

Aquiline Counseling PLLC

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**General Informed Consent and Office Policies****Welcome**

I want to take this opportunity to welcome you to Aquiline Counseling. I consider it a privilege to partner with you as you seek to make positive changes in your life. The most effective therapy starts with a relationship. In order for us to begin that process, I would like to tell you a few things about myself, my approach to therapy, my office policies, and your rights. Please read the information that follows and feel free to ask me any clarifying questions.

Education and Experience

I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (Credential # LH60450981) in the State of Washington. I have a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Northwest University in Kirkland, Washington. I actively continue to expand my knowledge and stay on top of current developments in psychology by participating in additional training. I am a member of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing International Association (EMDRIA).

I work with individual adults experiencing a variety of mental health issues including but not limited to post-traumatic stress disorder, other traumatic disorders, depression, anxiety, grief, and stress caused by life transitions. I also work with survivors of sexual abuse and domestic violence. I have an extensive background in law enforcement, which gives me firsthand knowledge and experience of what it's like to be a first responder or public safety employee. I am certified in EMDR (eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing), a highly effective treatment for PTSD. I am also a certified complex trauma professional, level II (IATP – International Association of Trauma Professionals). Both of these certifications required extensive post-graduate training and require a high level of continuing education each year.

Approach to Therapy

I believe that therapy is an effective way to work through life's struggles, losses, traumatic experiences, and disorders. Everyone's personal goals for therapy are different, but in general people who apply themselves and work hard in therapy can expect an improved quality of life, personal growth, a greater sense of wellbeing, and progress in healing from traumatic or significant emotional wounds. I teach clients coping skills, relaxation methods and other tools to manage and regulate emotional discomfort. It is important to acknowledge that for psychotherapy to improve your life and make the changes you desire you will have to work earnestly; and hard work does not always guarantee a successful outcome. As you work through issues that cause you distress, you may feel worse before you feel better. This is a normal response for many people and it should not cause you alarm. Wrestling with difficult topics can result in strained relationships within family, job, and friendships. This information is given to you so that you can prepare yourself and those close to you. Please keep me informed if unmanageable distress occurs and we can modify your course of therapy if needed. I encourage you to endure the

challenge of healing and life change with patience and perseverance. Our partnership in this endeavor has the expectation of a positive outcome that results in the quality of your life being improved.

Depending on the issue, the therapeutic process can take different paths and take different lengths of time. Just like one shoe size does not fit every person, one model of therapy does not fit every individual. Therefore, I use a variety of therapy types based on who you are as an individual. I integrate the following therapeutic modalities, including but not limited to: eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy (EMDR), cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), internal family systems (IFS), mindfulness, neuro-science including the polyvagal theory, etc into the sessions as is applicable.

I have geared my practice to focus on adults who have experienced trauma or adversity of some kind, I do not do only talk therapy with clients. In my opinion, talk therapy alone, does not make lasting changes. I do mix talk therapy with other types of therapy such as EMDR, IFS, CBT, DBT, etc. If you are looking only to talk to someone about daily life and its inherent stressors, please continue your search for a therapist. This is not the kind of work I do, but there are many other therapists that do this type of work. If you interested and motivated in learning new skills to improve your life, change your behaviors or better yet work on the deep wounds from the past that cause the current behaviors that concern you, you've come to the right place.

Another thought about therapy - I believe you will find that I will become one of your biggest advocates and supporters during the therapeutic relationship that develops between us. *However*, please keep in mind that a good therapist doesn't always agree with you. Sometimes having someone to challenge your patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving is what is needed to make the changes you want to make.

EMDR

EMDR is a highly effective, evidence-based therapy (which means it has been tested and found to work effectively) for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and other traumas. EMDR has been designated as an effective treatment by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and The World Health Organization (WHO).

EMDR therapy is also used with a variety of other mental health issues including by not limited to depression, anxiety, addictions, grief, and performance enhancement. Clinicians have seen positive results in these areas. Clinical trials are underway with these other mental health issues.

Distressing, unresolved memories may surface through the use of EMDR therapy. Some clients have experienced high levels of emotion or physical sensations during the treatment sessions. Following the treatment sessions, the processing of traumatic memories may continue, and disturbing dreams or nightmares, increased intense memories, strong feelings, etc., may surface. Prior to starting EMDR you will be taught a variety of tools to help you manage these experiences. It should be noted that the above described unpleasant responses often do not happen, and you find quick relief from PTSD and other symptoms.

Before commencing EMDR treatment, please consider all of the above. Please talk to me about any concerns. EMDR is my primary model of therapy, however, your therapy is a collaboration

between you and me. You are never required to participate in EMDR therapy, you may stop EMDR therapy at any time after we have started and you may do so without prejudice.

