



Williams Christian Counseling
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Joseph A. Williams, LCSW, BCPCC
Counseling for all issues and ages since 1998.
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Counseling Agreement

Please review this document carefully. If you agree with and understand all the issues in this document please sign your name on the signature page. If you have any questions, please ask your counselor. Federal and State regulations require disclosures of this nature and length for licensed counselors. If you disagree with a term or condition, please note it in the document with your initials. In addition, you will receive a copy of this entire document and you can review this document on the Williams Christian Counseling website. www.williamscc.org/agree.pdf

Williams Christian Counseling

Williams Christian Counseling is a private Christian counseling service founded by Joseph A. Williams on October 16, 1998. Mission Statement: "Williams Christian Counseling exists to meet the outpatient mental health needs of those who value Christianity. Counseling services will be provided with the highest levels of quality and confidentiality." We use a Christ-centered counseling approach utilizing the most effective therapeutic approaches such as Biblical application in life, Solution Focused Brief Therapy, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. It is hoped that counseling will encourage your Spiritual growth in Christ. Your counselor will remember you in prayer at least once daily while you are seeing him. You will not be preached to in counseling. The focus of treatment will be on determining goals for successful completion of counseling and discussing strategies to help you achieve and maintain those goals.

Not Connected with an Agency or Church

Williams Christian Counseling is an independent service not connected or affiliated with an agency or church. Sometimes agencies or churches will graciously provide Williams Christian Counseling office space.

Joseph A. Williams' Credentials as a Christian

Joseph A. Williams has been a professional counselor since September of 1997. In College, Mr. Williams focused on learning how to be an effective Christian Counselor. Mr. Williams is a Board Certified Professional Christian Counselor (B.C.P.C.C.). Certified by the Board of Christian Professional and Pastoral Counselors. He graduated in May of 1997 from Harding University, with two bachelor degrees in psychology and human resource management with a minor in computer applications. Harding University is a Christian university located in Arkansas. Most important for eternity, Mr. Williams has been a Born Again Christian since January 13, 1980. He is involved in a local church community. He has the Spiritual disciplines of daily Bible study, prayer, and reliance on God to maintain mental resiliency. These credentials, life experience, and a dependence on the Holy Spirit enable him to be an effective counselor.

Joseph A. Williams' Credentials as a State of KY licensed counselor

Mr. Williams is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (L.C.S.W.), licensed by the Kentucky board of social work. In Kentucky, this license is recognized as a Qualified Mental Health Professional (Q.M.H.P). Mr. Williams graduated with his Master of Social Work degree from Southern Illinois University in May of 1999. His concentration was Mental Health with a self-directed focus in Christian Counseling. Mr. Williams completes a minimum of 10 hours of continuing education every year. Mr. Williams was raised in Mayfield, Kentucky, so he is very familiar with small-town culture.

Agreement to Treatment and Outcomes

I hereby give permission for any counseling, testing, or diagnostic evaluation seen as helpful by Mr. Williams. I understand that counseling may sometimes lead to unanticipated emotional stress as well as emotional improvement and that Mr. Williams does not guarantee any particular results or outcomes from the counseling process. I understand

further that I am free to discontinue counseling at any time.

Treatment Approach

Mr. Williams uses a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy(CBT) approach with clients. The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy approach is an evidence-based practice. Evidence-based means that multiple research studies have concluded that it is an effective approach to help clients. <https://www.abct.org/get-help/what-is-evidence-based-practice/> According to the American Psychological Association (APA - <https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/patients-and-families/cognitive-behavioral>)Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a form of psychological treatment that has been demonstrated to be effective for a range of problems including depression, anxiety disorders, alcohol and drug use problems, marital problems, eating disorders, and severe mental illness. Numerous research studies suggest that CBT leads to significant improvement in functioning and quality of life. In many studies, CBT has been demonstrated to be as effective as, or more effective than, other forms of psychological therapy or psychiatric medications."

Interventions Used

These are listed from the most common to least commonly used.

Cognitive restructuring or reframing

This involves taking a hard look at negative thought patterns. Perhaps you tend to over-generalize, assume the worst will happen, or place far too much importance on minor details. Thinking this way can affect what you do and it can even become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Your therapist will ask about your thought process in certain situations so you can identify negative patterns. Once you're aware of them, you can learn how to reframe those thoughts so they're more positive and productive. For example: "I blew the report because I'm totally useless" can become "That report wasn't my best work, but I'm a valuable employee and I contribute in many ways." Proverbs 23:7, "For as you think within yourself, so you become."

