

# Karla Obernesser, LMHC

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## My Disclosure Statement

Welcome to my practice. It is an honor and privilege to be working with you. This document will describe for you my qualifications and policies. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

### My Qualifications

I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) certified by the State of Washington (#LH60300433). I completed my Master's of Counseling Degree from the University of Phoenix in 1999. Prior to that, I earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the University of North Texas.

### My Approach

I work collaboratively with my clients. I favor a client-centered therapeutic approach to counseling. Basic methods I use are:

- Listen to your perspective and communicate an understanding of it.
- Identify factors in your life that are helpful and harmful and what you would like to change.
- Share my observations on your strengths and patterns.
- Respectfully challenge thoughts, behaviors and beliefs that are no longer serving you well and help you find better replacements that fit for you.
- Offer useful information from my specialized knowledge about human development and success strategies, based on my studies of psychology, human development, neuroscience and other complimentary fields.
- Use a style that blends elements of being a facilitator, encourager, catalyst, consultant, and educator.

### Your Solution

You have the capacity to find the answers that work best for you. I will work with you to uncover your solution to the issues that you want to solve.

- Create goals – what are your hopes? What do you wish for yourself and your relationships?
- Give me feedback on how you perceive we are doing in our work together and guide me in being as helpful as possible for you.
- Commit to investing time and effort to meet your goals. You can anticipate some positive change and momentum after the first couple of sessions. However, if this issue has been a problem for you for a long period of time, it may take more than a couple of sessions to create lasting change. It is common to face frustration as you address some of life's issues. If you can meet weekly and are willing to do some activities and exercises between our sessions, you will see faster progress.

### Your Rights

**Participation:** Counseling is voluntary. You have a right to choose a counselor that best fits your needs. If you or I feel I am not the counselor to help you at this time, I will provide a list of referrals for you. You have a right to terminate treatment or ask for an explanation of procedures at any time during the course of counseling. I encourage you to discuss any questions or concerns with me that may arise in counseling. The length of treatment will depend on your situation as well as the goals that we establish together. Deciding on when to discontinue our counseling relationship is meant to be a mutual process. Before we stop, we will discuss how you will know if or when to come back or if

a regularly scheduled “check-in” might work best for you. Discussing termination of counseling will benefit you

**Confidentiality:** As a counseling client, you have privileged communication. This means that your relationship with me as my client, all information disclosed in our sessions, and the written records of those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission, except where law requires disclosure.

- **When Disclosure Is Required by Law:** Disclosure is required when there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect and when a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled.
- **When Disclosure May Be Required:** Disclosure may be required in a legal proceeding. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation that you initiate, the defendant may have the right to obtain your psychotherapy records and/or my testimony. If you have not paid your bill for treatment for a long period of time, your name, payment record and last known address may be sent to a collection agency or small claims court.

In couple or relationship therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. I will use my clinical judgment when revealing such information.

If I see you in public or outside of our sessions, I will not approach you so as to protect our confidential relationship.

**Consultation:**

I consult regularly with other professionals regarding my clients in order to provide you with the best possible service. Names or other identifying information are never mentioned; client identity remains completely anonymous and your confidentiality will be fully maintained.

**Release of Information:**

Considering all of the above exclusions, upon your request and with your written consent, I may release limited information to any person/agency you specify, unless I conclude that releasing such information might be harmful to you. If I reach that conclusion, I will explain the reason for denying your request.

**Email, Voicemail, Texting and Social Media:**

Email, Voicemail, Texting, and Social Media might compromise your confidentiality. Please let me know if you would like to avoid or limit this form of communication.

**Phone Calls and Emergencies:**

If you need to contact me in between sessions, you may call my number and leave a message: **425-941-8880**. I will check my messages daily. Emergency phone consultations are normally free. However, if we spend more than 5 minutes in the week on the phone, if you leave more than five minutes worth of phone messages in a week, if I spend more than five minutes reading and responding to emails from you during a given week, or if I spend more than five minutes involved in case management or coordination of care, I will bill you on a prorated basis for that time. If you feel the need for many phone calls and cannot wait for your next appointment, we may need to schedule more sessions to address your needs. If an emergency situation arises and you need to talk to someone right away:

Dial **911** – for local emergency information

Dial **611** – for local community resources

Dial the Crisis Clinic #: 1-866-427-4747

**Fees and Appointments:** My standard fee for a 45-minute session is \$125. An extended session fee for a 70-minute session is \$175. Collecting this fee at the beginning of the session is standard practice. I accept cash, checks and credit cards. For many reasons, I do not work with insurance collections. Some clients choose to submit their invoices and I am happy to provide those to you. Please be aware that filing for insurance can also put your confidentiality at risk. If insurance carriers contact me, they will want a mental health disorder diagnosis.

**Cancellations:** When we make an appointment, I am committing to hold that time for you. A minimum of **24 hours notice** is required for re-scheduling or cancelling your appointment. Your full fee will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Please let me know as soon as you know that you will not be able to keep your scheduled appointment. If you are running late for your appointment, please let me know via phone or email. If you are late for your session, we will still end at our regular time so that I have time to prepare for my next appointments and I can be on time for them.

**Social Media and Technology:**

**Friending:** I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on Facebook. I believe that adding clients as friends can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship.

I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice to allow people to share in practice updates and articles. You are welcome to view my Facebook Page and read or share articles posted there, but I do not accept clients as Fans of this Page. I believe having clients as Facebook Fans creates a greater likelihood of compromised client confidentiality and I feel it is best to be explicit to all who may view my list of Fans to know that they will not find client names on that list. Note that you should be able to subscribe to the page via RSS without becoming a Fan and without creating a visible, public link to my Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

I also, keep an Instagram account for my practice @counselingwithkarla –this is a daily uplifting message that anyone is welcome to enjoy. My Instagram following includes many people who use the internet who are NOT my clients. Please know that your following me on Instagram could raise questions regarding our counseling relationship but that would never be confirmed or denied by me.

**Online Scheduler:** I use an online scheduler (Schedulicity) for clients' convenience. It can be accessed on my website via the "schedule now" button. If you choose to use this, I will have access to the main calendar and have no control over the people who work for Schedulicity. If this concerns you, you may use your first name and last initial or create a code name for yourself (just be sure to let me know what that is).

**Livescribe Pen:** Sometimes, I use a Livescribe Pen to help to transcribe the details of our session to progress notes. This form of technology also records our sessions together. Please let me know if you are in any way uncomfortable with this technology and I can use regular pen and paper.