

Psychotherapy Policies & Contract

Welcome to my practice. This document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Psychological Services

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and client and the particular problems you bring forward. There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is no like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Sine therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown or have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubt persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

Dual Relationships

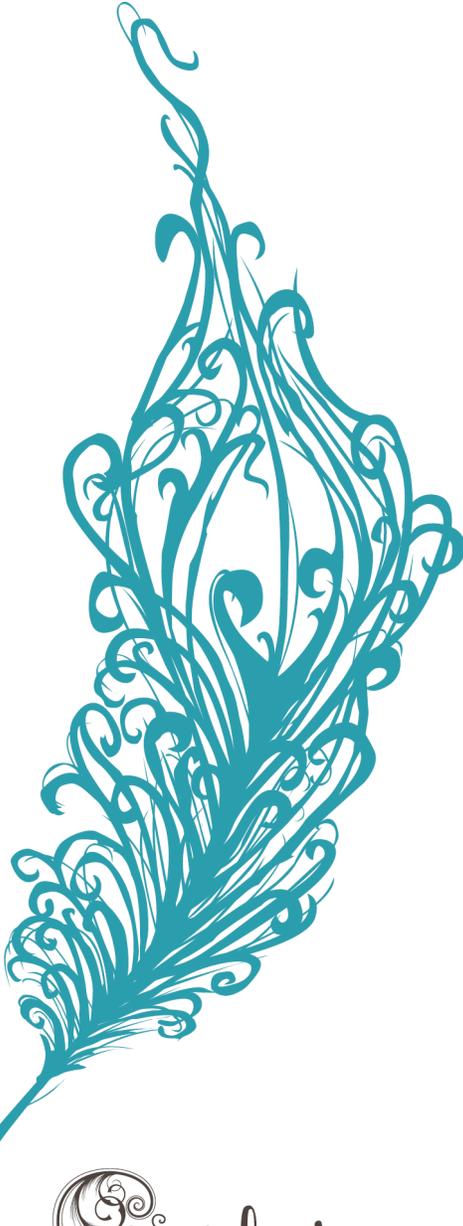
Therapy never involves sexual, business, or any other dual relationships that could impair my objectivity, clinical judgment or therapeutic effectiveness or could be exploitative in nature. It is possible that during the course of your treatment, I may become aware of other preexisting relationships that may affect our work together, and I will do my best to resolve these situations ethically, but this may entail our needing to stop working together, depending upon the type of conflict. Please discuss this with me if you have questions or concerns.

Meetings

I normally conduct an evaluation that will last from 2 to 4 sessions. During this time, we can both decide whether I am the best person to provide the services you need in order to meet your treatment goals. If psychotherapy is begun, I will usually schedule one 50-minute session (one appointment hour of 50 minutes duration) per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be longer or more frequent.

Cancellations and Lateness

Missed and cancelled sessions pose some issues for both of us. The work of psychotherapy is sometimes challenging and when we hit a difficult place together, it can feel easier to want to avoid coming in for treatment. I would prefer we speak about this intentionally rather than you canceling sessions.



www.sairalyn.com
studio@sairalyn.com

225 W 35th Street, 7th fl.
New York, NY 10001

(646) 801-4724

Once an appointment hour is scheduled, you will be expected to pay for it unless you provide 48 hours advance notice of cancellation. If it is possible, I will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment. If we are able to do, before the following weekend, I will allow you to reschedule at no extra fee.

If you are running late for your appointment, please phone, text or email me as soon as you can to let me know you will be late. If I do not hear from you by 20 minutes into your session, I will call to check on you and may assume you do not plan to attend your session.

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.

Contacting Me

I am often not immediately available by telephone. While I am usually in my office between 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., I probably will not answer the phone when I am with a client. For small administrative matters such as checking appointment times or changing them, you are welcome to email me at studio@sairalyn.com. I generally receive and return these emails within 24 hours with the exception of holidays or scheduled vacations and holidays.