Psychoeducation

According to the SA Journal of Psychiatry (<https://sajp.org.za/index.php/sajp/article/view/401/399>), "Psychoeducation was effective in reducing the severity of symptoms of depression, hopelessness, suicidality, anxiety, and risk of substance abuse at 6 months." As a Christian Counselor, Mr. Williams utilizes the Spiritual disciplines of Bible study, other self-help books, and articles with clients as psychoeducational resources. Mental resiliency and spiritual coping are developed through the application of knowledge learned and prayer. When the client consents to it, Bible application is incorporated as appropriate. Mr. Williams is respectful that some clients have had negative experiences with religion and if that is the case, Biblical application is not incorporated into their interventions. In a research journal article titled, Spirituality and mental health, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2755140/> "Studies show that religious beliefs and practices are supportive to cope with stresses in life and are beneficial to mental health." Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." II Corinthians 10:5, "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, I Thessalonians 5:21, "but test everything; hold fast to what is good.

Relaxation and stress reduction techniques

In CBT, you may be taught some progressive relaxation techniques, such as:

- deep breathing exercises
- muscle relaxation
- imagery

You'll learn practical skills to help lower stress and increase your sense of control such as exercise. This can help deal with phobias, social anxieties, and other stressors.

Guided discovery

In guided discovery, the therapist will acquaint themselves with your viewpoint. Then they'll ask questions designed to challenge your beliefs and broaden your thinking. You might be asked to give evidence that supports your assumptions, as well as evidence that does not. In the process, you'll learn to see things from other perspectives, especially ones that you may not have considered before. This can help you choose a more helpful path.

Journaling and thought records

Writing is a time-honored way of getting in touch with your thoughts. Your therapist may ask you to list negative thoughts that occurred to you between sessions, as well as positive thoughts you can choose instead. Another writing exercise is to keep track of the new thoughts and new behaviors you put into practice since the last session. Putting it in writing can help you see how far you've come.

Activity scheduling and behavior activation

If there's an activity you tend to put off or avoid due to fear or anxiety, getting it on your calendar can help. Once the burden of decision is gone, you may be more likely to follow through. Activity schedules can help establish good habits and provide ample opportunity to put what you've learned into practice.

Behavioral experiments

Behavioral experiments are typically used for anxiety disorders that involve catastrophic thinking. Before embarking on a task that normally makes you anxious, you'll be asked to predict what will happen. Later, you'll talk about whether the prediction came true. Over time, you may start to see that the predicted catastrophe is not very likely to happen. You'll likely start with lower-anxiety tasks and build up from there.

Roleplaying

Roleplaying can help you work through different behaviors in potentially difficult situations. Playing out possible scenarios can lessen fear and can be used for:

- improving problem-solving skills
- gaining familiarity and confidence in certain situations
- practicing social skills
- assertiveness training
- improving communication skills

Successive approximation

This involves taking tasks that seem overwhelming and breaking them into smaller, more achievable steps. Each successive step builds upon the previous steps so you gain confidence as you go, bit by bit.

Risks and Benefits of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has potential risks and benefits and Mr. Williams should discuss these with you as part of the informed consent process. It is important to understand the risks and benefits (as well as your rights and responsibilities as a client in counseling) before embarking on treatment because you will be asked to work in partnership with Mr. Williams to determine how to best approach your treatment.

Risks

The process of therapy may cause you to experience uncomfortable or painful feelings, such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, or frustration. Counseling may bring up painful memories. It might disrupt relationships. For example, if you want to work on improving your boundaries, this is likely to upset people who are used to ignoring your boundaries. Therapy can involve you sharing information that causes you to feel vulnerable. For example, it might be scary to share critical thoughts you have about yourself; in the past, there may have been someone in your life who used that self-disclosure against you instead of holding that for you safely. Another example is that you might hate to cry in front of other people and you may hate that you find yourself crying in therapy. Please know that if this describes you, you are

honoring me by sharing those deep feelings and I will honor you for taking the risk.

