



Kalamazoo Child and Family Counseling

Family Handbook

Effective Date: July 2026

What You'll Find in This Handbook

Section 1: Welcome to KCFC

Section 2: Our Services

Section 3: Getting Started

Section 4: What to Expect in Treatment

Section 5: Your Rights as a Client and Family

Section 6: Partnering for Success

Section 7: Privacy, Records, and Legal Considerations

Section 8: Safety, Crisis, and After-Hours Care

Section 9: Attendance, Cancellations, No-Shows, and Late Arrivals

Section 10: Financial Responsibility and Insurance

Section 11: Transitions, Referrals, and Ending Services

Section 12: Feedback, Complaints, and Grievances

Section 13: Handbook Acknowledgment

Need Help? We're Here for You.

Need...	Who to Contact / What to Do
Appointments	Call our office at 269-615-7637 or send a secure message through the Client Portal to schedule, cancel, or reschedule an appointment.
Billing Questions	Contact our Billing Department at 269-615-7637 ext. 303.
Medication Refills	Submit refill requests through the KCFC Client Portal. Please allow 3 business days for processing.
Privacy Questions	Tammy Walls, Privacy Officer 269-615-7637 ext. 303 privacy@kzoofamilycounseling.com
Clinical Director	Jeff LaPonsie, LMSW, 269-615-7637 ext. 711
Mental Health Emergency	Call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department if someone is in immediate danger.
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	Call or Text 988 for immediate mental health crisis support.
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222 (Available 24 hours a day)

Office Location

4341 S. Westnedge Ave., Ste 1112
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Office Hours

Monday–Friday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Saturday: By appointment only

Sunday: Closed

Hours may vary by clinician or program

After-Hours Reminder

KCFC is an outpatient behavioral health practice. Messages left through voicemail, email, text, or the Client Portal are not monitored continuously and should never be used during an emergency.

Visit Our Website

www.kzoofamilycounseling.com

Section 1: Welcome to KCFC

1.1 Welcome to Kalamazoo Child & Family Counseling

Welcome to Kalamazoo Child & Family Counseling (KCFC). We are so glad you are here.

We know that reaching out for mental health support is not always easy. Whether you're seeking services for your child, your family, or yourself, taking this first step often comes with a mix of hope, uncertainty, and questions. We want you to know that you are not alone. We are honored you've chosen to trust us, and we look forward to partnering with you.

At KCFC, we believe that meaningful change happens through caring relationships, collaboration, and evidence-based care. Our role is to provide a safe, supportive environment where children, adolescents, adults, and families can build new skills, strengthen relationships, and work toward healthier, more fulfilling lives.

This handbook is designed to help you understand what to expect while receiving services with us. Inside, you'll find information about our services, your rights and responsibilities, privacy and confidentiality, billing, attendance, communication, and other important

policies. More importantly, we hope this handbook helps you feel informed, prepared, and confident as we begin working together.

Please ask if you have questions about anything in this handbook. We're happy to explain not only what our policies are, but why they exist.

1.2 Our Mission

Helping families find more shared joy by providing exceptional mental health care to children, adolescents, and families through trauma-informed, pediatric-focused practice.

1.3 Our Vision

We envision a future where children's mental health is understood, protected, and nurtured as the foundation for strong families, strong futures, and thriving communities.

1.4 Our Values

Everything we do is guided by our CARE values:

Connection

Healing begins with relationships. We strive to build genuine, trusting partnerships with every child, family, and client we serve. We believe people grow best when they feel seen, heard, supported, and understood.

Accountability

We are committed to acting with honesty, professionalism, and integrity. We take responsibility for our work, communicate openly, and follow through on our commitments to the families who place their trust in us.

Respect

Every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and compassion. We value each person's unique experiences, culture, identity, beliefs, and perspective, and we work to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued.

Excellence

We are dedicated to giving your family the best possible care. This means using methods that really work, staying trauma-informed, and always looking for ways to improve. You and your family deserve high-quality support delivered with consistency and heart.

1.5 What You Can Expect From Us

When you choose KCFC, you can expect us to:

- Welcome you with kindness, compassion, and respect.
- Listen carefully to your concerns and take them seriously.

- Partner with you to develop treatment goals that reflect your family's needs and priorities.
- Explain recommendations, treatment options, and policies in clear, understandable language.
- Protect your privacy and confidentiality.
- Include parents and caregivers appropriately while respecting each client's developmental needs and therapeutic privacy.
- Provide care that is trauma-informed, evidence-based, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate.
- Communicate openly and honestly, even when conversations are difficult.
- Continually evaluate progress and adjust treatment as your needs change.

1.6 Our Commitment to Inclusive Care

We are a counseling practice for all families. We believe that all iterations of families are valid, and we honor the diverse ways families are formed, structured, and defined. Our doors are open to everyone, and we are committed to providing care that is inclusive and respectful. We do not discriminate against individuals or families based on their religious or political beliefs, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic. Whether you are

navigating life's challenges or seeking support for growth, we are here to walk alongside you, exactly as you are.

