

Grace Silvia, LCSW

Client Policies and Informed Consent

Here is information that you should know before starting therapy with me. We will go over this together at our first session and I hope you will ask any questions or express any concerns.

Philosophy and approach

I believe people are brilliant, creative and holy in how we have survived. Negative patterns often come from our survival strategies. They hold a key to healing and part of our work together will be to understand their wisdom. I can help you develop your tools of curiosity, compassion and mindfulness to safely explore your inner and outer worlds. But you are the expert in your experience. The more you let me know what works for you, what doesn't, and what could work better, the better I can support you. It is a collaborative healing journey. I aim to be as respectful, trauma-informed and anti-oppressive as possible, and welcome feedback at every step.

Credentials for therapy

I hold a Master of Social Work degree (MSW) and am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in Oregon State, license #L8115. I have studied Hakomi in depth and Focusing, both body-mind-heart-soul integrated modalities. Please see my website for more details, at www.GraceSilvia.com.

Informed consent is a process

Informed consent means that you understand the benefits and risks of therapy, alternatives, costs, your rights and responsibilities, and how we will be doing the work. It means that you voluntarily choose for us to work together, and can similarly choose to end therapy at any time. Informed consent will be an ongoing process and begins with reviewing and discussing these policies. I encourage you to ask questions, consider the options thoughtfully, and share your experiences and concerns honestly, both now and throughout our work together.

Therapy benefits and risks

Therapy can be a transformative experience. It may increase self-esteem, self-compassion and self-efficacy. It can decrease distress, and increase personal awareness and skills for managing difficult situations. However, therapy will also bring up feelings that may be uncomfortable, like fear, shame, anger, frustration, despair, and even joy, love, freedom, and peace. It is important to go as slowly as necessary and not in a way that re-traumatizes. If anything does not feel right, I want to know! Speaking your truth is powerful healing in itself, and is welcome here.

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What to expect—logistics

Sessions will usually be one hour. There is no right frequency for therapy—once a week, twice a week, every other week—you decide and it may change over time. Likewise, there is no right duration: some people just want a few sessions to work through a particular issue, others may want to work through old patterns over the course of years. It is your choice. I will also let you know if I believe that I am not the right clinician for you, or if I can no longer provide you with the quality of support you deserve. *I strongly encourage having a final session* to close working together, whether you were satisfied or dissatisfied with the therapy—there can be a lot of healing in ending with intention either way.

What to expect—mindfulness and body-centered work

We will work a lot with mindfulness—gentle, compassionate turning attention inward. We will also work with your physical sensations and impulses. They are both powerful tools for getting in touch with your healing wisdom. Body-centered work may incorporate non-sexual touch, but only in ways that feel emotionally safe to you and never for my benefit. This is a very important point: touch between client and therapist can be powerfully healing, but should never be sexual or initiated for the benefit of the therapist, and should only happen if the client can refuse. There are many alternatives if touch does not feel comfortable or safe in any way. It is an option, not a requirement.

If you are not satisfied

If at any time you are not happy with my work, please let me know. *Studies show that working through dissatisfaction with a therapist often leads to a stronger therapeutic relationship than if there is nothing to work through.* If I am not able to resolve your concerns or you choose not to address them with me, you have the right to bring them to my regulatory board:

State of Oregon, Board of Licensed Social Workers
Attention: COMPLIANCE DIVISION
3218 Pringle Road S., Suite #240 / Salem, OR 97302-6310
1.866.355.7050, EXT. 5 blsw.investigator@state.or.us

Scheduling and fee

You can schedule with me by phone (my direct message line is 503-929-0326), by email (GraceSilvia@protonmail.com) or during the session (usually at the beginning).

My fee is \$105 per session. I do not take insurance, but offer a sliding scale and activist discount to make this support more accessible. Payment is due at the time of the session, or as agreed. Please give me at least 24 hours notice to cancel an appointment to avoid a \$50 fee (except illness or emergency).

Everyone deserves support for healing. I am happy to share what I know about alternatives to private pay therapy: peer counseling, such as Focusing or Re-evaluation Counseling; low-cost mental health agencies, clinics and training sites; community behavioral health agencies; and peer support groups.

Between session communication & after-hours crisis support

For non-emergencies: My phone is mostly for messages, so that it doesn't ring during sessions. I don't work every day, so please allow 2 business days for me to return your phone call or email. You can also talk to a peer through the David Romprey Warm Line, 800-698-2392, daily 9am-11pm.

For emergencies: I am not on call after hours. If you are in a mental health crisis, call 911, go to your nearest hospital emergency room, call Multnomah County Crisis Line at 503-988-4888, or call Lines for Life at 800-273-8255. But please also let me know so I can support you if you want.

Legal issues

If you are, or may be, involved in legal or court proceedings, please let me know as soon as possible. It is important for us to understand how this might impact our work together. Please note that entering into therapy is not the same as a forensic or custody evaluation. In the event that you need such an evaluation, we can discuss the options for an appropriate referral.

Your right to confidentiality and exceptions

You have the right to confidentiality. Confidentiality of Personal Health Information (PHI) is legislated by the Health and Information Privacy Protection Act (HIPPA), passed federally in 2001 (with updates, including electronic data transmission), Oregon law, and my code of ethics.

Confidentiality means that I won't tell anyone what you say during therapy, or even let anyone know whether you are a client, without your permission. Please be aware that there are some circumstances under HIPAA and/or Oregon law in which I may, or am required to, break confidentiality:

- If you fill out a Release of Information (ROI) form giving me permission to share information with a specific person or organization (verbally or in writing).
- If I am subpoenaed to testify in court with an appropriate court order or there is an investigation by the Board of Social Workers.
- If you tell me that you are struggling with abusing or neglecting a child, elder, or vulnerable adult, past, present or planning to in the future.
- If you are in imminent danger of harming yourself or another person. (If you know this may be an issue, we can create a plan so that I know your preferences for how you want support, and what you don't want, ahead of time.)
- If you have a medical emergency.
- If I consult with other mental health or medical providers to do my best work possible or to help you get other professional help, though I will not use identifying information.
- If I am unavailable for an extended period of time, I may arrange for coverage.

If we see each other outside of the clinic

It is my responsibility to uphold your confidentiality. You can acknowledge me, or not, as you want. It is up to you. I will only acknowledge you to the extent I acknowledge strangers—so I might smile or say hello, but no more unless you choose. Then I will follow your lead. Let's clarify this point in person.

Other rights

You also have the right to:

- Participate in respectful treatment without discrimination in a safe environment, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, race, disability, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, gender identity, sexual identity, national origin, or source of payment.
- Make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in therapy.
- Ask questions about my training, experience, suggestions, or any aspect of therapy.
- Expect me to act ethically and professionally, including having no sexual, social or extra financial relationship with you or any other client.
- Expect that I will follow the Codes of Ethics by the National Association of Social Workers and Oregon State (http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_800/oar_877/877_030.html).
- Examine public records maintained by the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers and have the Board confirm my credentials.
- Have access to your clinical record, and receive any information in paper format, if needed.
- Speak with me about any concerns or complaints.
- Stop our work together for any reason and be referred respectfully to another provider.

Responsibilities

Your responsibilities include:

- Being an active participant, include asking questions about anything you don't understand or have concerns about, and saying “No” to anything you don't want to do for any reason.
- Understand these policies; and discuss any concerns about your treatment with me.
- Inform me and other providers about changes in your care.

Only sign when you have read or/and verbally reviewed this, and have had your questions answered to your satisfaction.

Client's signature

Client's printed name

Date