



Introduction

The following information is provided to inform you of what to expect from the counseling services at Harmony Harbor Counseling (HHC) and to ensure that you understand the professional relationship between you and your counselor. In order to receive treatment, your signed consent is necessary.

Counseling Services Provided

As a counselor with a M.A. and as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Pam provides outpatient mental health services for adults, including psychotherapy for individuals, couples and families. In providing compassionate and effective psychotherapy, she respects the uniqueness of each individual and is interested in their growth, development, and wholeness. Pam 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 leads 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 involved in helping to implement an adherent DBT program.
- ❖ She specializes in teaching mindfulness and incorporates mindfulness training in psychotherapy when appropriate.

Education and Professional Credentials

Pam has been counseling since 2010 in many settings including residential, non-profit, and faith-based settings. She now works at Harmony Harbor Counseling, LLC, which was founded in 2013 by Dr. Stacy Louk, providing outpatient psychotherapy for a wide range of concerns.

- ❖ M.A. in Professional Counseling from Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia
- ❖ Licensed Mental Health Counselor, #MH12756
- ❖ Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from University of Maryland, College Park
- ❖ Extensive training in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

Therapeutic Orientation

Pam 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. Pam primarily uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, including mindfulness training, and specializes in the integration of psychology and spiritual/religious concerns. She continually pursues additional training and education and strives to provide evidence-based treatment.

Evidence-Based Treatment

Some treatment modalities utilize particular protocols. Pam has received extensive training and mentoring in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and is helping to implement a comprehensive program at HHC. If you are interested in this program, Pam will discuss with you the specific DBT requirements. Additionally, other treatment modalities like Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Overcoming Depression or Managing Anxiety and Panic also may require distinctive commitments on the part of the client and counselor. If these treatments are warranted, Pam 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, Pam 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 achieve 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 experiences, and it may cause you to experience more intense or uncomfortable feelings; i.e., 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 of care. While there are no guarantees, counseling often leads to a better quality of life overall: an improved self-concept; better relationships; increased spirituality; hope, peace, and joy; and 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. Harmony Harbor Counseling 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, elder, or mentally challenged 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 Pam 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 Pam 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.

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, Pam 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 Pam is \$150.00 and \$120.00 for each subsequent session. Other charges may apply depending on the service rendered. Harmony Harbor Counseling 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. If you are paying by insurance, fees may vary and Pam will discuss this with you as appropriate.

In Case of an Emergency

Pam 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 or send an email to support@harmony-harbor.com. Please note that though Pam cannot often answer the phone directly because she is in session, HHC has a receptionist and additional administrative support and will call you back as soon as possible. In extreme emergencies, you may reach her on her cell phone at (941) 492-4590.

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 Pam is a professional one. She 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. Pam 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. Pam 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 Pam 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 Pam is on vacation or unavailable, 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 Pam 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.