



MENTAL WELLNESS MINISTRY
Service Agreement

The following information serves to introduce you to the ministry and to outline the agreement between us, to explain your rights and responsibilities as a client of the Mental Wellness Ministry (MWM), and to explain our rights and responsibilities as your provider of psychological therapy services.

Our Services

The Mental Wellness Ministry was established in 2015 at Our Lady of the Fields Roman Catholic Church (OLF) to provide low-cost mental health related services to individuals, couples, and/or families who desire such services to assist them with various issues that may be affecting their mental, emotional, relational, or spiritual health.

The Mental Wellness Ministry enables counselors to provide psychological therapy, counseling, and treatment using sound psychological principles and treatment interventions that are consistent with the moral teachings and vision of the human person as proclaimed through the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church. The MWM is comprised of mental health counselors who utilize a variety of theoretical orientations and interventions and have differing degrees due to their varied professional education and training. Each counselor is a licensed mental health provider in the state of Maryland according to the requirements of their professional licensure board. While we operate out of Our Lady of the Fields Roman Catholic Church, we are practitioners operating independently and are not employees of OLF or the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The Mental Wellness Ministry welcomes clients of all faiths and backgrounds and provides all clients with impartial access to treatment regardless of race, religion, gender, age, ethnicity, national origin, disability, handicap or otherwise.

When issues or needs arise that are beyond the scope of practice for any of the counselors, you will be provided with appropriate referrals to other qualified professionals who will be better able to meet your needs. Please see attached list for the names of the counselors serving in the MWM currently.

What to Expect

Other than the initial assessment and any specially arranged sessions, regular counseling sessions will be scheduled in advance, for a specific date and time, and typically will be 45 minutes in length. Having a full session is dependent on you arriving on time for the session and participating until the end of the scheduled time.

A Mental Wellness Ministry counselor will conduct a comprehensive mental health assessment at the start of your counseling and, based on that assessment, will work with you to develop an individualized treatment plan focused on your specific needs, goals, financial situation, and availability. The mental health assessment and/or counseling sessions may include a review of your family and medical history, a discussion about current and past events in your life, and discussion about your current concerns, state of mind, goals, relationships, and/or health. In the cases of couples or family therapy, the couple or family unit will be the focus of treatment, not any one particular individual within the couple or family.

Your counselor will be clear about your treatment needs and will encourage you to take an active and informed role in developing your treatment plan. To accomplish your counseling goals, the Mental Wellness Ministry counselors agree to:

- Treat you with respect and dignity and value you as a whole person.
- Communicate with you in a clear and understandable manner.
- Keep your information and conversations private and confidential unless required by law to disclose them.
- Focus on you as an individual (or the couple or family as a unit) and implement a treatment plan that integrates sound psychological principles with Catholic moral and spiritual principles.
- Provide you with all information necessary to understand and proceed with the agreed upon treatment plan.
- Where applicable, assist you to reconcile Catholic religious beliefs with your emotions, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors.
- Encourage you to focus and engage in moral practices as defined by the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.
- Notify you promptly if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your information.

As a person (or couple or family) who chooses a counselor in the Mental Wellness Ministry to serve and treat you, you agree to:

- Keep your appointments and arrive on time for your sessions.
- Notify your counselor directly if you are running late to a session. A shorter session due to tardiness will still require full payment for the session as outlined in your financial agreement with your counselor.
- Notify your counselor at least 24 hours in advance, if you are unable to keep a session. Failure to notify your counselor in advance will require the payment of any agreed upon fee for the missed session unless otherwise determined by your counselor.
- Pay your fee at the time of each session and discuss difficulty paying the fees with your counselor if you are having trouble making the agreed upon payment.
- Attend your sessions free from the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Discuss with your counselor your decision to discontinue treatment if you decide to do so before treatment goals have been reached.
- Provide written consent to share your treatment information with any other family, friends, or others involved in your care.

Fees and Payment

Session fees are determined in accordance with Mental Wellness Ministry's Fee Schedule, which is \$75.00 for the initial assessment session and \$50.00 per session for subsequent sessions. However, each counselor may make available a sliding scale at their discretion when considering all of a client's circumstances. The minimum fee with any counselor will be \$ 10.00 per session.

Fees for other consulting services (e.g., reviewing records, making court appearances, preparing court reports, completing forms, reviewing and/or preparing third-party reports, or phone contact other than for scheduling appointment purposes, etc.) will be based on the usual fee amount (\$50 per 45 min session) even if you are receiving a sliding scale for your sessions. These extra consulting fees may be assessed and *pro-rated* on a case-by-case basis.

