

# Laurel Fay & Associates, LLC

*Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists*

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Silver Spring, MD 20910

301-563-9520

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## **INFORMED CONSENT, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Our Philosophy and Approach:**

As Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, we are specially trained to work with couples and families, as well as individuals. We approach therapy from a systemic perspective, understanding people in the context of their relationship systems. We believe each person in a relationship is important to the system as a whole. Relationships become out of balance as a result of many different factors and patterns, which can be examined in the therapy sessions. We also view the systems *within* individuals: how their thoughts, feelings, and experiences affect their situation. We work with clients to understand how all these factors contribute to their present circumstances.

During an initial getting-to-know you period, your therapist will work with you to develop an initial understanding of your problem/situation. We will then begin work to define your goals. Depending on the nature of your goals in therapy and the amount of consistent effort that is applied, therapy may involve just a few sessions or several months or years. Your goals may change as time goes on.

Our therapists have various tools they use in therapy to customize to the uniqueness of the people we see. Some of these tools include cognitive-behavioral techniques, experiential exercises, homework assignments, and family-of-origin work.

We want to work cooperatively with you at all times, and we are always open to your questions and feedback. You and your therapist share responsibility for the outcome of therapy.

### **The possible benefits** of participating in therapy may include:

- A better ability to handle or cope with marital, family, and other interpersonal issues.
- Increased understanding of family and personal goals and values.
- A deepening of connections in your relationships.
- A healing of wounds inflicted past or present.
- Greater happiness as an individual and increased relational harmony.
- Resolution of specific concerns brought to therapy.

### **The possible risks** of treatment may include:

- No guarantee as to therapy outcome. Some people experience no improvement in their situation – a few may even think things are worse after treatment.
- The experiencing of intense and uncomfortable feelings as unpleasant events, relationship patterns, and other concerns are addressed.
- Therapy can sometimes lead to individual decisions that can be disruptive for your self or family.
- Some health insurance companies will not cover the cost of family or couple therapy.

**Outside consultation:** At times it will be important for the progress of therapy to contact other professionals who are helping you or your child. Such professionals may be school teachers, psychiatrists, or attorneys. Your therapist will not make such contact without the written permission of all participating family members. As a means to help clients as effectively as possible, we regularly consult with other experienced therapists regarding client issues. We do not reveal any identifying information about our clients.

**Fees:** The fee for a 50-minute session with Laurel A. Fay, M.S., LCMFT is \$140; the fee for a 50-minute session with Katie Hrapczynski, April McDowell or Adam Lowe is \$110, and for a 50-minute session with Kate Opel the fee is \$125. **Payment in full is expected at the time of service.** If longer sessions occur, the fee will be prorated. Fees for additional time or services, including travel time, will be billed at the regular session fee rate. Such additional services may include, but are not limited to, consultation with other professionals, preparation of reports or correspondence, any necessary court appearances, school meetings, phone calls lasting over 10 minutes. We accept cash, personal checks, Visa or MasterCard. If you chose to pay with a credit card, you will be billed using our online system, TherapyPartner. This means that after your credit card information is collected once, sessions will be billed to that card automatically, and monthly insurance-ready statements will be emailed to you. You can change your payment method at any time. We do not bill insurance companies directly, but can give you a statement of services for you to submit to your insurance company if you are paying with a check or cash.

**Cancellation policy:** **THE USUAL PER SESSION RATE IS CHARGED FOR MISSED APPOINTMENTS OR FOR CANCELLATIONS MADE WITH LESS THAN 24 HOURS NOTICE GIVEN.** Your time has been reserved for you and since this is the basis of our livelihood, only with sufficient notice can we make that time available to someone else. If you do need to cancel an appointment, **please call rather than email** – we receive your call much faster than we do your email message.

**Phone Numbers:** The main number to call is 301-563-9520. Your therapist will return calls in a timely manner, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, and will return weekend calls on Monday, unless Monday is a holiday.

**Legal Proceedings:** To contain our costs and remain focused on our primary mission to help our clients improve their quality of life, it is our longstanding policy and practice not to complete character references or offer court testimony. To clarify, we will write a case summary of a client's attendance and progress in therapy for him or her to take to court. However, we will not appear voluntarily for a legal proceeding. Despite being informed of our practice's policy, if our staff is subpoenaed for a legal proceeding, the cost of such services is \$500/hour/person subpoenaed.

**Emergencies:** Our aim is to be available to you should an emotional emergency arise. Therapeutic calls are billed pro-rated at the regular fee. However, we cannot provide 24-hour availability. If you are in need of immediate attention, please call the 24-hour hotline at **(240) 777-4000 at the Montgomery County Crisis Center, the Maryland State Crisis Hotline at 1-800-422-0009**, or go immediately to your nearest hospital emergency room.

**Termination:** When it is time to stop therapy, it is important that there be time given before terminating to bring closure to the therapeutic relationship by talking about what has and has not taken place during the time together and to say "good-bye." This is usually done with a minimum of one session devoted to reviewing our therapeutic work together, and your future goals.

*Referrals are always appreciated.*

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I understand that Laurel A. Fay, M.S., Licensed Clinical Marriage and Family Therapist or one of her associates will provide professional services to

Client name(s): \_\_\_\_\_.

**My signature below affirms my informed and voluntary consent to enter therapy (and/or have my child/ren enter therapy). I affirm that prior to becoming a client of Laurel Fay and Associates, I was given sufficient information to understand the nature of therapy, including the possible risks and benefits, and also the nature of confidentiality. I understand the office policies and procedures and cancellation policy and agree to uphold these policies. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had my questions answered satisfactorily. I understand that I can ask questions and raise concerns about the treatment at any time.**

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Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Name

Signature

Date

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Name

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Signature

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Date