Oversight & Consultation

As therapeutic practice, I participate in a consultation and supervision group. This group consists of a several colleagues and an expert supervisor in advanced EMDR. My purpose in participating in this group is to collaborate on cases, ethics, and therapeutic needs and issues for my clients. Your privacy remains my utmost priority; during such meetings, your anonymity is maintained in the discussion of your case; no identifiable information is given to the group.

My Responsibilities to You

I value you as a client and I hope through clear communication, commitment, and professionalism, to serve you effectively. There are several topics I would like for you to be informed of as you begin therapy. They are as follows:

I am frequently unable to immediately take phone calls because my work hours vary, but I check my voicemails regularly and return calls as soon as possible. If you are in crisis, immediately call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. You can also call the King County Crisis Clinic 24 hours a day at 206-461-3222 (or 1-866-4CRISIS) or chat with them online at www.crisisclinic.org/Chat. Another immediate crisis line is 1-800-273-TALK. If you are a first responder or first responder family member you can call Code 4 Northwest at 425-243-5092 or Safe Call Now at 206-459-3020.

Referrals and Termination

Occasionally, there are reasons to refer clients to other therapists. This may occur because of a mental health issue that is outside of my scope of practice. This also could occur if, in my professional opinion, I am not the best therapist to help you. This could possibly occur because you are not making the progress **you** want to make in our work together. Sometimes a change is warranted so that you get all you can out of the therapy process. If I assess that I am no longer able to help you make progress toward your goals and improve your mental health, I am ethically bound to refer you to another health or mental health provider. If this is the case, I will provide referrals for you and continue to meet with you for a reasonable length of time until you find a suitable therapist.

If, without having made prior arrangements with me, I have not heard from you in 30 days I will assume that you would like me to terminate our current episode of care and close your active clinical file. In such cases, we may re-open the file and initiate a new episode of care. Alternatively, I may not be able to re-initiate a new episode of care due to my client load.

Confidentiality

In order for trust to exist between us, you must be confident that I value your privacy and will keep it confidential. The information you disclose in therapy sessions is private and confidential and will not be shared by me to anyone without explicit written consent from you, with some exceptions. There are times when I may request your permission to share information with other healthcare professionals, such as medical doctors, so that we can work together for your benefit.

I am required by law to disclose the following information to the appropriate authorities with or without your permission: 1) suspicion of abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults; and 2) when records are subpoenaed by a court of law (*RCW 70.02.230(2)(o), 70.02.050, 18.225.105, and CFR Part 2 & 2.63(a)(1).*) I will make every reasonable effort to inform you of information that I am required to report prior to the report being made. Additionally, the law permits disclosure without client authorization if there is reasonable belief that disclosure will avoid or minimize an imminent danger to the health or safety of the individual or any other individual (*RCW 18.225.105*)

Fees

Standard session, 50 - 53 minutes	\$185.00
30 minute extension to standard session -	\$92.50 (insurance does not pay for the extension)
Diagnostic intake session	\$240.00
Family session	\$220.00
Crisis session	\$225.00 (prorate session over 55 min.)

Additional services such as filling out FMLA paperwork, consultations with other health professionals working with you, etc., will be charged at my standard session fee to compensate for my time. Fees for these services must be paid in advance of the work being provided. Charges will be rounded to the nearest 15-minute increment.

I accept checks and credit/debit cards, including HSA type cards. Payment is due at the time of service. Should any payment by check be returned for non-payment, you will be assessed a \$25.00 returned check fee.

Cancellations

Please provide me with at least **48 hours notice** of a cancellation. I understand that there are times when you must miss an appointment due to personal illness, emergencies or obligations for work or family. However, when you do not call at least 48 hours in advance to cancel an appointment, you may be preventing another client from getting much needed treatment and it affects my ability to run my business efficiently and effectively. I am rarely able to fill an appointment slot when I receive less than a few days notice. Conversely, the situation may arise where another client fails to cancel and I am unable to schedule you for a visit, due to a seemingly "full" appointment calendar. A cancelled appointment also delays our work together.

Please keep in mind that unlike a medical doctor or ARNP who are able to see 15 to 25 clients per day, I can only see 6 to 8 clients a day. I reserve a full hour of my time for the session and clinical notes. The session time is actually 50 minutes. If a client cancels with less than 48 hours notice, it is unlikely I will be able to fill the time slot and I lose an entire hour from my work schedule.

I allow one cancellation per 6-month period without charge if the cancellation is due to illness or family or work emergencies. Other reasons for cancellation will be charged. *No shows and less than 24 hours notice are always charged the full fee.* Please note that insurance companies do not reimburse for missed appointments. I am unable to bill your insurance company for this fee.

