

Next Chapter Counseling, LLC

Communication Policies

Deborah S. Wood, LPC, RN, NCC

Please initial and sign below.

____ 1. In order to care for myself and my family I need to safeguard my “down time” just as I encourage you to do. Therefore, I cannot be available to clients on a 24/7 basis any more than you would expect anyone with whom you have a professional relationship - your doctor, attorney, hair stylist, accountant, etc. - to be always immediately available to you. Appointments are required for nearly all professional matters. Please do not be offended by these boundaries to our relationship. They are necessary in order for me to better serve you.

____ 2. For short messages texting is my preferred form of communication. Please text to 804-683-6855 and **always sign your first name and last initial.** I do not keep client information in my phone so for reasons of confidentiality **I cannot reply to unsigned texts.** Also, while you probably have only one counselor named Deborah, I may have three patients named Deborah – hence the importance of the last initial.

____ 3. For longer communication please leave a message on my voice mail – 804-683-6855 – and include **your name, time, and call back number.** Please email as a last resort as I may not see it for several days.

____ 4. I do not answer calls or texts when I am with clients, but will answer as soon as I am free to do so.

____ 5. Calls or texts that come in after 8pm will usually be answered the following day. I silence my phone at night so you may text at any time of day or night without disturbing anyone.

____ 6. Please be advised that **confidentiality cannot be guaranteed with text or email communication.**

____ 7. It is my belief that communication between therapist and client is best achieved through face to face sessions, so while I will attempt to answer short questions or concerns that take 10 minutes or less, I ask that you wait if at all possible until your next session to discuss issues.

____ 8. Anything over 10 minutes becomes a “session” and I will ask that you make an appointment to come in, agree that we are going to have a phone session, or transfer to zoom. Session fees as outlined in the financial agreement will then apply.

____ 9. Next Chapter Counseling as a private counseling practice is not designed or equipped to serve as a crisis facility. For mental health crises please call 911 or go to the nearest hospital with mental health services. I will be happy to make you aware of the closest facility to you should you desire that information.

____ 10. Please use the 804- 683- 6855 number for all communications with me. Any communication you receive from any other number about your counseling sessions **DID NOT** come from me and should be ignored. I will sign every text so there is no confusion about the source. Again, **signatures are required on all texts and emails, and name, phone number, and time of call must be left with any voice message.**

I thank you in advance for your understanding and consideration!

Name

Date

