

Stronghold Counseling Services Client Handbook

STRONGHOLD COUNSELING SERVICES, INC.
Sioux Falls Yankton Spearfish
(605) 334 7713

OUR MISSION

At Stronghold our attempt is to respond to the needs of our clients in the Sioux Falls area by providing professional assessment and therapy services as well as individual, couples, family, and group therapy. Our hope is to create the best possible context for creating change by providing quality counseling service that is informed and girded by a Biblical gracefilled perspective.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our clinical philosophy stresses the importance of attaining knowledge and insight; and making positive, responsible choices. In an atmosphere of warmth, respect, freedom, and God's grace, the reliance on the use of defense diminishes and people begin to heal and change. Our staff employs an integrated model (one that balances contemporary psychology with sound biblical truths and principles) to help our clients begin to self-assess. This model seems to further facilitate the process of recognizing, accepting and dealing with their problems. Because problems affect people in all areas of their lives and all different kinds of people, our staff utilizes a team approach to each individual and family served.

OUR TEAM

A highly trained team cares for each client from initial to final session. The team varies according to client needs, but Stronghold's staff is willing to coordinate and cooperate with a wide variety of professionals and specialists, including physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, substance abuse counselors, court service workers, probation officers, family therapists, and social workers.

Each client's therapist will, with the Stronghold team, meet on a regular basis as needed to discuss the client's progress and to plan the therapy required to address the client's personal recovery needs. This coordination and team effort insures that the best possible therapy is afforded in as timely and efficient a manner as possible.

OUR SERVICES

Individual Therapy

The client works with a Stronghold therapist in a graceful collaboration to develop solutions to overcome obstacles in the client's live.

Family/Marriage Therapy

A couple or family meets with a Stronghold therapist to gracefully address differences, transitions or life and issues that have become problematic. Because problems and difference are normal for relationships, the therapy will seek to pursue a course between people that reconciles and restores these relationships.

Group Therapy

Individuals with common concerns meet together with a Stronghold therapist to help bear one another's burdens as well as to challenge one another with truthful words of encouragement and concern. Together they work to build a hopeful vision which is necessary to overcome any struggle.

Play Therapy

Play therapy is based on the fact that play is the way a child naturally expresses his or her self. Play therapy gives the child the opportunity to “play out” his or her feelings, (such as tension, frustration, insecurity, aggression, fear, anger, bewilderment, confusion) and the opportunity to “play out” his or her problems. Through the child’s experience in play therapy, the child can experience change and growth.

Lifesc scripting Group

This is a ten-week interactive group in which participants are involved in the process of investigating, observing, and discussing their experiences. It is designed to address the consequences of being sexually abused as a child or adolescent.

OUR APPROACH

Counseling Care and Supervision

The counseling needs of our clients are addressed by a staff of certified or licensed counselors and counseling interns who are supervised by Stronghold’s Clinical Supervision.

Therapy Components

Stronghold’s clients may be involved in a variety of therapeutic activities, including couple’s group, family, individual and playtherapy. Components vary depending on the therapist and client need.

Staffing Cases

At SCS we believe in a team approach. As a consequence, it is the expectation of the clinical director that complicated and complex cases be brought to our weekly staffing meeting anonymously. If you still feel that would compromise your confidentiality, please advise your counselor to exclude your file from any joint collaboration.

CONTACT AND APPOINTMENTS

Single Point of Contact

Contacting us is easy. Call (605) 334 – 7713. This single point of office is the number to call for information, consultation, evaluations, and appointments.

Program and Services Information

If you would like more information regarding any of our therapists or services, we invite you to call us. We hold all inquiries in the strictest confidence.

Consultations and Evaluations

Often people don’t know whether or not they need or could benefit from our services. If you or someone you needs help and would like to speak to someone who can answer your questions, call us. Phone consultations are free and are held in the strictest confidence.

To inquire about scheduling, call our office number. Evaluations are confidential and you will be informed about the results immediately following the evaluation.

Appointments

Appointments may be arranged by calling our office number. Referrals to Stronghold may be made by any concerned persons. We attempt to schedule urgent appointments with an appropriate provider within 48 hours. Our counselor’s office hours vary by professional but our main office and phone hours are:

C:\stronghold\handbook also available on our website on the forms page

Monday – Thursday 8am-8pm

Friday – 8am – 2pm

Stronghold Counseling Services has an answering machine for after hour messages. If urgent care is needed, clients are instructed to dial 911. On the weekends we have a pager service available for emergencies.

Financial concerns associated with therapy are important to most everyone. Our therapy program costs are covered, in full or in part, by many insurance carriers. Questions regarding the cost of therapy may be discussed with your therapist and your insurance coverage may be discussed with our financial secretary.

PAYMENT AND COLLECTION OF FEES POLICIES

Cash Payment Policy

Unless other arrangements have been made in writing with your counselor, payment is due when you (or your family member) come in for your counseling session.