If you need to contact me between sessions about a clinical matter, please leave a message for me at (646) 801-4724. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of holidays or vacations. If you are difficult to reach, please inform me of the times when you will be available. If I will be unavailable for an extended time, I will let you know in advance and I will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

Emergency phone consultations of five minutes or less are normally free. However, if we spend more than five minutes in a 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 or coordination of care, I will bill you on a prorated basis for that time.

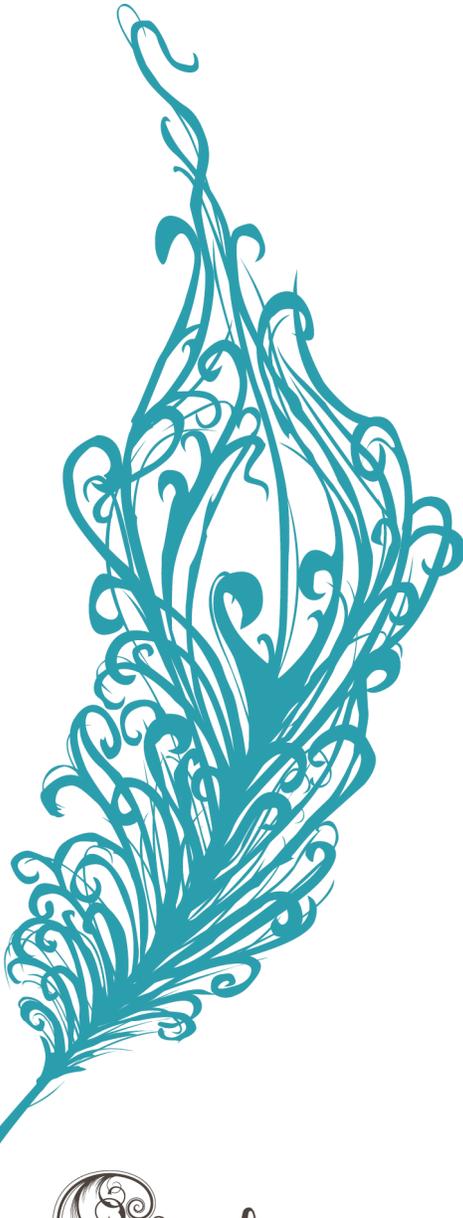
If you feel the need for many phone calls and cannot wait for your next appointment, we may need to schedule more sessions to address your needs. If an emergency situation arises, please indicate it clearly in your message to me. If your situation is an acute emergency and you need to talk to someone right away, contact your family physician or the closest 24-hour emergency psychiatric service:

- Dial 911 OR
- Go to your nearest Emergency Room and ask for the clinician/psychologist/psychiatrist on call

Social Media

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

My primary concern is your privacy. If you share this concern, there are more private ways to follow me (such as using an RSS feed), which would eliminate having a public link to my content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me. Note that I will not follow you back. I do not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. My reasoning is that I believe casual viewing of clients' online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion in regard to whether it's being done as a part of your treatment or to satisfy my personal curiosity. In addition, viewing your online activities without your consent and without our explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on our working relationship. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with me, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together, during the therapy hour.



www.sairalyn.com
studio@sairalyn.com

225 W 35th Street, 7th fl.
New York, NY 10001

(646) 801-4724

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) to contact me other than to notify me of an impending lateness to our session. Please do not use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me. These sites are not secure and I may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with me in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with me this way could compromise your confidentiality. It may also create the possibility that these exchanges become a part of your legal medical record and will need to be documented and archived in your chart.

If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Direct email at studio@sairalyn.com is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. I prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments. Please do not email me content related to your therapy sessions, as email is not completely secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate with me by email, be aware that all emails are retained in the logs of your and my Internet service providers. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet service provider. You should also know that any emails I receive from you and any responses that I send to you become a part of your legal record.

