

Services and Policies

Welcome to my practice. Please read this document carefully and ask any questions.

CONTENTS

About Nobuko.....	2
Contacting Nobuko	2
Business Hours & My Extended Absence	2
In an Emergency.....	2
By Phone	3
By Email, Text, Social Media	3
About Psychotherapy – General Information.....	3
Benefits and risks of Psychotherapy.....	3
Working together.....	3
Structure of Sessions.....	4
What if we are not a good match?	4
Confidentiality.....	5
Fees and Appointment policies	7
Professional Fees	7
Payments and Billing.....	7
Cancellation and Rescheduling.....	7
Late Arrival to Session.....	7
Late Payment Fee.....	7
Insurance Information	8
Insurance and My Services	8
Insurance and Your Therapy	8

ABOUT NOBUKO

I am a Licensed Psychologist in California, license number PSY21211, with a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology. I specialize in helping adults with issues related to stress and strong emotions, as well as effects of traumatic experiences. I offer individual psychotherapy in the North Bay area of San Francisco, California.

Although I may share the therapy office with other therapists, I am not professionally affiliated with them or any other individuals in this building.

CONTACTING NOBUKO

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BUSINESS HOURS & MY EXTENDED ABSENCE

Our therapy meetings are by appointment only.

My business hours are Tuesday through Thursday, 9 am to 8 pm, and Friday 9 am to 1 pm. I may not be reachable during the non-business hours.

In addition to the holidays, I take one long vacation each year up to one month.

IN AN EMERGENCY

If you are experiencing an emotional crisis and feel that you can't wait for me to return your call, please call 911 or any of the numbers below. They are available 24 hours, every day.

CRISIS HOTLINE

North Bay Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1 (855) 587-6373

Sonoma County Emergency Mental Health Hotline: 1 (800) 746-8181

ASSESSMENT AND HOSPITALIZATION

Aurora Santa Rosa Hospital: (707) 800-7700

1287 Fulton Road, Santa Rosa, CA

Marin County Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) (415) 473-6666

250 Bon Air, Greenbrae, CA

BY PHONE

My telephone is usually answered by voice mail that I check frequently during the week, and less often on weekends and holidays. Most will be returned within 1 business day.

BY EMAIL, TEXT, SOCIAL MEDIA

To send me secure encrypted email message, please visit www.schedule.care It will take you to a page where you can search for my name. Please register yourself. Please note the address does not have ".com" at the end.

You can text me at the phone number listed above.

Texting and regular (unencrypted) email are not secure means of communication, so please do not include sensitive information that you would like to keep confidential.

Please refrain from using the social media in particular (such as Facebook and LinkedIn) to contact me as most of such companies have the access to your account, putting your privacy at a great risk.

ABOUT PSYCHOTHERAPY – GENERAL INFORMATION

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

Psychotherapy has been shown to have benefits for most people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. At the same time, psychotherapy involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, and you may at times experience uncomfortable feelings. While Nobuko Hattori will make every effort to provide therapy that is effective, no guarantee can be made as to eventual outcome of treatment.

WORKING TOGETHER

Psychotherapy is teamwork, similar to working with a fitness coach, rather than a visit to a medical doctor. While I offer my expertise, your active participation is the key for you to reach your therapy goals.

There is no topic that is off-limit, no matter how uncomfortable or embarrassed you might feel about it. If it is important to you, it is important to me. I welcome questions and often solicit feedback from you to strengthen our partnership and to maximize the benefit of our work together.

Your session is time investing in your future. I encourage you to take the full advantage of the time by arriving a little early. It is a good idea to spend a few minutes before the session begins, thinking about what you would like to achieve during the session.

In the unlikely event that a negative issue about my service should arise, I sincerely ask you to address it with me directly first. You have every right to seek remedy for any concern or grievance, but it is imperative that you attempt to do so first with me directly. This has never been an issue, and I intend for it to stay this way.

STRUCTURE OF SESSIONS

LENGTH AND FREQUENCY OF A SESSION

We will usually meet once a week on the same day and time for a session. Different frequency may be arranged to optimize therapeutic benefits and to accommodate your schedule. Twice-a-week, bi-weekly, and a weekly session plus a brief mid-week check-in are also available.

The length of one standard session is 50-minute. However, it is common to schedule longer 75- and 90-minute sessions. The length of each session is agreed upon between us in advance. To promote predictability and healthy boundary, I do not extend or shorten the length of the session spontaneously.

You are free to end our psychotherapy at any time while I would appreciate your advance notice.

NUMBER OF SESSIONS

Many clients achieve significant improvement in their quality of life in 8 to 20 sessions. The number of sessions depends considerably on your therapy goals and the history of your problem. Some therapy goals can be achieved in a few sessions, while others may take more than a year.

WHAT IF WE ARE NOT A GOOD MATCH?

A good match between the client and therapist is one of the strongest predictors for a successful therapy outcome. You should work only with the therapist whom you feel comfortable working with.

