



LIVING WELL COUNSELING CENTER

5 Sheep Davis Rd. Suite G
Pembroke, NH 03275

Office Policies, Procedures, and Information

The following information explains policies and procedures for the offices of Priscilla Thompson, PLLC, Sheila Guinther, PLLC, and Valerie Jones, PLLC. We encourage you to read the information carefully and discuss any questions you have. After reading it, please sign the Consent to Treat Form to acknowledge that you have read and comprehended the following information.

1. **CODE OF ETHICS:** As licensed clinical mental health counselors, Priscilla Thompson, LCMHC, Sheila Guinther, LCMHC, and Valerie Jones, LCMHC are governed by the *Code of Ethics* of the American Mental Health Counselors Association. A copy of the Code of Ethics is available at all times.

2. **QUALIFICATIONS AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE:**

Priscilla Thompson received her Master of Arts in both Mental Health Counseling and Marriage and Family Therapy in 2008 from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. The New Hampshire Board of Mental Health granted Priscilla a license as a clinical mental health counselor in 2010. In 2015, Priscilla was certified in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). Priscilla provides outpatient individual therapy for adults.

Sheila Guinther received her Master of Education in Mental Health Counseling degree in 2002 from Plymouth State University. Sheila received her license from the New Hampshire Board of Mental Health in 2005. Sheila provides outpatient individual therapy for adults.

Valerie Jones received her Master of Arts in Professional Counseling in 2010 from Liberty University. She has taken additional classes from Capitol Bible Seminary and Rivier University. The New Hampshire Board of Mental Health granted Valerie a license as a clinical mental health counselor in 2021. Valerie provides outpatient therapy for children, teens and adults.

3. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** Under New Hampshire law, communications between a client and a therapist are privileged (confidential) and may not be disclosed without the specific authorization of the client except under specific, limited circumstances. For example, the privilege does not apply in a civil commitment proceeding in which the issue is whether the individual is a danger to self or others or when a client is seeking treatment relating to a workers' compensation claim. Records may also be subject to audit by regulatory authorities. Furthermore, many reporting laws create exceptions. See *reporting requirements*. Within the course of treatment, a client's case may need to be reviewed by a colleague, who is legally bound to confidentiality. By signing, you are acknowledging that you understand that your therapist may discuss your case in consultation and you do not object to her doing so in an effort to ensure that you and your family are receiving the best treatment possible.
4. **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** Among the exceptions to confidentiality are New Hampshire reporting laws, which require counselors to report certain types of conduct to the appropriate authorities. For example, any person who suspects a child or incapacitated adult has been abused, neglected or exploited must report to state authorities. Mental Health Counselors are required to warn police or likely victims of a client's "serious threat of physical violence" to a person or property. Mental Health Counselors may



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get a specific consent and agreement to notify family members or others in the event of a client's suicidality. However, they may also release information without written consent if they have reason to believe the client has imminent suicidal plans.

5. **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** New Hampshire is a small state. From time to time, actual or potential conflicts of interest may arise. In the event that your therapist becomes aware of a conflict of interest in providing treatment to you, she may be required to refer you to another therapist. Regardless of the existence of a conflict of interest, you can be assured that any information will remain confidential.
6. **GROUP THERAPY:** Unlike individual treatment, confidentiality of group therapy is not privileged, and therefore is not protected by law. Group members must sign and abide by a written confidentiality agreement prior to participating in the group. Clients with concerns about confidentiality should discuss them prior to beginning treatment.
7. **PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES:** Licensed clinical mental health counselors are obligated to establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries (relationships) with present and past clients (and, in some cases, client's family members). For instance, a counselor should never become friends with clients. Please note that in order to respect your privacy, your therapist will not acknowledge you in any public setting unless you initiate the interaction.
8. **CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS:** If you have any complaint about the treatment you have received or about any billing procedure, you should not hesitate to raise them with your therapist. Reports of misconduct or complaints can be directed to the New Hampshire Board of Mental Health Practice at 7 Eagle Square Concord, NH 03301.
9. **LIMITS OF AVAILABILITY:** Priscilla Thompson can be reached at 603-565-0592 and Sheila Guinther can be reached at 603-224-2700. Valerie Jones can be reached at 603-506-4891. If your therapist is unavailable, you may leave a message and she will return your call at her earliest convenience. Generally, you can expect to hear back from your therapist within 36 hours, unless she is on vacation. In the case of a psychiatric emergency for which your therapist is unavailable, you should consult with your other medical providers such as your primary care physician or go to your nearest emergency room. **We do not provide after hours support for crisis situations.**
10. **LIMITS OF SERVICE:** Please be advised that our role is to provide therapy services. We will not assess fitness for custody or work readiness, serve as an advocate, or act as an expert witness. We are not able to provide medication evaluations, medication management, or administer psychological testing. You should be aware that if your therapist were court-ordered to appear, you would be charged a fee of \$250 per hour for any time spent in court or travel.
11. **PROFESSIONAL RECORDS:** Your therapist maintains a file for each client. If you would like your therapist to communicate with another medical provider, please request and complete a PHI release. As a client, you are entitled to a copy of your records for a fee that covers copying and administrative costs. If you wish to see a copy of your treatment records, we recommend you review them with your therapist so that we may discuss the contents.



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The Board of Mental Health requires that your therapist make available to you a plan for your continued treatment and/or your records in the event of her death or disability at the time that you are an active client. In this event of your therapist's untimely death, a colleague will inform you and thus have access to your records.