Termination and Follow Up

Deciding when to stop our work together is meant to be a mutual process. Before we stop, we will discuss how you will know if or when to come back or whether a regularly scheduled "check-in" might work best for you. If it is not possible for you to phase out of therapy, I recommend that we have closure on the therapy process with at least two termination sessions. I also ask all clients to indicate on their intake form whether they consent to follow-up emails to assess your satisfaction with my services, and a one year follow-up to see if you have maintained your goals. You may opt out of both of these follow-up contacts.

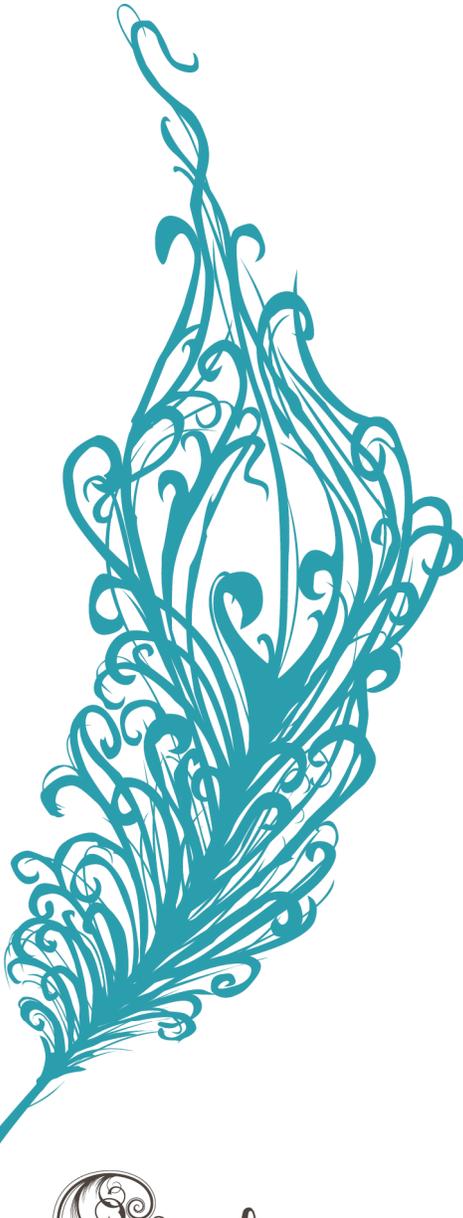
Noncompliance with treatment recommendations may necessitate early termination of services. I will look at your issues with you and exercise my educated judgment about what treatment will be in your best interest. Your responsibility is to make a good faith effort to fulfill the treatment recommendations to which you have agreed. If you have concerns or reservations about my treatment recommendations, I strongly encourage you to express them so that we can resolve any possible differences or misunderstandings.

If during our work together I assess that I am not effective in helping you reach your therapeutic goals, I am obliged to discuss this with you and, if appropriate, terminate treatment and give you referrals that may be of help to you. If you request it and authorize it in writing, I may talk to the psychotherapist of your choice (with your permission only) in order to help with the transition. If at any time you want another professional's opinion or wish to consult with another therapist, I will assist you in finding someone qualified. You have the right to terminate treatment at any time. If you choose to do so, I will offer to provide you with names of other qualified professionals whose services you might prefer.

If you commit violence to, verbally or physically threaten or harass me, the office, or my family, I reserve the right to terminate your treatment unilaterally and immediately. Failure or refusal to pay for services after a reasonable time is another condition for termination of services. Please contact me to make arrangements any time your financial situation changes.