Many times, things get worse before they improve. Because therapy often means focusing on and talking about unpleasant or painful issues, in the near-term therapy can cause an increase in symptoms. Focusing on the painful issue or finding that your problem seems to be worsening at the time can be upsetting to you as a client. Or if you see for the first time that you played a role in the problem, this could be upsetting. These feelings should be only temporary and we will assess where you are at each week so that we can see clearly how therapy is going.

For therapy to be successful, will require change of some kind. It might be a change in how some of your thinking is (such as from "black and white" thinking to being able to see shades of gray in between) or in some of your behaviors (in anxiety, you might eventually be asked to do the very thing that scares you). Change is uncomfortable and all change involves loss, even if it is good change. For example, if you lose 20 pounds, you are likely excited about your new body shape. As a result of the changes that helped you achieve that weight loss, you now need to buy new clothes. You also had to give up eating certain things and had to exercise daily (and you hate exercise). In this case, you lost eating some foods and lost being comfortable on the couch after work because you took up jogging instead. So, even good change can involve loss.

CBT is not free and there is no guarantee that it will work or how quickly it will work. Although the American Psychological Association (<https://www.apa.org/topics/psychotherapy/understanding>) states, "Reviews of studies show that about 75% of people who enter psychotherapy show some benefit. Other reviews have found that the average person who engages in psychotherapy is better off by the end of treatment than 80% of those who don't receive treatment at all." By assessing where you are at each session, we will minimize this risk. Please know that a lack of success with one therapist does not mean you will not be successful with a different therapist. The relationship between counselor and client is a key component of the outcome. Some therapist/client "fits" are better than others. You may get very different results with two different therapists. Mr. Williams will not accept a client he does not believe he can help. If we do find that you are not making the progress we want, Mr. Williams will help you to find another therapist who may end up being a better fit for you.

Benefits

As previously mentioned by the American Psychological Association (<https://www.apa.org/topics/psychotherapy/understanding>), "Reviews of studies show that about 75% of people who enter psychotherapy show some benefit. Other reviews have found that the average person who engages in psychotherapy is better off by the end of treatment than 80% of those who don't receive treatment at all." Those are pretty strong odds in your favor. Mr. Williams will maximize this for clients by assessing where you are at each session so that we can act quickly to minimize time spent on therapeutic efforts that aren't helping and to focus on those that are helping.

Research has found that simply scheduling the first appointment often leads to an improvement in your issue. Why is this? It is likely due to relief or hope. If you have been debating for some time whether or not to pick up the phone and make the appointment, it can be a relief to finally have decided to do it and to have the appointment. It can be a relief and provide hope to know that in so many days you will meet the therapist and begin addressing your issue.

Another benefit of therapy is having someone who is on your side. Even if Mr. Williams gently challenges you about a particular thing, he is doing it because he wants you to have success in therapy and make the changes you are seeking. Traditionally, therapy has often focused on deficits and pathology but Mr. Williams likes to focus on clients' strengths and ability to make changes. Many times, Mr. Williams can see strengths that his clients don't see in themselves. One possible benefit of therapy, then, is discovering new strengths and positive aspects of yourself that you had but were unaware of and perhaps in developing those even further.

Possible benefits often depend on the issue you are working with but may include:

- improved relationships
- improved communication skills
- improved coping skills (stress relief)
- clearer personal goals
- ability to set boundaries
- more confidence
- coming to terms with past experiences
- decreased levels of depression and anxiety
- a caring, interested listener focused on helping you
- increased self-acceptance
- increased self-control

Treatment Planning

A treatment plan is a document that identifies problems you want to work on in therapy, what your goals for these problems are, and steps you can take to work towards accomplishing those goals. Treatment plans are important because they act as a map for the therapeutic process and provide you and your therapist with a way of measuring whether therapy is working. You must be involved in the creation of your treatment plan so that it will be unique to you and can be successful. Mr. Williams will collaborate with you during your meetings to identify problems, set goals, and suggest tasks. Mr. Williams will make suggestions and you are expected to approve, disapprove, add your own, or change to those suggestions.

Treatment planning begins at the first session when the client completes the intake form. On the intake form, the client writes out their identified problem(s) and initial goals for counseling. During the first session, Mr. Williams discusses those problems and goals with the client. Then a brainstorming process happens to establish possible tasks to help the client reach their goals based on their identified problems. During the brainstorming process, Mr. Williams types up the agreed-upon tasks and prints a copy for the client to take with them. During the following sessions, Mr. Williams asks the client what is working and not working with their tasks. Mr. Williams will then tweak, add, or remove treatment suggestions with the client's full cooperation. After revisions are agreed upon, the client is presented with an updated copy of their treatment plan to take with them.

