

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 Pastoral Counselor with a Ph.D. and as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Dr. Louk provides outpatient mental health services for adults, 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 is Dr. Louk's primary counseling mission. 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.

- ❖ She frequently runs weekly Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) psycho-educational skills training groups that target managing difficult emotions and teach interpersonal skills to improve relationships. She is currently working on implementing an adherent DBT program.
- ❖ Dr. Louk is also certified in Prepare and Enrich, which is a program for pre-marital couples and for long term couples in need of support.
- ❖ As a pastoral counselor, she integrates psychology with spiritual and religious concerns as appropriate for each client.
- ❖ Additionally, she specializes in teaching mindfulness and incorporates mindfulness training in psychotherapy when appropriate.

Education and Professional Credentials

Dr. Louk has been practicing counseling since 2000 in many settings including residential, outpatient, non-profit, and faith-based settings. Now in private practice at Harmony Harbor Counseling, LLC, which she founded in 2013, Dr. Louk provides outpatient psychotherapy for a wide range of concerns.

- ❖ M.S. and Ph.D. in Pastoral Counseling from Loyola University Maryland
- ❖ Licensed Mental Health Counselor, MH#9651
- ❖ Qualified Supervisor for Florida Registered Interns and MHC Students.
- ❖ Bachelor of Science in Psychology from University of Mary Washington
- ❖ Extensive training in providing and running a comprehensive Dialectical Behavioral Therapy program
- ❖ Dynamic speaker and presenter on many clinical topics

Therapeutic Orientation

Dr. Louk 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, including mindfulness training, and specializes in the integration of psychology and spiritual/religious concerns. Dr. Louk continually pursues additional training and education and strives to provide evidence-based treatment.

Evidence-Based Treatment

Some treatment modalities utilize particular protocols. Dr. Louk has received extensive training and mentoring in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and is working to implement a comprehensive program. If you are interested in this program, Dr. Louk will discuss with you a specific DBT Contract and After-Hours Phone Coaching Contract. Additionally, other treatment modalities like Prolonged Exposure or Managing Anxiety and Panic may require

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distinctive commitments on the part of the client and counselor. If these treatments are warranted, Dr. Louk will go over what is entailed and is appropriate for each client.

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, Dr. Louk will take a personal history and explore your reasons for seeking counseling at this time. As a solution-focused therapist, Dr. Louk 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.

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 Dr. Louk 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 Dr. Louk 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.

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Recordings

Sometimes a client will be encouraged to record a specific part or all of a session for a particular treatment protocol (i.e. prolonged exposure) and review it between sessions. You will be encouraged to keep those recordings in a safe and confidential place. At other times, Dr. Louk will ask to audio or video record a part or all of a session for her own training purposes. These recordings are used solely for training and will remain strictly confidential and protected and properly destroyed.

Fee and Method of Payment

The initial session for Dr. Louk is \$175 and \$150 for each subsequent session. Other charges may apply and could vary from \$75 to \$200 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, cash counted, 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 reimbursement.

In Case of an Emergency

Dr. Louk 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 Dr. Louk directly at drstacy@harmony-harbor.com. Please note that though Dr. Louk cannot often answer the phone directly because she is in session, she has a receptionist and 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) 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 Dr. Louk is a professional one. Dr. Louk holds her role as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor 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. Dr. Louk 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. Dr. Louk 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 Dr. Louk 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 Dr. Louk is on vacation or unavailable, then please call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

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