Professional Fees

My hourly rate is \$120. In addition to weekly appointments, I charge this amount for other professional services you may need, though I will break down the hourly cost if I work for periods of less than one hour. Other services include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 5 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professional you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other services you may request of me. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require my participation, you will be expected to pay for my professional time even if I am called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, I charge \$180 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.



www.sairalyn.com
studio@sairalyn.com

225 W 35th Street, 7th fl.
New York, NY 10001

(646) 801-4724

The fee is to be paid at the start of each session unless other arrangements have been made. If you are late, we will end on time and not run over into the next person's session. An annual fee increase will occur every January and I will begin to remind you of this in October and November.

Balances: I do not permit clients to carry a balance of more than one session and if you are unable to pay this balance, we will discuss whether it makes sense to pause your care or develop another strategy so that you can avoid incurring additional debt. Please let me know if any problem arises during the course of therapy regarding your ability to make timely payments.

Fee Reduction: I offer some lower fee slots, based upon income and circumstances, but I prefer to hold these slots for current clients who have proven to be experiencing life transitions resulting in financial hardship. If my fee is a concern, please discuss it with me. If I am unable to accommodate your financial situation, I will provide you with referrals.

Billing and Payments

In order for us to set realistic goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. You will be expected to pay for each session at the beginning of each session, unless we agree otherwise. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested.

If your account has not been paid for more than 60 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information I release regarding a client's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

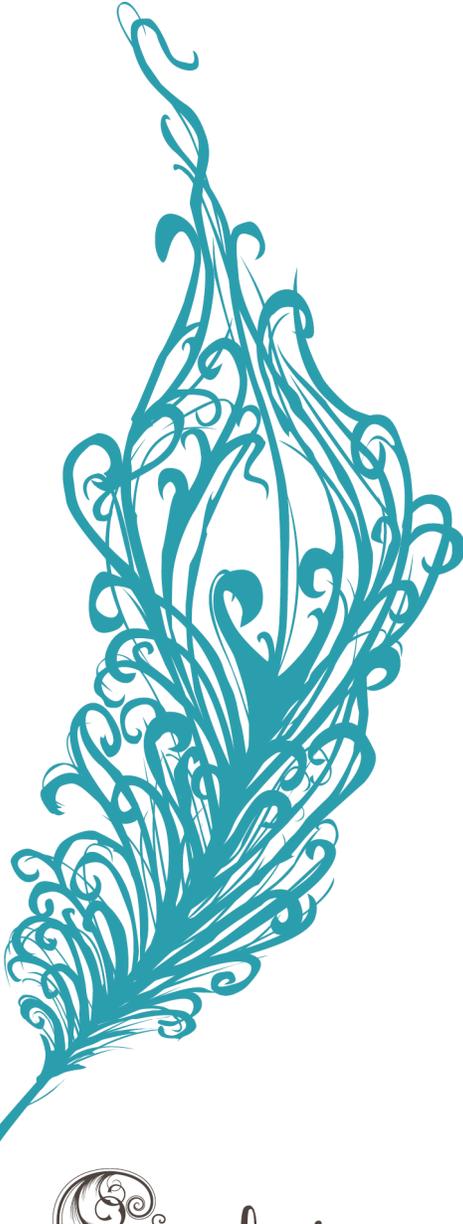
Insurance Reimbursement

I do not currently take insurance. If you have a health insurance policy, it will sometimes provide some coverage for mental health treatment. I can provide you with a monthly billing statement for reimbursement if you wish to submit it to your insurance company. This monthly statement is your receipt for tax or insurance purposes. However, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.

You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about the coverage, call your plan administrator. I will provide you with whatever information I can based on my experience and will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. Managed health care plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work out specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some clients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end.

