



PEACE OF MIND CENTER, LLC
Matthew R. Mills, M.D. • Psychiatrist

PHYSICIAN-PATIENT AGREEMENT

With warm sincerity, I welcome you to my practice!

This eight page document contains important information about my professional services and business policies. **Please read each page carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting.**

The following information and policies are meant to be protective of us both. **When you sign this document, it will represent a formal written agreement between us.**

Please note that my private practice is a part-time practice. For this reason, I generally have fixed office hours. If the need were to arise, however, I may be able to schedule additional time outside of my regular office hours. Please note that I will exhaust whatever means available to arrange a time for us to meet that is mutually agreeable.

I look forward to working with you!

Matthew R. Mills, M.D.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies, depending on the personalities of the therapist and the patient, and the particular problems brought forward during therapy sessions.

There are many different methods I, as your therapist, may use to deal with the problems you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for your therapy to be most successful, you will need to work at home and during your sessions on the issues we talk about together.

Psychotherapy sessions are usually scheduled one to two times a week (45-minute sessions). However, the frequency of our meetings will depend on your level of distress, time, and ability to pay for services.

Psychotherapy: Its Benefits & Risks

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since 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 to have sustained benefits for those who go through the process.

Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and a significant reduction in feelings of distress. Still, there are no guarantees regarding what you will experience.

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Our First Few Sessions

Our first few therapy sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the intake and evaluation process, I will be able to offer you my first impressions of what our work will include, along with a treatment plan if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information and form your own opinion regarding whether you feel comfortable working with me.

Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money and energy, so please be very careful about the therapist you select. The rapport we develop between us will mean everything. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise.

Medication Management

Often, patients who are taking psychiatric medications are referred to my practice, as well as those who are interested in exploring medication options as part of their treatment. As a graduate of the University of Illinois Medical Center, I have been well-trained in evidence-based psychopharmacology. For many psychiatric disorders (especially mood and anxiety disorders), current research shows that the most effective treatment is a combination of psychotherapy and the use of medication. Psychotherapy often increases the effectiveness of medication. Conversely, the use of medication can reduce distressing symptoms to a degree where psychotherapy can be most useful.

Whenever medications are used, the decision will be made collaboratively. I may make recommendations regarding the use of medication. However, if you do not wish to take psychiatric medications, you retain that right without any undue pressure or coercion.

Medication Management: Its Benefits & Risks

Your mind and body are precious. Psychiatric medications have both benefits and risks. Whenever a new medication is started or suggested, I will provide you with information regarding the risks and benefits of the medication. **It is highly suggested that you also review credible literature on your own to read about your medication and come prepared to ask questions in session.**

Most medications, including mood stabilizers such as Depakote and Lithium, require baseline laboratory testing and periodic lab monitoring. In order for me to prescribe your medications professionally and safely, you will be asked to comply with all requests for laboratory testing. It is in both of our best interests for you to remain compliant with current medication prescribing and monitoring guidelines.

Your medication-management visits can be as frequent as weekly (in the initial weeks of medication treatment) or as infrequently as one visit every three to six months.

When you are relatively stable and comfortable on your medication, the most common interval for medication visits is once per month. **Without exception, the longest interval that will be permitted between medication management visits is six months. If you allow more than 6 months to elapse in between visits, your patient file can be automatically closed.**

Our Meetings

After speaking briefly over the phone to arrange a time to meet, you will be scheduled for an initial diagnostic evaluation. At the initial evaluation, we will discuss the issues you are facing and determine a treatment plan.

My therapy and medication-management visits will begin and end on time. If you are late for a session, your visit will end at the normally scheduled time, regardless of the late start. For this reason, **I encourage you to plan on arriving at least 10 minutes early.** We have a comfortable waiting room, and there is a lovely art frame shop and an art gallery in the building. An early arrival will also give you a chance to collect your thoughts and prepare for our meeting.

Payment & Cancellation Policies

Once an appointment is scheduled, patients will be expected to pay for the session (in full) at the start of each visit, unless 48 hours' advance notice of cancellation is provided.

