



**Jennifer L. Harkins, LPC, PLLC**

## **OFFICE PRACTICES AND POLICIES**

Welcome to my office. The following is general information about myself and office policies. Please feel free to ask any other questions you may have.

**About me:** After graduating with a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1998, I began working with children and families at a local nonprofit organization focused on providing support and guidance through mentoring. My early career in social service work led me to focus on what can be most transformative and healing: understanding and accepting self. I received my master's degree in counseling and became licensed as a Professional Counselor. I continued social service work as a counselor with Family Violence Prevention Services, Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas and The Center for Health Care Services. I now have a general practice that is shaped by my experiences and work with trauma.

**About How I Practice:** Our beliefs about ourselves and the world are powerful. These beliefs are shaped by our life experiences beginning in childhood and often times do not serve us well. I work with clients to begin to explore and understand personal beliefs, where they come from and the impact on life. Often times we find ourselves repeating roles and patterns of which we are not fully aware. We learned what helped us survive that may not be particularly healthy and has led to possible consequences such as work struggles, relationship struggles, anxiety, depression and a general feeling of dis-ease. Working to gain full awareness can allow us to let go and begin healing from past traumas and learn a healthier way to cope with future difficulties so that we can live the life we were meant to live.

My theoretical approach is based in Person Centered that sees all people as individuals and deserving of unconditional, positive regard. I also draw from other approaches such as Existential in our search for meaning to life and Cognitive Behavioral in recognizing our behaviors and practice for healthy adjustments.

**Contacting Me:** Please call me at 210-379-5364. I appreciate a day or two to return your call as I give my clients full attention and days can be busy!

**Cancellation Policy:** If you need to reschedule or cancel an appointment, please call at least 24 hours in advance. If you miss an appointment or cancel at the last moment, regular fees will be charged to you for that time. Sudden emergencies or illnesses can be discussed. If you know you will need to cancel an appointment I would very much appreciate as much advance notice as you can provide.

**Risks of Treatment:** Counseling can challenge the ways in which you typically handle issues and can sometimes create anxiety. People who visit a counselor for the first time may not understand the process, how to begin or are worried about being judged for information that is shared. Most of this concern will fade as you get to know me and yourself in counseling. Progress depends on many factors including motivation, support, and specific life circumstances. Most people report benefit but some do not. It is important to share any and all concerns you may have about your sessions.

**Confidentiality and Privacy:** Any information you give me will be released to others only by your written consent. There are certain circumstances, however, where I am required to disclose confidential information without consent from clients. I will break confidentiality if:

- You are a danger to yourself or others.
- You are a minor, elderly, or disabled person and are being abused.
- You have perpetrated abuse against a minor, elderly, or disabled person.
- You report sexual contact with a previous psychotherapist or clergy member.
- You file suit against me for breach of duty.
- You use insurance for payment, and the insurance company requests information about your case.
- A court order or other legal proceeding that requires disclosure.

In order to be compliant with HIPAA rules, you will be given a separate and more complete statement regarding confidentiality of records.