You should also be aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes I have to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of the entire record (in rare cases). This information will become part of the insurance company files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, I have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. I will provide you with a copy of any report I submit if you request it.



www.sairalyn.com
studio@sairalyn.com

225 W 35th Street, 7th fl.
New York, NY 10001

(646) 801-4724

Professional Records

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or I can prepare a summary for you instead. Because these records contain information that can be misinterpreted by and/or upsetting to someone who is not a mental health professional, it is my general policy to provide them to you only at your request. However, if I believe that to do so would be emotionally damaging, I will be happy to send them to another mental health professional who is working with you. If you wish to see your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. Clients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

Minors

If you are under 18 years of age, please be aware that the law may provide your parents the right to examine your treatment records. It is my policy to request an agreement from parent that they agree to give up access to your records. If they agree, I will provide them only with general information about our work together, unless I feel there is a high risk that you will seriously harm yourself or someone else. In this case, I will notify them of my concern. I will also provide them with a summary of your treatment when it is complete. Before giving them any information, I will discuss the matter with you, if possible, and do my best to handle any objections you may have about what I am prepared to discuss.

Confidentiality

In general, the law protects the privacy of all communication between a client and a psychotherapist, and I can release information about our work to others only with your written permission. But there are a few exceptions.

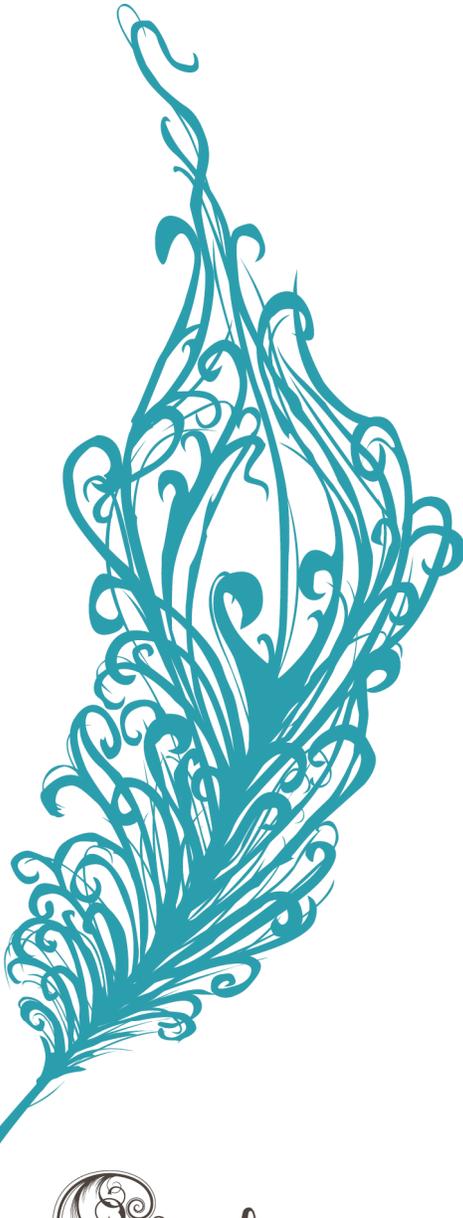
In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he or she determines that the issues demand it.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. For example, if I believe that child, elderly, or disabled person is being abused, I must file a report with the appropriate state agency.

If I believe that a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, I am required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm himself or herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him or her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

These situations have rarely occurred in my practice. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action. I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have at our next meeting. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you if you need specific advice, but formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, and I am not an attorney.



www.sairalyn.com
studio@sairalyn.com

225 W 35th Street, 7th fl.
New York, NY 10001

(646) 801-4724

Acknowledgement

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

I acknowledge the receipt of Sairalyn's Studio Psychotherapy Policies and Contract and I understand and agree to comply with these policies. I understand that these policies will always be available to me on the Sairalyn's Studio website but that I may always request a hard copy if I am unable to access them.

I understand that Sairalyn Ansano, LCAT, is a licensed art therapist (001658) in the state of New York.

I also acknowledge the receipt of the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices for my review. I understand that the HIPAA form will remain available on the Sairalyn's Studio website but that I may always request a hard copy if I am unable to access it

Full Name (PRINT)

Signature

Date



www.sairalyn.com
studio@sairalyn.com

225 W 35th Street, 7th fl.
New York, NY 10001

(646) 801-4724