If you do not provide proper notice of cancellation (i.e., not calling to cancel or calling less than 48 hours from your appointment's start time), **you will be charged the full session fee (unless you opt to conduct your session over the phone, as described below)**. The purpose of this fee is to strongly reinforce the need to be mindful of your appointments, including your start time. This will maximize your benefits from treatment, while firmly protecting my time and ensuring that I will be available to other patients who need my services.

Please Note: If you do not follow these cancellation and rescheduling guidelines, the session fee you will be charged is not eligible for submission to your insurance company for reimbursement. In other words, you will need to pay this fee on your own.

I will waive the cancellation fee only in instances of extreme emergency (for example, a medical or psychiatric hospitalization). Unacceptable reasons for not following the cancellation policy include forgetting your appointment date and/or start time, neglecting to make arrangements for transportation, for time off work, or for child care. With regard to mild illness (the common cold, for instance), if you are well enough to go to work (in other words, not bedridden), you are well enough to attend your scheduled therapy sessions.

As a courtesy, if you wish to cancel because you are not able to come to your regular appointment (and/or you give late notice of cancellation), I will offer you the opportunity to conduct your full session over the phone. Please keep in mind that this is not a preferred method of doing psychotherapy and medication management. Phone sessions will be billed at an additional premium of 30%.

Professional Fees: Medication Management

My professional fees represent fair-market value for psychiatric services in the Chicago area. The rate for my medication management visits (20-25 minutes) is \$190 per visit.

For patients seeking my services on an 'out of network' basis, I will provide a billing receipt that you can submit to your insurance company for reimbursement.

Professional Fees: Psychotherapy

Again, my professional fees represent fair-market value for psychiatric services in the Chicago area. The rate for psychotherapy visits (45 minutes, with or without medication) is \$240 per session. **This rate applies only to patients who are being seen at least twice monthly on average.** If you request a less frequent interval (ex: once monthly), my fee for the 45 minute psychotherapy appointment is \$285.

The rate for an initial diagnostic interview (45 minutes up to one hour) is \$385. All patients, regardless of their established psychiatric history, need to be scheduled for an initial diagnostic interview. For patients seeking my services on an 'out of network' basis, I will provide a billing receipt that you can submit to your insurance company for reimbursement.

Professional Fees: Other Services

Other services for which I charge include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and time spent performing any other service you may request of me.

My fee for the above services is \$385 per hour. I will adjust the hourly fee if I work for periods of less than one hour. Please note that in most instances, fees for the "other services" listed above will not be reimbursed by your insurance company. You will be responsible for payment of these services on your own.

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. I charge \$485 per hour for my preparation and attendance at any legal proceedings.

Billing & Payments

Patients will be expected to pay for each session (in full) at the start of each visit unless 48 hours' advance notice of cancellation is provided. I accept personal checks (preferred) and cash, as well as Visa, Mastercard and Discover.

Please make personal checks payable to Peace of Mind Center, LLC. If you prefer paying by credit card, please bring your card with you to your initial psychiatric diagnostic interview. Your card number will be entered into a highly secure SSL (Secure Socket Layer), certified on-line terminal. This is the highest level of security, which the major credit card companies require. **Rest assured that I will exhaust all personal and professional means available to ensure that your financial information is kept safe and confidential.**

If your account has not been paid for more than 30 days and arrangements for payment have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means to secure 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 treatment information I release is the patient's name, the nature of services provided, and the amount past due.

Insurance Reimbursement

Matthew R. Mills, M.D., is NOT affiliated with any health insurance networks. I am considered an "out-of-network provider" and do not file insurance claims. You will need to submit the claim on your own to your insurance company. I will provide you with a billing receipt containing all the information you will need to submit your claim.

For patients seeking my services on an out of network basis, 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 your coverage, please contact your insurance plan administrator.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have increasingly become more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine how much mental health coverage is available. Managed health care plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they reimburse 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 for you to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions.

While a lot can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need additional help after their insurance benefits end.

You should also be fully aware that most insurance companies require you to authorize me to provide them with a clinical diagnosis. In some instances, I need to provide additional clinical information; for example, treatment plans, treatment summaries or, in rare cases, copies of an entire record. This information then becomes part of the insurance company's files and will likely be stored electronically. Though all insurance companies state that they keep such information confidential, please understand that I have no control over what they do with this information once it is in their hands. In some cases, they might share the information with a national medical information databank.

