

What to Expect for Individual Therapy

Before the First Session

After you have scheduled an appointment, your clinician may ask you to complete some forms to bring with you for your first session. Please thoroughly read the instructions and content on the forms, and make sure to sign and date all of the paperwork. If you have any questions regarding the forms, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please prepare to bring your proof of income to the first session to confirm the fee.

The First Session

The purpose of your first therapy session is to get an in-depth evaluation of your psychotherapeutic needs. Initially, your clinician will briefly review the forms that you have completed and answer any questions you may have. The clinician also will explain your rights and responsibilities as a client, Meltzer Center policies, and limits of confidentiality. You may be asked to complete additional paperwork at this time. Once all the forms are completed, you will be asked to discuss your need for individual therapy, your goals for psychotherapy, and your expectations and concerns regarding therapy. The clinician also will conduct a detailed clinical interview of your present complaint and your background (e.g., current health, employment, and social status; medical history; psychiatric history; work history; family background). For supervision purposes, all sessions will be videotaped with your written consent.

The Therapy Process

After the first session, your clinician will discuss your case with the assigned supervisor, a licensed psychologist, who will oversee the treatment process. The graduate student clinician will have regular meetings with his or her supervisor to discuss your progress in therapy. Typically, clients see their assigned clinician during the course of their treatment. Occasionally, therapist and client mismatches do occur, and we will try to accommodate you by assigning you to a new clinician or providing you with an appropriate referral. We strongly encourage you to address any concerns you may have with your clinician during the course of your treatment.

Most clients decide to end therapy sessions when they feel that they have met their goals for therapy. Because our clinicians are graduate students, they may not be available to provide services after completing their coursework and training requirements. If this occurs before you have met your therapy goals and you wish to continue to receive treatment from the Meltzer Center, you will be assigned to another clinician or provided an appropriate referral.

Cancellation and Payment Policies

If you cannot attend a session, we require a cancellation notice 24 hours before your scheduled session. You may leave a message for your clinician at 202-994-0036 or email us at meltzercenter@gwu.edu. If we do not hear from you within 24 hours, then you will be billed for the missed session. If you show up late for a session, your clinician will not be able to extend the session to make up for the lost time.

We ask that you pay your set fee to your clinician at each session. We accept cash or checks made out to the Meltzer Psychological Services Center. We do not take credit cards. If you experience financial difficulties and have trouble paying your balance, please notify your clinician as soon as possible so that we can discuss a payment plan or possible reduction in fee.