

February 7, 2024

Dear Clients,

Thank you for having entrusted me with your care. It is truly an honor learning of your life and working with you to meet your goals. I appreciate your understanding and flexibility while I am on maternity leave. While I am looking forward to having quality time with my baby and family, I remain focused and committed to your needs as well.

My due date is March 13, 2024 (though I predict an early delivery!). I plan to be out of the office for a minimum of 8 weeks, postpartum. Each client will receive a text notification that maternity leave has begun. Since I plan to see clients up until I physically cannot, some appointments may be cancelled at the last minute. When the 8<sup>th</sup> week of maternity leave is approaching, I will check in with every client to assess their need for care. If a client is comfortable and confident in their coping, I will continue maternity leave for another 4 weeks (12 weeks in total). If their needs require more immediate care, I am happy to begin scheduling those clients in. However, the day/time of our regularly scheduled sessions may need to be modified for those remaining 4 weeks. If any client is willing and able to meet via telehealth, I may request us utilizing TherapySites (HIPPA compliant platform), as opposed to meeting in person.

I have no doubt that this may be a challenging time away from consistent treatment. Please do not hesitate to be in contact with me should the need arise. It is perfectly appropriate for you to be in contact with me to provide an update, ask a question, make a request, or to develop a plan of action to address any concerns. This is of no bother to me at all, I would rather we be able to address issues as they arise to keep up with your progress. You may be in contact with me via email, text message, or a phone call. I will likely check my email every day to every other day, so feel free to text if you would like me to be alerted right away. If you prefer to speak by phone, please send a text with this request so we can set up an appropriate window of opportunity, as I may not have the ability to maintain a confidential setting at random. If you only seek to provide an update, with no other request of me, I ask that you send the update via email. I will acknowledge receiving the email but may not necessarily form a detailed response as if we were in session.

Though I will certainly do my best, there will be times when I am not available to you when you may be in need. I ask that if your need is severe, you seek emergency services immediately. **Do not wait for a response from me. In the event of an emergency, please contact 911.** Please inform me if you find that your needs are not being properly met during this time and know that I support and encourage you to contact local counseling practices in the area as you need or would like. I have provided a list for you below. This list is not an endorsement of any practice or practitioner, nor is it an exhausted list of providers in the area. Psychology Today and/or the Provider List potentially offered by your insurance carrier may also be of help.

**Zepf Center Crisis Care Hotline: 419-904-2273 or Suicide/Crisis Hotline: 988 or 1-800-273-8255**  
**The Willow Center: (419) 720-5800** (Bowling Green & Toledo)  
**Karuna House: 419-806-6663** (Perrysburg)

**Wildwood Counseling Services: 419-405-1000 (Toledo)**  
**Sylvania Therapy and Counseling: 419-517-7073 (Sylvania)**

**Mild needs** are defined by issues that arise that you deem to be relatively expected or are confident that they can be coped with well enough within a matter of days or one to two weeks.

**Moderate needs** are those that are deemed imperative to your care in the present or may have a large impact on your future, that you find difficult to manage with your current set of coping skills, and will likely not see a decrease in intensity, frequency, or duration of consequential symptoms after two weeks.

**Severe needs** are those that are an immediate threat to your safety and well-being (real or perceived).

**In The Event of Therapist's Incapacitation or Demise:**

The continuation of your care, privacy, and confidentiality are of the utmost importance to me. In the event I encounter a medical emergency rendering me incapacitated to notify you directly, or to my demise, Steve Cukierski has been formally designated as the party responsible for the entirety of my practice, which includes Records Custodian. The position of Records Custodian is to ensure safety, confidentiality, transfer, and destruction of records for seven years per Ohio Law. The Records Custodian will not review or make changes to any records; only retrieve records to either transfer (with written consent by the client) or destroy the records at the appropriate time. With respect to my upcoming maternity leave (and only in the event of incapacitation), Records Custodian will have access to a prepared list which only includes the initials and phone numbers of active clients (clients who have been seen within the last 30 days) for the sole purpose of providing notification of maternity leave or any pertinent information regarding my inability to act as your provider in the future. Please seek support from another practitioner immediately should this be the case. **The Records Custodian will have no other identifying information about you, nor will he attempt to engage with you beyond sending a no-reply notification sent via text message from my phone. If you seek additional information related to your records, you may send a written request via email or USPS addressed to Records Custodian.**

Once again, I am truly honored and grateful to be working with you and appreciate your willingness to be flexible in your own care to allow me the opportunity to be with my growing family. Please take a moment to reflect on the work you have put into treatment, any valuable insights or skills you have picked up, how far you have come, and where you would like to see yourself in the second half of this year. I sincerely look forward to resuming our work together.

In Health,

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