



1712 St Rt 121 Bypass N
Suite I
Murray, KY 42071
270-761-5804

Informed Consent for Couples

Welcome to Bridges Family Center, LLC! Whether this is your first time in counseling or one of many times we appreciate your trust in our ability to serve you and your partner. Counseling is an important decision and we hope that you will take the time to read this form so that you will know what to expect out of your time with us. At any time if you have questions about our services please don't hesitate to let us know. It is our mission to assist you in building your bridge to change!

Qualifications:

Our staff is made up of six therapists, an office manager and an office assistant. Katrina Coffelt is the owner/manager of this agency. She obtained her Master of Arts degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of Denver. She is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and Nationally Certified Counselor. Ashley Champion earned her Educational Specialist degree in Community Counseling from Murray State University. She is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor. Lauren Dunlap obtained her Master of Science Degree in Social Work from the University of Tennessee. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Brandon Swaggart obtained his Master of Arts Degree in Counseling from St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas. He is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor. Janey Wells obtained her Master of Arts degree in Expressive Therapies and Mental Health Counseling from Lesley University in Cambridge, MA. She is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and Nationally Certified Counselor. Danyelle Day obtained her Educational Specialist degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Murray State University. She is a Licensed Professional Clinical Associate. All six counselors possess an active license to practice counseling in the state of Kentucky. Katrina Coffelt, Ashley Champion, Brandon Swaggart, and Janey Wells are licensed by the Kentucky Board of Professional Counselors. Lauren Dunlap is licensed by the Kentucky Board of Social Work.

Nature of Counseling Services:

Couples Counseling is a collaborative process between you and your counselor to work on areas of dissatisfaction in your relationship/life and assist you with developing and maintaining a healthy relationship. For counseling to be most effective, it is important that you take an active role in the process. Counseling activities are governed by the Kentucky Board of Professional Counselors and the Kentucky Board of Social Work. It is our responsibility to follow all counseling guidelines and laws in an effort to provide you with the best care. We do not take on clients we do not think we can help. Counseling has both benefits and risks. Possible risks include the experience of uncomfortable feelings (such as sadness, guilt, anger, anxiety, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness) or the recall of unpleasant events in your life. Possible benefits include potential reduction in feelings of distress, improvement in interpersonal relationships, increased ability to solve problems, better coping skills, and resolution of specific problems.

Procedures:

We utilize the "Gottman Method Couples Therapy" model as a basis for the treatment that we provide. We feel that this model is the most effective method of treatment for couples. This method requires that therapists be specially trained. Your therapist has completed the Level 1 Gottman Method Couples Training. Below is a basic summary of this method and an explanation about what you can expect to occur in sessions. It is Kentucky State law that any couple who reports or has engaged in domestic violence is not allowed to participate in couples therapy until they have completed treatment with a domestic violence specialist. If it is determined that domestic violence is occurring a report will be made to the Domestic Violence hotline, you will be referred to a specialist, and treatment will cease.

Overview of Gottman Method Couples Therapy

The Gottman Method of Couples Therapy is based on Dr. John Gottman's research that began in the 1970's and continues to this day. The research has focused on what makes relationships succeed or fail. From this research, Drs. John and Julie Gottman have created a method of therapy that emphasizes a "nuts and bolts" approach to improving clients' relationships.

This method is designed to help teach specific tools to deepen friendship and intimacy in your relationship. To help you productively manage conflicts, you will be given methods to manage "resolvable problems" and dialogue about "gridlocked" or (perpetual) issues. We will also work together to help you appreciate your relationship's strengths and to gently navigate through its vulnerabilities.

Gottman Method Couples Therapy consists of five parts:

Assessment
Treatment

Phasing out of therapy
Termination

Outcome Evaluation

Early in the assessment phase you will be given some written materials to complete that will help us better understand your relationship. In the first sessions we will talk about the history of your relationship, areas of concern, and goals for treatment.

In the next session, we will meet with you individually to learn each of your personal histories and to give each of you an opportunity to share thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. In the final session of assessment, we will share with you recommendations for treatment and work to define mutually agreed upon goals for your therapy.

Most of the work will involve sessions where you will be seen together as a couple. However, there may be times when individual sessions are recommended. We may also give you exercises to practice between sessions.