When we have all the necessary information about your insurance coverage, we will discuss what we can expect to accomplish with the benefits available to you, as well as what will happen if these benefits run out before you feel ready to end our sessions.

It is critical to remember that you have the right to pay for my services yourself to avoid the problems described above.

Contacting Me

Rest assured that I will not answer my telephone or return pages when I am in session with you. **You will have paid for my time and will therefore receive 100% of my attention during your session.** Although I want to be as available as possible to my patients, I am often not immediately available by phone.

(773) 938-1595 is for routine (non-urgent) issues such as medication-refill requests or appointment inquiries. I will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays.

(773) 407-4521 is my personal cell phone number and is an emergency line reserved for extremely urgent patient issues. Messages left on this line should require my immediate attention. **If you have a life-threatening medical or psychiatric crisis, please do NOT leave a message on my emergency line,** as critical time might be spent waiting for me to contact you. **Instead, call 911 immediately or go to the nearest emergency room** to be evaluated. Once you are evaluated, please ask your treating physician to call me on my emergency line.

As long as your questions or concerns can be adequately addressed within a 10-minute period, you will not be charged any fees. I will advise you when 10 minutes have elapsed and ask that that we either wrap up our conversation, agree to continue at my hourly rate, or schedule either a future phone conversation or an in-office

Please note that the fee for these unscheduled phone sessions will not be reimbursed by your insurance company. You will be responsible for payment of these services on your own.

If, due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, you are unable to come to my office and anticipate needing to speak to me at length over the phone, I ask that you contact me to schedule a phone session (with a time length mutually agreed upon) to be billed at the hourly rate.

The purpose of this charge is to reinforce the concept that phone conversation should never take the place of in office psychotherapy and medication management. Although most patients use good judgment when deciding on appropriate use of phone contact with their therapist, some call several times per week with distressing issues and/or attempt to avoid in-office fees for psychotherapy and/or medication management. If this problematic pattern becomes apparent, you will be asked to schedule a phone session (with a time length mutually agreed upon) or an in-office meeting as soon as possible.

E-mail should be used only to cancel or reschedule your appointments or for medication refill requests. Please remember this policy regarding E-mail at all times. Questions about your medications, and other personal concerns should be handled in a face-to-face meeting (preferred) or on the phone (if absolutely necessary).

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 treatment summary for you. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted by and/or upsetting to untrained readers.

If you wish to see your records, I recommend that you review them in my presence so that we can discuss the contents. **As mentioned in the *Professional Fees* section, you will be charged an appropriate fee for my professional time spent responding to treatment-record requests.**

For Minors Under 18

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 your parents that they wave their right to access your records. If they agree, I will provide your parents only general information about our work together unless I feel there is a serious risk that you will harm yourself or someone else. In this case, I will notify your parents of my concern. I will also provide them with a summary of your treatment when it is complete. Before giving your parents any information, I will discuss the matter with you whenever possible. I will do my best to handle any objections you may have about what I am prepared to discuss with your parents.

Confidentiality

In general, the law protects the privacy of all communications between a patient and a therapist, and I can release information about our work to others only with your written consent. However, 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 this issue demands it.

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

These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the patient. If the patient threatens to harm himself or herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for the patient or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a patient. During the consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my patient. The consultant is legally bound to keep this information confidential.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss your questions or concerns at our next meeting. I will be happy to discuss these issues with you. However, since laws governing confidentiality are quite complex, you may wish to seek legal advice from an attorney.

Your signature below indicates that you have read all of the information in this *Physician- Patient Agreement* (including the cancellation policy and fee schedule, as well as billing and payment arrangements) and you agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship. Please note that my professional fees may be subject to change, the fees listed in this contract are current as of August 17th, 2015.

Patient Signature

Date

Matthew R. Mills, M.D.

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature (if patient is under 18 years of age)

Date

I very much look forward to working with you and embarking on our mutual journey of healing, hope, and understanding.

Matthew R. Mills, M.D.