

Tara McDonald, M.A., LMHC

Licensed Mental Health Counselor

Private practice in psychotherapy

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phone: (360) 303-1414

WA State License LH00009769

Associate Member of Associates in Mental Health

Terms of Service and Counselor Disclosure Statement

Welcome to my counseling practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and policies. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask me any questions at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Washington State Law requires that mental health therapists provide clients with written information about their qualifications, treatment philosophy and methods, and service policies. It is your right and responsibility to choose the provider and counseling that best suits your needs. To help you make your choice and to help facilitate our work together, here is some basic information about my therapy practice. This statement, in its entirety, serves as our agreement to our respective rights and responsibilities as therapist and client. You will be asked to sign after reading this and before we begin our therapy together.

My Education, Certifications, Licensure, and Experience

- B.A., Psychology and Communication. University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO, 1977.
- M.A., Counseling Psychology. McGregor School of Antioch University, Yellow Springs, OH, 1995.
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Certification. University of New Mexico, 2004.
- Washington licensure (LH00009769): Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), 2005 – present.
- CEAP certification (Certified Employee Assistance Professional), 2007 – present.
- Department of Transportation (DOT) Substance Abuse Professional (SAP), 2009 – present.
- Advanced certification in family counseling with Terry Real, Relational Life Institute, 2009.
- Level 1 & 2 Gottman Method Couples Therapy; certified Gottman Educator, Gottman Institute, 2010.
- Level 1 & 2 certificates, Internal Family Systems (IFS), Center for Self-Leadership, 2016.

I have worked as a counselor and teacher in various settings throughout my career in Colorado, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington State, including Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs); private practice; an inpatient hospital for mental illness and substance abuse; a residential treatment facility for adolescents; a crisis intervention hotline; and at a domestic violence shelter.

Approach to therapy

I listen deeply to each person and strive to create a safe place for anyone dealing with transition, change, or healing. My counseling style is both direct and gentle, following each person's own timing and focus. I use many different methods to support clients as we address their concerns, including psychodynamic, attachment-based, solution-focused, coaching, psycho-educational, Internal Family Systems, and cognitive/behavioral approaches. In couples counseling, I support both people individually and equally as we work together on identifying underlying patterns and creating new pathways for connection and communication. My areas of specialty include working with adults; couples; relationship issues; depression; anxiety; trauma and PTSD; substance abuse and other addictive behaviors; working with families with a loved one struggling with addiction; grief and loss; domestic violence; ADD; body image and/or overeating issues; self-esteem; and spirituality. My overall approach embraces the idea that a problem or crisis is often a jumping off point or an opportunity that can help us gain new skills, knowledge, and deeper access to our intrinsic values and spirit.

Confidentiality and Privacy

I keep confidential anything you say to me, with a few exceptions that are required by law (see the Washington State Notice of Privacy Practices). To provide the best therapy, I participate in peer review and consultation, but will never disclose your name or identifying circumstances.

Appointments

If you need to cancel your appointment for any reason, please cancel 24 hours in advance by emailing AND leaving me a phone message (I do not communicate by text in my practice). If you miss a session with less than 24 hours' notice, I charge a \$50 cancellation fee, which I ask that you pay at your next session. **Please be aware that your insurance will not cover missed appointments; this cancellation fee will be an out-of-pocket expense.** An alternative to missing a face-to-face appointment is a phone or VSee appointment (a confidential type of Skype connection via computer). Each calendar year, I allow one missed session with less than 24 hours' notice without charging the cancellation fee.

Billing practices

Payment for services is **due at the beginning of each session**, which includes the co-payment or co-insurance if you are using your insurance plan. My basic rate is \$120 per session (50 - 60 minutes) or \$150 for a 75-minute session. If you have insurance that will cover counseling, your co-pay is paid out of pocket while I collect the remainder of your fee from your insurance company. Please remember, however, that you are ultimately responsible for the payment of your costs, not your insurance company. *I strongly recommend that you call the number on the back of your insurance card to obtain information about your mental health coverage, deductible (and if it's been met for the current calendar year), and any co-payment or co-insurance costs that will be out of pocket for you.* Additionally, I hold a certain number of spaces for Adjusted Fee situations on a space available basis. The adjusted fee will be determined between the two of us either before or during our first session; this agreed-upon rate should be discussed on a regular basis and can be renegotiated as needed by either of us at any time. My cancellation policy for adjusted fee sessions is the same as above (see "Appointments" section above).

Emergencies

If you experience a mental health emergency between sessions, please contact me by phone at **360-303-1414**; leave a voice message if needed; and **call my answering service** through Associates in Mental Health at **360-715-2470** and they will have me paged. I will return your call as soon as I can. If I cannot be reached in the time that you need, please contact the Volunteers of America 24-hour on-call crisis line at 1-800-584-3578; call 911; or go directly to the nearest emergency room for help.

Treatment Consent

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have been given information about the type of counseling I will receive from Tara McDonald, M.A., LMHC; the methods and techniques used as well as her education, experience, and training; and the cost of counseling services. I have received this information in writing.

I have been made aware that counselors practicing for a fee must be registered or certified with the Department of Health for the safety and protection of public health. Licensing or information about practice standards does not guarantee the effectiveness of any treatment.

Client Signature

Date

Tara McDonald, M.A., LMHC

Date