Past Due Accounts

If, for any reason, there is a balance due on your (or your family member's account at Stronghold Counseling Services, Inc. 45 or 60 days after the counseling services were provided:

- **If You Have Insurance** – If an insurance claim has been filed and no reply has been received, it will be your responsibility to call your insurance company to check on the payment, and to inform Stronghold Counseling Services, Inc. in writing as to what your insurance company said they will do regarding payment. **Full payment of those charges must be made by the insurance company or by you within 60 days of the time the services were provided.** If Stronghold Counseling Services, Inc. receives an insurance check for those charges after you have made a personal payment, you may choose to either receive a refund, or apply those payments to further services.
- **If You Do not Have Insurance** and have a balance on your account, you will receive a note on your statement from Stronghold Counseling Services, Inc. to let you know you have charges that are days past due. You will need to come in and fill out, or mail back to Stronghold, a payment plan and include your first payment toward that plan. That written payment plan needs to be received in the Stronghold office before 60 days from the time the services were provided.
- **60 Days Past Due Balance** – If Stronghold has not received a written payment plan from you, along with your first payment toward that plan, by the time 60 days have passed since the services were provided, with few exceptions, your past due charges will be turned over to a collection service.
- If you are receiving counseling services and have a 60 day or more past due account, continuing services will be provided for you on a **CASH ONLY** basis – you will need to make a cash payment prior to each counseling session.
- If you have any questions about these policies or your account at Counseling Services, Inc., please talk with your (or your family member's) therapist.

THERAPY GOALS

The goals for each member of the therapeutic programs are:

- To know yourself in light of God's graceful truth;
- To know what your emotional conflicts are;
- To learn to communicate your true feelings;
- To learn what motivates you;
- To become familiar with your needs; and,

- To face reality and accept maturity by God's love and grace while developing a graceful therapeutic relationship.

The Stronghold staff assumes responsibility for the overall course of therapy. Assessment, diagnosis, individual, couples, play therapy, family, group therapy and referrals are our professional responsibilities.

SERVICE OBJECTIVES

The counselors at Stronghold will demonstrate the following characteristics to create a therapeutic environment:

- The counselor will be responsible for assessment of each client and appropriate treatment planning or referral
- The counselor will serve as a facilitator by implementing a variety of techniques which range from directive counseling through client-initiated learning;
- The counselor will establish an atmosphere which encourages personal exploration of alternatives to self-defeating behaviors and attitudes; and,
- The counselor will work toward helping each client develop self-acceptance and a sense of individual worth.
- The clients participating in therapy will be expected to demonstrate the following characteristics while participating in the process:
 - The client will attempt to examine all problematic behaviors and interactions;
 - The client will learn to honestly express ideas and feelings toward self, others, and counselors;
 - The client will make an effort to talk about self at each therapy session
 - The client will participate in the therapy planning process; and,
 - The client will maintain consistent attendance at all therapy sessions.
- Family involvement is a key factor in the effectiveness of client programming. Families whose children are involved in therapeutic programming will be expected to demonstrate the following characteristics:
 - The family will participate in the initial assessment interviewing process;
 - The parents may participate in the Thursday evening Parent Support Group;
 - The family will participate in the therapy planning process;
 - The family will communicate regularly with the counselors;
 - The parent will be responsible to react to his/her child in an appropriate manner with regard to communications and discipline; and,
 - The family will feel free to discuss feelings, questions, and ideas with the counselor and will keep communication lines open with each other, counselors.

There is an emphasis on activities which develop self-motivation, self-discipline, creativity, mutual acceptance, respect, responsibility, and cooperation. The clients have progressive responsibility for accomplishing the goals of their therapy plan. The goal of therapy is to have each client living at his or her highest level of functioning (lowest level of care).

CLIENT'S RIGHTS

- Each client shall have impartial access to therapy regardless of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, mental or physical handicap, or ability to pay.
- Each client's personal dignity shall be recognized and respected in the provision of all care and therapy.
- Each client shall also have the following rights:
 1. To seek and have access to legal counsel.
 2. To refuse therapy or extraordinary therapy.
 3. To refuse to be a subject in a human subject research project.
 4. To confidentiality of all records.
 5. To file a verbal or formal written complaint to us in the event you are dissatisfied with our service. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.
 - a. The office manager is available to hear your feedback and has the authority to resolve customer issues quickly and efficiently.
 - b. If your issue is not resolved at this level, it will be raised to the Clinical Director.
 - c. If the issue is still not resolved at this level, you may file a complaint with the SD Board of Counselors.

Notice of Confidentiality Regulations

The confidentiality of alcohol and other drug abuse client records maintained by this program is protected by federal and state law and regulations. Generally, the agency may not say to a person outside the agency that a client receives therapy at this agency, or disclose any information identifying a client as a client unless:

1. The client consents in writing.
2. The disclosure is allowed by a court order, or
3. The disclosure is made to medical personnel in a medical emergency or to qualified personnel for research, audit, or program evaluation.

Violation of the federal and state law and regulations by this agency is a crime. Suspected violations may be reported by appropriate authorities in accordance with federal and state regulations.

Federal and state law regulations do not protect any information about a crime committed by a client either at the agency or against any person who works for the agency or about any threat to commit such a crime.

Federal and state laws and regulations do not protect any information about suspected client abuse or neglect from being reported under state law to appropriate state or local authorities. (See 42 U.S.S. 290dd-3 and 42 U.S.C. 290ee-3 for federal laws and 42 CFR Part 2 for federal regulations.)

Fire/Disaster Evacuation Plan

In the event of tornado or other natural disasters, clients and staff will exit the Stronghold Office and proceed to the hallway or restrooms located on the lower level.

There are fire extinguishers located on the lower level of the building on both the east and west side. In the event of a fire, clients and staff will evacuate the building utilizing either entrance.

Serving the Physically challenged and disabled client:

In regards to serving our physically challenged and handicapped clients, Stronghold staff will make an effort to accommodate depending on the extent and severity of the disability. In those cases where the physical layout of our

facility does not permit accommodations, we would be willing to meet with our clients at off site location.

If you have any problems with any aspect of your therapy, please inform your counselor or the Director of Stronghold.