Here are some tips to help you with the treatment planning process.

Identifying Problems

When collaborating with Mr. Williams to create your treatment plan, you first need to identify the problems you want to work on in therapy. You can gain insight into what these problems are by asking yourself "Why am I seeking therapy in the first place?" You can also talk to members of your support system and ask them what they observe as being problematic in your life.

Setting Goals

After you've identified the problems you want to work on with your therapist, you need to formulate goals for these problems. One way of identifying your goals is to ask yourself "What will my life look like when this problem is no longer an issue for me?" Your goals should be measurable. One way to make your goals measurable is to quantify them and add a deadline you want to have them achieved by.

Choosing Tasks

Lastly, you need to identify objectives. Objectives are tasks you can work on that will help you reach your overall goal. You want to choose tasks that relate directly to your identified problems and bring you closer to reaching your goals. For example, if your original problem is that you've been having a rapid heartbeat, racing thoughts, and difficulty breathing due to anxiety, your overall goal might be to experience a reduction in symptoms of anxiety. Your objectives may include practicing deep breathing techniques for 5 minutes a day, identifying at least 5 triggers for anxiety, and

identifying at least 5 coping skills for each anxious trigger, because these tasks will help reduce your anxiety.

If the treatment planning process feels overwhelming, don't worry. You are not expected to come up with your problems, goals, and objectives all by yourself because the treatment planning process is a collaboration between you and Mr. Williams.

Understanding that Mr. Williams does not provide an Emergency Service

I am aware that Mr. Williams' counseling service is not an emergency 24-hour service. In an emergency, I will call 911 or the mental health crisis line at 1-800-592-3980 to obtain emergency services.

Understanding of Fees, Tardiness, and Cancellation Responsibilities

CASH - Services are to be paid in full when they are provided. Counseling and consulting costs are \$30 per quarter hour when paid in full by cash or check at the time of service. If interested, ask about a discount that is available when you pay a retainer. Payments accepted with a credit/debit/flex/insurance card have an additional charge of 5% due to increased overhead costs. Sessions are generally between 30 and 60 minutes.

INSURANCE - I will be responsible for paying \$30 per quarter hour until it has been determined by my counselor that my yearly deductible has been met. After my deductible has been met, I will be responsible for paying \$30 per quarter hour that goes beyond the covered time, plus co-insurance/co-pays as determined by the insurance. Services are to be paid in full when they are provided.

I accept the responsibility for the fees and recognize that they do not automatically include services such as written reports, responding to subpoenas, third party consultations, telephone calls, answering emails or other electronic communication, or other related services, which are charged separately and may not be a part of this agreement. I further understand that I should notify Mr. Williams in advance when I must cancel or reschedule an appointment. If I fail to give advance notice to Mr. Williams, I will face a service charge that may be as much as the normal rate for counseling. In addition, I understand that if I am tardy for a session, the time will be lost, I will be responsible for the full fee amount, and the session will end at the regularly scheduled time.

Client Bill of Rights

Rights are those things people deserve to have, no matter who they are or what they have done. I have the following rights as a client of Mr. Williams:

- The right not to be discriminated against based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, or handicap.
- The right to be free from exploitation of any type.
- The right to confidentiality regarding my client record and the fact of my being a client.
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.
- The right not to be forced to participate in any activities that involve risk to health and physical well-being.
- The right to have my next appointment within ten days if needed.
- The right to cancel and reschedule my appointment with advance notice.
- The right to seek a second opinion from another counselor.
- The right to terminate counseling at any time.
- The right to ask for or refuse prayer.
- The right to be notified if a change in the counseling agreement or statement of information practices is made.
- The right to disagree with a part of the counseling agreement or the statement of information practices and have this documented in my record.
- The right to receive confidential communications of my record or appointment times.
- The right to insert statements into my confidential record.
- The right to provide input to my treatment plan and to know when the treatment plan is revised.
- The right to receive an accounting of disclosures of my confidential information.
- The right to receive a client copy of my confidential record.
- The right to receive a paper copy of any documents regarding my case that are sent electronically.