If you feel that we are not a good match regardless of the reasons, please bring it to my attention. With the local resources and the network of colleagues that I have, I will be able to assist you in finding other psychotherapists whom may be a better match for you. No hard feelings – I am here to serve you.

If, at any point, it becomes evident that I do not have the expertise in the area that you are seeking therapy for, it is my professional duty to discuss it with you and provide options for appropriate care.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality means that all communications between a client and a psychologist is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work to others with your permission.

EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY

No topics are off-limit in our sessions. However, there are some situations in which all mental health professionals are legally obligated to take action to protect a client and/or others from harm, even if we have to reveal some information about the client to another person or an agency. This is referred as Exceptions to Confidentiality, and examples are as follows.

- If a client indicates a serious threat to harm himself/herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or call the client's emergency contact person or others who can help provide protection.
- If I suspect that a client is threatening bodily harm to another, I am required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, and/or seeking hospitalization for the client.
- If I suspect that a child, elderly person, or disabled person may be neglected or abused, I am legally required to file a report with the appropriate State agency. Viewing child pornography or sending sexual contents to a minor is considered child abuse.
- In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

These situations have rarely occurred in my experience. If a similar situation occurs, I will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

HOW DOES CONFIDENTIALITY SHAPE OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP?

Confidentiality is one of the most unique and helpful aspects of psychotherapy. It allows you to focus only on you and the issues at hand without risking social consequences that may arise in non-therapeutic relationships, such as the ones with friends and family members. To protect your confidentiality and that of other clients, I have the policies below.

“YOU FIRST” POLICY

Sometimes, we may run into each other around town. Depending on the circumstances, you may not want people around you to know that I am your therapist. So, in any encounter outside the office, I will follow your lead on how to interact or not interact with you. You are welcome to not acknowledge me, give a nod of acknowledgement, say “hi”, introduce me to others as your therapist, etc.

OUT-OF-OFFICE RELATIONSHIP

Sometimes, we may have situations where we interact not as a therapist and a client, but as members of an organization or a social circle. If this situation occurs, we will discuss it to make appropriate plans to protect your confidentiality as well as to protect each other’s livelihood as individuals.

In addition, to maximize the benefit of your psychotherapy, I make reasonable efforts to limit our social contact.

Sexual relationship between therapists and their clients are counter-therapeutic and strictly prohibited by law.

NO SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

I do not make any social media communication with my current or former clients in order to maintain the high level of confidentiality and respect for privacy. In the event that you and I have been unknowingly connected online, I may ask to make changes that best suit the circumstance.

“NO CONFIRMATION OR DENIAL” POLICY

If I am asked by anyone about you, I will not confirm or deny whether you are or have been in the past my client, even when it is common knowledge, unless I have permission from you. Likewise, I will not share any information about other clients without their permission.

You, on the other hand, are free to share anything with anyone about what takes place in our work together.

USING A CONSULTANT

To provide the best care possible, I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don’t object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together.

FEES AND APPOINTMENT POLICIES

PROFESSIONAL FEES

My standard 50-minute session fee is \$130. For sessions of other length, the fee will be adjusted accordingly at 10 minute increment in most cases, at a rate of \$25 for each 10 minutes. Phone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes will be charged at \$30 for each 10-minute duration, unless other arrangements are made.

To avoid any unexpected charges, please read the sections below “Cancellation and Rescheduling” and “Late Arrival to Session.”

For other professional services you may need, the above fee structure will be used.

PAYMENTS AND BILLING

Payment is due at the beginning of the session unless we agree otherwise.

I accept payment by

- Cash and Check (preferred)
- Debit or Credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover)
- Health Savings Account card

CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING

Once you make an appointment, the time is reserved for you. If you need to cancel or reschedule, please give as much notice as possible. **A cancellation made less than 12 hours before the appointment will be charged 100% of the scheduled session fee.**

LATE ARRIVAL TO SESSION

If you arrive late for a session, please know that the length of the session will not be extended and a full fee is expected even if you arrive late.

LATE PAYMENT FEE

There will be a \$10 charge for a payment not received at the time of service. I do not permit clients to carry a balance of more than two sessions. I may also ask that you provide a credit card number to be on file. If you are unable to pay the balance, please discuss it so that we can develop a plan that best suits your situation.

INSURANCE INFORMATION

INSURANCE AND MY SERVICES

I am not on any insurance panels, however, as a licensed psychologist, many insurance plans reimburse clients for a portion of my services as an "out of network" provider.

If you are using insurance, I will provide you with the necessary paperwork to submit to your insurance provider for reimbursement. Please note that reimbursement is not guaranteed, and **you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of my fees at the time of service.**

INSURANCE AND YOUR THERAPY

The financial assistance that insurance companies offer to its members can help many to receive necessary therapy. At the same time, there are some disadvantages. Please consider them in making your own personal decision about using your health insurance.

I will provide your insurance company with only the minimum information they require. However, to use your insurance benefit, most insurance companies require that psychotherapy is medically necessary due to a mental health disorder. The information will be a part of your medical record that the insurance company maintains.

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