

Considerations in Deciding between Insurance or Private Pay for Therapy

PRIVATE PAY

1. Full Control Over Therapy Process

With private pay practice, all decisions over your therapy, such as how often to have sessions, when to have sessions, the requirements for continued sessions, and the techniques and modalities used, are all controlled by you and your therapist.

2. Your Sessions Are Confidential

All of your records and session notes are strictly confidential. Confidential information does not need to be sent to an insurance company to read and review in order to approve payment reimbursements.

3. A Mental Health Diagnosis is Not Required

Therapy can be provided without a mental health diagnosis. Additionally, there won't be a mental health diagnosis in your insurance records in the future which can potentially affect insurance coverage and/or your insurance premiums.

4. Higher out-of-pocket expenses

Even when private pay fees are comparatively reasonable, many of us are not in the financial position to pay hundreds of dollars per month for mental health services.

INSURANCE

1. Potentially Less Control

With any insurance, there is always a risk that certain insurance benefits may be limited or impacted by contractual limitations on the choice of therapist, and the number, frequency and length of sessions.

2. Your Session Notes May Be Shared With The Insurance Co.

Therapists who bill insurance may be asked to share session notes and/or other potentially confidential information with the client's insurance company.

3. Insurance Requires You To Be Diagnosed

In order to be reimbursed by an insurance plan, a mental health professional - just like a doctor - must provide a diagnosis. Without a mental health diagnosis, the insurance company won't pay or approve future sessions. When one is given a mental health diagnosis for insurance reimbursement, the diagnosis can potentially be considered a pre-existing condition.

4. Insurance Co-Pays May Be More Affordable

After clients meet any of their specific deductibles, they often find that their session co-pays are relatively low enough to make a commitment to therapy and counseling affordable and easier. Over time, paying co-pays for each session vs. private pay rate may be easier for some clients.