Statement of Information Practices

This statement describes how confidential information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

Use of Confidential Information

I understand that my confidential information will be used by Mr. Williams for two purposes. Those purposes are: (1) to help me reach goals in counseling and (2) to improve the counseling process.

Understanding of Confidentiality

Mr. Williams practices the Golden Rule (Do Unto Others as You Would have Them Do Unto You) when it comes to maintaining the confidentiality of client records. No information about me will be released to anyone except when specifically required by law, or with my specific written authorization. I understand that my counselor will keep my records electronically. If my records are kept on paper they will always be secured in a locked file cabinet and electronic records are always password protected. My counselor is the only person who will have access to my records. Upon completion of treatment, after a minimum ten-year period for adults or after reaching the age of majority for minors, my records will be electronically deleted and physically shredded as appropriate.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

While my therapeutic record is confidential, I realize that there are times when my counselor may be legally or ethically required to release information against my wishes. I understand that my counselor is required by professional ethics and law to report evidence or suspicion of abuse or neglect, with or without client consent, including evidence or suspicions formed in the course of treatment. I further understand that my counselor is required by professional ethics and state law to report threats to physically harm others or ourselves that I, my companions, or members of my family may make, regardless of my or our wishes. I recognize that in rare circumstances my counselor is legally obligated to release information when ordered by a court of law. If I am active in the military, my records may be requested for review by a commanding officer in my unit.

Summary of Exceptions to Confidentiality

If confidential information is released, only a minimum amount of information will be released to comply with Federal or State law. I understand that the following list of uses and disclosures are the only exceptions to my confidentiality that might be made without my prior authorization.

- Uses and disclosures required by law.
- Uses and disclosures required by a payee.
- Uses and disclosures for professional consultations.
- Uses and disclosures for law enforcement purposes.
- Uses and disclosures to answer a complaint or public criticism.
- Uses and disclosures for judicial and administrative proceedings.
- Uses and disclosures about victims of abuse, neglect or domestic violence.
- Uses and disclosures to avoid a serious threat to health or safety of self or others

Disclosure Information

I understand that at any time I may ask for a report from Mr. Williams regarding when and to whom uses and disclosures of my confidential information have been made. In addition, I may ask verbally or in writing for a client copy of my confidential record. These reports or records will be provided to me within 14 days of my initial request.

Client Authorizations & Signatures

Understanding of Surveillance

I am aware that Williams Christian Counseling may have closed-circuit video surveillance in all rooms except for the bathroom. I understand that any video recorded while I am on the premises will be saved on a computer, password-protected, and maintained confidentially. It is understood that video surveillance is for security, to enable parents to watch their children while in counseling, and to make counseling less likely to be interrupted whenever someone enters the waiting room. Audio surveillance will not be conducted unless notification is given.

Contact Permission

Williams Christian Counseling sometimes calls or texts clients to remind them of their appointments or clarify other counseling matters. Is it permissible to contact you by telephone?

(Circle one): Yes No N/A. If we can call you, what number should be called? _____

If we can call you, is it permissible to leave a message? (Circle one): Yes No N/A. If needed, is it permissible to contact you by email? (Circle one): Yes No N/A. Is it permissible to send you a text message? (Circle one): Yes No N/A.

If we can email you, what email address do we use?

If we can text you, what number do we use if not already listed?

Insurance Authorization

If you choose for your insurance company to pay for your services, Mr. Williams will be required to report a medically necessary mental health diagnoses to them. On rare occasions, your insurance company may audit your counselor's records to see that your treatment was necessary for the reported diagnoses. If they determine that treatment was unnecessary, they may not pay for services. Do you authorize your insurance company to pay for services and do you authorize release of information if required by your insurance company? (Circle one): Yes No N/A.

If you answered yes, what is the name, date of birth, and social security number of the primary insured?

Signatures

I have read or had explained to me all the terms and conditions of the counseling agreement and the statement of information practices, and have signed below to indicate my agreement with each of the terms and conditions. If I have disagreed with a term or condition, it is noted with my initials. I have been promised copies of this agreement. I can also review this document on the Williams Christian Counseling website. www.williamscc.org/agree.pdf

Client, parent, or guardian of client

Joseph A. Williams

Additional Client

Today's Date