Payment for all sessions and services is due at the time of the session or service. Payment may be in cash or check. Checks should be made out to the individual counselor. Clients will be assessed a \$20 administrative fee, in addition to the regular session or service fee for each returned or dishonored check. Some counselors

have the ability to accept credit cards. An additional minimal processing fee may be added to the session fee for credit card payments.

In the event a client fails to pay for two sessions or services, or has an unpaid balance for more than 30 days, the Mental Wellness Ministry counselor will discuss the delinquency and postpone services until the balance is paid or a new payment schedule agreed upon.

The Mental Wellness Ministry does not accept insurance of any kind, so all services are provided and charged directly to the client. In the event a client desires to seek reimbursement of such service fees from his or her insurance company, it is the client's responsibility to submit such claim to his or her insurance company for reimbursement. In such cases where you choose to file for reimbursement, the insurance company may ask for a mental health diagnosis and reason for treatment to support your claim. Any diagnosis given to you for the insurance company will become part of your permanent insurance records.

Your Treatment Records

The Mental Wellness Ministry counselors keep confidential records about your therapy and/or counseling sessions and your personalized treatment plan. Client records typically are used by your counselor to document your sessions and therapeutic treatment. To request a copy of your record you may contact your individual counselor. Information about your treatment, progress and participation in treatment and any other information requested by a third-party will only be released with your written consent unless otherwise required by law.

In accordance with local, state, and federal laws, every counselor in the Mental Wellness Ministry is a mandated reporter of abuse and neglect. This includes the requirement to report abuse which is disclosed by adult who was abused as a child. We are also required to report to the necessary authorities if you are at risk of harm to yourself or pose a serious danger of risk of harm or violence to others or their property. In those cases, written consent to release information regarding your condition will not be required.

All records are stored and maintained in accordance with applicable law. For Maryland adult clients, this typically means that your counselor, or their designee, will maintain your client records for a minimum of 5 years after the record is made. For Maryland clients who are minors, this typically means that the client's record will be maintained for 3 years after the client reaches the age of majority or for 5 years, whichever is later.

In the event the Mental Wellness Ministry counselor desires to destroy a client record after the required period of storage, such record will be destroyed in a manner that protects client confidentiality and is in accordance with applicable law.

Inclement Weather and Other Closings

In the event of inclement weather, please contact your counselor directly to determine the status of your appointment. The Mental Wellness Ministry's office will be closed when Anne Arundel County Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather. At this time, the Mental Wellness Ministry does not have the capacity to provide tele-mental health services so the session would be cancelled with no charge for the cancelled session.

Should the office be closed for any other reason out of the counselor's control, your counselor will notify you of the inability to have your session due to the closure and no fee will be charged.

Emergency and Urgent Situations

In the event of a life-threatening emergency, clients should call 911 or go directly to the nearest emergency room. Clients should **not** call their counselor or come to the Mental Wellness Ministry office at Our Lady of the Fields Church instead of calling 911 or seeking emergency medical attention.

In the event of urgent, but non-life-threatening matters, clients should try to contact their counselor at the counselor's number. In the event the counselor is not able to take the call, the client should leave a detailed message, including a callback telephone number. The counselor will return the call as soon as possible.

Discharge Planning

Discharge from receiving counseling services through the MWM may occur at any time and in different ways. Discharge can occur based upon meeting treatment goals and at the appropriate time you and your counselor will discuss when to end treatment. Discharge may also occur when a client decides to withdraw from counseling. In addition, counseling may end due to a failure to pay for services and inability or avoidance in discussing alternative payment options with your counselor. If counseling services are ended for any reason, I understand that I have 45 days to resume treatment and maintain an active chart. After 45 days, a new initial assessment session may be required as deemed by your counselor.

Your Rights as a Client

If at any time you believe that you have been treated unfairly in any way, if you have any questions related to any aspect of the Mental Wellness Ministry, or you believe that the Mental Wellness Ministry has not lived up to the terms of this agreement, please discuss your concerns first with your counselor. If you are still not satisfied with the resolution, you may discuss your concerns with your counselor's direct supervisor, should your counselor have a clinical supervisor within the ministry.

Should you have serious concerns and wish to file a professional complaint against your counselor, you may contact her or his respective state supervisory boards and follow their procedures for filing an official complaint.

Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists

<https://health.maryland.gov/psych/Pages/home.aspx>

Maryland Board of Professional Counselors

<https://health.maryland.gov/bopc/Pages/complaintold.aspx>

Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners

<https://health.maryland.gov/bswe/Pages/Complaint.aspx>