If there is a consistent pattern of cancelling appointments, even with 48 hours or more notice, you may lose a regularly scheduled appointment time slot or be terminated from therapy.

Below are the fees you will be charged for cancelling or not showing up to an appointment. I reserve the right to waive or modify these fees at my discretion.

No Show Fee (no call prior to appointment time)	Full Fee
24 hours or less cancellation fee	Full Fee
48 hours or less cancellation fee	\$100.00

If you arrive late for your appointment, you will be seen for the remaining time, and will be charged the full fee. If I begin a session late, I will do one of the following, depending on both our availability: either see you for the full session time or charge you a prorated fee. Phone calls over 15 minutes in length will be charged at a prorated fee.

Litigation

I offer professional services for the primary purpose of counseling and psychotherapy, not for the purpose of preparing for litigation. If you are seeking services for preparation of litigation or other legal action, I can help you find a referral to a forensic expert. I am not able to provide a recommendation, evaluation, or opinion, in any legal forum relating to separation, divorce, child custody, visitation or parenting plans.

I do not voluntarily participate in legal actions for the purposes of child custody, divorce proceedings, or any other civil or criminal legal proceedings; this includes letter writing, declarations, testimony and/or release of records for the purpose of such legal actions. I will comply with subpoenas & other court orders in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

If you request my involvement in any legal actions, including but not limited to, testimony, depositions, declarations, written and/or oral reports the following fees apply:

- A litigation fee of \$1500. ***This is a separate fee from what is listed below and must be paid in advance of all services I provide on legal matters.***
- Billing for all time dedicated to these legal actions will be at the fee of \$200 per hour. This includes, but is not limited to case preparation, review of your records, phone calls, deposition or testimony time, travel time, etc. ***Some of these fees must be paid in advance of the services being rendered.***
- Any and all travel related expenses, including mileage and parking.
- Reimbursement for mailings.
- Fees for providing records/copies per WA state WAC code.
- Any and all fees for the purpose of legal representation.

Failure to pay fees, by any signing or initiating party and/or their representative, in full will constitute an outstanding balance. Any outstanding balance may be referred to a collection service for the purpose of collections.

Insurance and Payment

I am an out of network provider for all insurance companies. Prior to starting therapy with me, I will provide you with a good faith estimate (GFE) which will detail an estimate of the fees for service. This is a federal requirement for out of network medical providers associated with the Good Faith Act of 2022.

After each session, I will provide you with what is called a Super Bill. This is for you to submit to your insurance company yourself for direct reimbursement if you have out of network provider coverage. I do not call insurance companies due to the extremely long wait times and endless phone trees.

You are responsible for any outstanding amounts not covered by insurance. It is your responsibility to know understand your insurance coverage, including whether they cover out of network providers. Some plans do not.

You are financially responsible for any outstanding balance. Any outstanding balance that is not paid within 90 days of billing to you directly, may be referred to a collection service for the purpose of collections.

Most insurance policies have annual deductibles that must be paid before insurance coverage is applied. If you have questions about this please contact your insurance company.

Social Media

In order to comply with ethical standards of the ACA (American Counseling Association) and to protect your privacy, I cannot have *personal* connections with clients on social media, including but not limited to Face Book, Instagram, and Linked-In.

Electronic Communications Via Email, Text and Other Non-Secure Means

See separate policy form

Your Rights

Although we will endeavor to work as a collaborative team, ultimately, this is your therapy. With that in mind, you have the right to have input into this process as well as to refuse treatment. You are not obligated to remain in therapy with me and may terminate at any time. You also have the right to change therapists. Feel free to bring any concerns, complaints, or suggestions about your treatment to me directly and we can work on a solution. If you believe I have acted unprofessionally or unethically, please bring the matter to my attention so clarification and resolution can be made. You have the right to file a complaint about any mental health professional by contacting the Washington State Department of Health at 360-236-4700, Complaint Intake, PO Box 47857, Olympia, WA, 98504-7857 or www.doh.wa.gov/hsga/Complaint. My goal is to serve you humbly, respectfully, and professionally and to provide the highest quality of care possible.

I am required to keep records regarding your therapy. These records are held in strict confidence, excluding the exceptions listed above. You are entitled to a copy of your records

upon request. If I determine that certain portions of your record would cause you undue harm, I will withhold these portions. If needed I am willing to review the file with you and offer explanations of unfamiliar terms.

Agreement and Consent

The information in this document is in accordance with ethical requirements of Washington State for Licensed Mental Health Counselors. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us and your consent to therapy.

I consider it an honor to be part of your journey toward a more fulfilled life.

Sandy Tudor

Please sign to indicate that you have read and understood this document and agree to its terms. Please keep a copy for your reference. *Your signature indicates that you have read and understood the information contain herein.*

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____