The length of therapy will be determined by your specific needs and goals. In the course of therapy, we will establish points at which to evaluate your satisfaction and progress. Also, we will encourage you to raise any questions or concerns that you have about therapy at any time.

In the later stage of therapy we will "phase out" or meet less frequently in order for you to test out new relationship skills and to prepare for termination of the therapy. Although you may terminate therapy whenever you wish, it is most helpful to have at least one session together to summarize progress, define the work that remains, and say good-bye.

In the outcome-evaluation phase, as per the Gottman Method, four follow up sessions are planned: one after six months, one after twelve months, one after eighteen months, and one after two years. These sessions have been shown through research to significantly decrease the changes of relapse into previous, unhelpful patterns. In addition, commitment to providing the best therapy possible requires ongoing evaluation of methods used and client progress. The purpose of these follow-up sessions then will be to fine-tune any of your relationship skills if needed, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the therapy received.

Following the completion of your intake you and your therapist will discuss the frequency of appointments to be scheduled. Appointments are scheduled for 45-50 minute segments. **Being late for an appointment by 15 minutes or more may require that you reschedule.**

Fees:

You will be provided with a form which discusses the cost of services provided. If you have any additional questions regarding fees for services please feel free to discuss this with your counselor at any time.

Contact/Scheduling:

Office hours are Monday through Thursday 9-6 and Fridays 9-1. Evening appointments are available upon request. If you are unable to make an appointment you can cancel and reschedule sessions by calling the office at 270-761-5804. It is our policy that if you need to cancel an appointment you must do so at least twenty-four hours (24) prior to your scheduled appointment time. Failure to do so will result in being charged the full amount of the session. In the event that you reach our voicemail system or answering service please leave a detailed message and phone number at which you may be reached. If you are difficult to reach please be sure to let us know a time that you will be available. In the event that we must cancel or reschedule your appointment we will contact you as soon as possible. If you have an emergency after hours please call the Emergency Room at your nearest hospital, call 911, or the 24 hour crisis line at 270-251-2924.

Record Procedures:

Your counselor is required by law to keep a record of every time you meet. These records include a brief synopsis of the session/conversation, and any observations or plans for the next meeting. Please note that a Judge can subpoena your records for a variety of reasons and your counselor must comply. Your counselor may be called to testify about the records and must comply.

Confidentially:

In general, the law protects confidentially of all communication between the client and the counselor. Information about your therapy can only be released with your written permission (in the form of a release of information form). The following however, are ways in which your information may be shared without your permission:

- Client is a danger to self/others
- Client is being or reports being emotionally/physically/sexually abused or neglected
- Client is involved in or reports a domestic violence relationship
- Court orders a release of information
- Counselor is engaged in a systematic supervision process
- Client is below the age of 18, guardians have the right to therapeutic information
- An insurance company requests a diagnosis and/or relant clinical information

Attorneys' Fees:

Should it become necessary for Bridges Family Center to employ an attorney to enforce any of the conditions or covenants hereof, including the collection of fees, clients agree to pay all expenses so incurred, including a reasonable attorneys' fee.

Rights and Responsibilities as a Client:

RIGHTS: As a client of Bridges Family Center, you have the right to prompt/consistent service, respect, and confidentiality. It is our goal to get you in for services in a prompt and convenient manner. It is also our goal that your services be as frequently scheduled as agreed upon between you and your counselor. Bridges Family Center staff members are further committed to treat all clients with respect, regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. Staff members demonstrate this respect by keeping appointments, by making every effort to notify you if a change in time is necessary, and by giving you their complete attention and avoiding interruptions during sessions. It is also understood that all information will be kept confidential within legal limitations and limitations of signed releases.

RESPONSIBILITY: It is your responsibility to participate in counseling services by keeping scheduled appointments and arriving on time. If you decide to discontinue counseling, it is your responsibility to inform your counselor. If at any time you feel that your rights as a client have been abused or denied it is the client's responsibility to file a written grievance making their concerns known. You make request a grievance form from the front office staff.

Signature verifying agreement

Your signature below indicates that you have read all the information above in this document and, that you understand it, and you agree to abide by it as long as you are a client at Bridges Family Center.

Signature of Client

Date

Signature of Client

Date

Witness

Date