effective. If you think you have been treated unfairly or unethically, have spoken with me and find we cannot resolve this problem to your satisfaction, you may contact Rev. Rick Howell, LMHC, Th.M., Executive Director of Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast, 3224 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, Florida, 34239, at 941-926-2959. You can lodge a complaint or receive clarification of your rights with Rev. Howell.

Vacation and Illness

From time to time I will be out of contact due to such things as continuing education seminars, vacations, illness, family emergencies, etc. Counseling is a uniquely personal service so your counseling may be briefly interrupted at those times. I will give you advance notice whenever possible. If an emergency arises when I am unavailable, please call the Bayside Center for Behavioral Health of Sarasota Memorial Hospital: 1-800-764-8477, or 941-917-7760.

I look forward to our meetings, to learning more about you and your hopes and aspirations, and to helping you refine them and make them a reality.

Please make a copy of this disclosure statement, sign the signature page, and return the **signature page only** to me by one of these methods:

Email: melissa@samaritangulfcoast.com

FAX – 941-928-2959

USPS: ATT: Melissa Carlson, LCSW

Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast, 3224 Bee Ridge Rd, Sarasota, FL 34239

Thank you!