In the event of your unlikely death, your next of kin or the executor of your estate will have access to your records, unless you explicitly and in writing state that your preference is otherwise.

12. **INSURANCE/REIMBURSEMENT OF SERVICES:** Clients will authorize payment of medical benefits to Priscilla Thompson, PLLC, Sheila Guinther, PLLC, and Valerie Jones, PLLC. In the event the client's insurance company does not honor this request, the client will take responsibility for payment of the bill in full. As a courtesy, we may assist with insurance benefit verification. However, **the quoted benefit information of coverage is not a guarantee of payment by an insurance carrier.** Insurance carriers routinely review claims and change payment and medical necessity determination. In addition, the client should be aware that coverage may be reduced by services received at another provider. The client is ultimately responsible for his or her benefit information as it relates to his or her condition.

There is an option for self-pay. Priscilla Thompson and Sheila Guinther charge \$120 for the first session and \$100 for each session following. Valerie Jones charges \$110 for the first session and \$90 for subsequent sessions. A sliding fee scale is available only under certain circumstances. Please discuss with your therapist if there is a need for a sliding fee scale. Payment is expected at the time of service. In this case, we will not bill these services to insurance carriers.

Some insurance companies limit the number of sessions, which will be fully or partially reimbursed. Clients are encouraged to communicate directly with their insurance provider regarding policies and benefits prior to beginning treatment. Any concerns about the confidentiality of records should be directed to the insurance company. Some companies conduct random periodic file audits for quality assurance purposes. Should you choose to access your insurance benefit, it is important that you know that your insurance company may review your record.

In order to process client claims, disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance company (i.e. diagnosis, symptoms). We cannot guarantee the confidentiality of information after it has been shared with your insurance company. Managed Care Plans are often based on the notion of medical necessity and are oriented towards short term treatment designed to resolve specific problems that are interfering with a person's normal functioning. **You are ultimately responsible for paying for all services rendered even if your insurance company or other identified payment parties do not cover them.** Session payments/co-payments are due at the time of service. You may pay with cash, a personal check made out to "Priscilla Thompson, PLLC" or "Sheila Guinther, PLLC" or "Valerie Jones, PLLC" or by VISA/MASTERCARD/AMEX card. **If you cancel your appointment with less than 24 hours notice, you may be assigned a \$50 cancellation fee.** During the course of treatment, please notify your therapist of any changes or updates in your insurance coverage or personal demographic such as name, address, or phone number.



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13. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Some vendors require electronic billing and information gathering (by fax or email). We cannot guarantee the confidentiality of such communications. If you do not consent to electronic communications, please inform us immediately, before beginning treatment, so that we may determine whether and how to proceed. **Please understand that we limit email communication to insurance issues, scheduling, and brief conversations related to coping skills.** All clinical issues should be addressed in session or via phone, if the issue cannot wait until the next session. **In the event of text communication, we also limit communication to scheduling, insurance issues, and brief conversations related to coping skills only. Email and texting is not a substitute for counseling.**

14. INDEPENDENT ENTITIES

Living Well Counseling Center is not a registered business entity within the state of New Hampshire. Each therapist owns and operates their own respective professional limited liability company (PLLC) and continues to operate independently of other therapists regardless of shared paper work, mutually agreed on policies, and shared office space. For this reason, each therapist may adopt their own policies and procedures. Please consult with your therapist directly on administrative matters (e.g., paperwork, privacy disclosures, etc.), payment issues, and termination.

Client Rights and Responsibilities

As a client you have rights that will be respected at all times. Your most important right is the right to know what your rights are and the right to complain when you believe your rights have been violated.

Client Rights:

- Clients are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and be free from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Clients have a right to confidentiality. Client information will not be released to anyone without the written consent of the client, parent or guardian, unless otherwise required by law. Photographs and audio or visual recordings will not be made without the client's written permission.
- Clients are entitled to appropriate, professional treatment and services regardless of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age or disability.
- Clients have a right to a mutually agreed upon treatment plan that promotes wellness and independence.
- Clients are entitled to an explanation of any treatment provided, the reasons and the expected effects. Clients also have a right to information about all aspects of treatment they receive.
- Clients have the right to decline treatment offered to them unless they are endangering themselves or others.



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- Clients have the right to understand the information contained on the papers they sign, have their questions answered in a readily understandable language and review their records.
- Clients and/or their families have the right to complain if they feel their rights have been violated or that they are being treated unfairly. Clients are entitled to information regarding the types of services available and their cost.
- Clients have the right to a second opinion by another professional.
- Clients have the right to discontinue services and to receive notice before the provider discontinues their services.

Client Responsibilities

- Clients are responsible for participating actively and honestly in their treatment.
- Clients are responsible for asking questions about any policy, procedure or treatment with which they do not understand or with which they do not agree.
- Clients are responsible for carefully reading and understanding any papers that they may be asked to sign in relation to their treatment.
- Clients are responsible for contacting their respective therapist, Priscilla Thompson, PLCC, Sheila Guinther, PLLC or Valerie Jones, PLLC with any concerns.
- Clients are responsible for payment of missed appointments unless provider is notified more than 24 hours in advance.
- Clients are responsible for payment of the services they receive and the agreed upon times.

If any concerns arise during services and cannot be resolved with the above named providers, you have a right to appeal to the:

**Board of Examiners of Psychology and Mental Health Practice
7 Eagle Square
Concord, NH 03301
603-271-6762**