



Introduction

The following information is provided to inform you of what to expect from counseling services at HHC and to ensure that you understand your professional relationship with your counselor. Your signed consent is needed for treatment.

Counseling Services Provided

As a Registered Mental Health Counseling Intern with a Master's in Professional Counseling, Brittany Essig provides outpatient mental health services, including psychotherapy for individuals, couples and families. Providing compassionate and effective psychotherapy with the goal of assisting clients in finding a mindful balance within the mind, body, and spirit towards growth, satisfaction, and well-being. She treats a wide range of mental health conditions from depression and anxiety to bipolar disorder and personality disorders, including those who suffer from severe mental health conditions.

- ❖ Brittany is being trained in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), which treats emotional difficulties in a wide range of mental health issues.
- ❖ She co-leads two weekly DBT Skills Training groups that target managing difficult emotions and teach interpersonal skills to improve relationships.
- ❖ Additionally, she is learning mindfulness and incorporates mindfulness training in psychotherapy when appropriate.

Education and Professional Credentials

Brittany Essig graduated from Liberty University in 2014 and received clinical training at an alternative school for at risk students. Now in practice at Harmony Harbor Counseling, Brittany provides outpatient psychotherapy for a wide range of concerns.

- ❖ M.A. in Professional Counseling from Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia
- ❖ Registered Mental Health Counseling Intern #IMH15871
- ❖ Bachelor of Science in Religion from Liberty University
- ❖ Training in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

Therapeutic Orientation

Brittany Essig is interested in the wellness of all aspects of an individual: mental, physical, behavioral, and spiritual. She looks forward to learning about your unique situation and assisting you in developing your personal treatment goals so that you may achieve the highest quality of life. She primarily uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and DBT, which includes integration of mindfulness. Brittany continually pursues additional training and education and strives to provide clients with evidence-based treatment.

Evidence-Based Treatment

Some treatment modalities utilize particular protocols. Brittany is receiving on-going supervision and training in DBT. DBT is an evidence-based treatment with research supporting its effectiveness for a variety of clinical issues. If you are interested in this treatment, your counselor will discuss with you the specifics regarding DBT.

Counseling Process

Counseling presents an opportunity to make an investment in your personal growth and well-being within the context of a professional, helping relationship. Initially, Brittany will take a personal history and explore your reasons for seeking counseling at this time. As a solution-focused therapist, she will assist you in creating a treatment plan and clarifying your goals. Your commitment and personal involvement is vital to the counseling process and in order to find the best results, you will be encouraged to focus on your goals in between sessions and be willing to try new behaviors and skills. Your



input is essential to the process and you are encouraged to offer feedback along the way. Periodically, a review and evaluation of your progress will be addressed and your treatment goals will be revised as needed.

Counseling Benefits and Risks

Please note that participating in counseling offers both risks and benefits. Counseling often addresses difficult aspects of life experience and it may cause you to experience more intense or uncomfortable feelings, like sadness, shame, guilt, and even anxiety. This occurrence is expected and usually will only last a short time. In the long run, however, research has consistently revealed the benefits of counseling and HHC is committed to employing evidence-based therapies to provide you the best quality care. While there are no guarantees, counseling often leads to a better quality of life overall, including for example, improved self-concept, better relationships, increased spirituality, more hope, peace, and joy, and more effective management of emotions.

Continuation and Maintenance of Treatment

One of the primary treatment goals of HHC is to lessen the need for treatment. Ideally, as you improve, the frequency of your sessions will start to decrease to a maintenance phase where you will need less and less counseling, and then you may come only as needed.

Supervision and Consultation

As a Registered Mental Health Counseling Intern, Brittany is participating in supervision as stated under terms of the State of Florida by Dr. Stacy Louk Walker, LMHC. Brittany also meets with the DBT Consultation Team weekly and will continue to pursue additional training and supervision to ensure you continue to receive services that meet your needs. Your confidentiality is maintained during this process.

Confidentiality

The relationship between client and counselor is confidential and protected legally and ethically. HHC adheres to the American Counseling Association's ethical guidelines, which can be found at <http://counseling.org/Resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>. The confidential information in your file is used within HHC to provide treatment and every effort is made to keep it protected and secure. Both verbal information and written records about a client cannot be shared with another party without the written consent of the client or the client's legal guardian. Some noted exceptions include: 1) the duty to warn and protect a client in danger of harming him/herself or another person; 2) when there is suspected child or elder abuse or neglect; 3) in the case of a court order or legal matter; and 4) in consultation and/or supervision. Please see the HIPAA form for the detailed regulations regarding confidentiality.

Length of Sessions

Sessions normally last 55 minutes. Typically Brittany sees clients for one 55 minute session per week, unless it is decided that there is a higher need. In that case, she may recommend to meet more than once a week. If you arrive late for your session, it will still end at the scheduled time. Please understand that Brittany will do her absolute best to run on time and she usually is punctual, though crises do occur and sessions may be extended if required. If she is running behind for some reason, she will still honor the full 55 minutes of your session.

Fee and Method of Payment

The initial session for Brittany Essig is \$95 and \$85 for each subsequent session. Other charges may apply and could vary depending on the service rendered. HHC accepts cash, checks, and all major credit cards. You are expected to pay-in-full at the time of your session. Please be prepared with your check pre-written and/or card ready to pay at the **beginning** of



each session so that the majority of the session can focus on your clinical needs. Also, if you pay by cash, please have the proper amount because HHC does not provide change. Upon setting up your initial appointment, please let us know if you will need a monthly statement or a receipt for insurance reimbursement.

In Case of an Emergency

Your counselor does not provide emergency services. She will make every attempt to be available to you as soon as possible should a crisis occur. If you cannot wait for her return call, please call 911 or go to the nearest hospital and she will attempt to contact you as soon as possible. Otherwise, you may leave a message on the main number for HHC at (941) 312-6412, send an email to support@harmony-harbor.com or to Brittany Essig directly at brittany@harmony-harbor.com. Please note that though your counselor cannot often answer the phone directly because she is in session, she has a receptionist and additional administrative support and checks her messages frequently and will call you back as soon as possible. In extreme emergencies, you may reach her on her cell phone at (941) 548-9906 and if she does not answer, you can reach Dr. Stacy Louk Walker at (941) 391-1066.

Explanation of Dual Relationships

While a healthy counseling relationship is at times very personal and intimate in nature, it is important to be clear that your relationship with Brittany Essig is a professional one. She holds a role as a Registered Mental Health Counseling Intern in the highest esteem and believes the safety of the therapeutic relationship to be a vital part of the process of healing and growing. Professional boundaries will be maintained at all times. Brittany will respect your privacy in public and will not speak to you or acknowledge you unless you choose to speak to her.

Vacation and Other Unexpected Absences

Taking time off is part of self-care. Your counselor will periodically take time off for vacation and your counseling may be temporarily on hold. She typically does not go for a longer period than one week at a time. She will give you advance notice whenever possible. Otherwise, if for some reason Brittany cannot make your scheduled time due to illness, a family emergency, etc. she will do her best to contact you or have her administrative support contact you as early as possible. If you have an emergency while Brittany is on vacation or unavailable, then please call 911 or go to the nearest hospital. You may also reach out to Dr. Stacy Louk Walker at (941) 391-1066, Brittany's supervisor.

If you have any questions or concerns about this Informed Consent for Treatment, please discuss them with your counselor in your initial appointment and whenever necessary. Please sign the signature page to show that you received this form and agree with the terms. You may retain this form for your records.