Section 2: Our Services

2.1 Caring for Your Whole Family

At KCFC, we offer a variety of services to support your family as your needs change. Our team coordinates care to ensure treatment is centered on your family's unique goals.

2.2 Our Heart-Centered Approach

Everything we do is built on a developmental, trauma-informed approach. This means we look beyond just symptoms to truly understand your child's experiences, strengths, and environment.

We believe that real healing happens through safe, trusting relationships. Our clinicians use methods that work, but we always tailor them to your child or family's specific needs. To us, therapy works best when you and your family are active, valued partners in the process.

2.3 Outpatient Therapy

Outpatient therapy is designed to support the child/teenager and the caregiver when facing life's emotional and behavioral challenges.

Therapy may help with concerns such as:

- Anxiety and excessive worry
- Depression and mood concerns
- Trauma and stressful life experiences
- Emotional regulation
- Behavioral challenges
- Family conflict
- Parenting concerns
- School-related difficulties
- Grief and loss
- Life transitions and adjustment
- Stress management
- Other mental health concerns

Depending on your needs, therapy may include individual sessions, family therapy, caregiver sessions, or a combination of these approaches. Your clinician will work with you to develop a treatment plan that supports your goals and builds on your family's strengths.

2.4 Psychological Evaluations

Sometimes you might have questions that therapy alone can't quite answer. A psychological evaluation can help you understand more deeply how your child thinks, learns, and processes the world around them.

We might suggest an evaluation to help clarify a diagnosis, identify learning needs, or guide your child's treatment and school supports.

While a referral from your pediatrician can help you get the most out of your

insurance, it's not always required. You're always welcome to reach out to us directly to discuss if testing might be a helpful next step for your child.

2.5 Medication Management

For some children and adolescents, medication can be an important part of an overall treatment plan. When clinically appropriate, KCFC offers psychiatric medication management for **non-pregnant children and adolescents** (2-21 years old) as part of our commitment to providing comprehensive pediatric behavioral health care.

2.5.1 Medication Refill Policy

To ensure your child has continuous access to their medications, we ask that all refill requests be submitted through the KCFC Client Portal. We ask that you allow **3 business days** for our team to process your request and coordinate with your pharmacy. Please plan ahead to avoid running out of medication. If your child is nearing the end of their current prescription and does not have a follow-up appointment scheduled, your provider may ask you to schedule a visit before the next refill can be authorized.

Our prescribing providers work closely with therapists in a team approach. With your permission, we also communicate with your child's primary care provider and other members of your healthcare team to ensure care is

coordinated, thoughtful, and centered around your child's needs.

Although a referral from your child's primary care provider may help maximize your insurance benefits, referrals are often not required. Our team is happy to discuss your options and help determine whether medication management may be an appropriate part of your child's care.

Because our medication management services are focused on pediatric behavioral health, we do not provide medication management for adults or for individuals who are pregnant, but we can connect you with an appropriate provider.

2.6 Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is an evidence-based treatment designed to help adolescents (13-18 years) build skills to manage intense emotions and respond more effectively to life's challenges.

Program Expectations:

- Weekly individual therapy
- Weekly skills group
- Diary card
- Practice between sessions

DBT may be appropriate for adolescents experiencing emotional dysregulation, self-harming behaviors, suicidal thoughts, or other difficulties managing overwhelming emotions.

Rather than simply talking about problems, DBT focuses on teaching practical skills that can be used in everyday life.

Our comprehensive outpatient DBT program includes:

- **One individual therapy session each week** to address personal goals, apply DBT skills to everyday challenges, and support ongoing progress.
- **Your weekly DBT skills group**, where you learn and practice skills in mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness alongside peers.
- **Your access to skills coaching**, giving you and your family the opportunity to receive guidance between sessions when you need help applying DBT skills to real-life situations.

Our goal is to help adolescents not only understand these skills during therapy, but also develop the confidence to use them successfully in their daily lives at home, at school, and in their relationships.

2.7 Adolescent DBT Intensive Outpatient Program (DBT IOP)

For adolescents who need more support than traditional outpatient therapy or outpatient DBT program, our Adolescent Dialectical Behavior Therapy Intensive Outpatient Program (DBT IOP) provides a higher level of

structured care while allowing teens to continue living at home and remain connected to their families, school, and community.

Designed for youth ages 12 through the end of high school, this program often lasts 4–6 weeks and is a structured commitment intended to support adolescents transitioning from inpatient treatment or for those who are at risk of needing more intense services. To support the best possible outcomes, the program requires meeting for 3 hours a day for 3 days a week, and includes participation in individual and family counseling as recommended by your clinical team, along with weekly psychiatry visits.

The program combines evidence-based DBT treatment with structured therapeutic programming to help adolescents strengthen emotional regulation, improve relationships, and build resilience. Because these requirements are essential to the effectiveness and safety of the program, please keep in mind that if participation requirements are not met, a client may be discharged from the program or may be unable to utilize insurance benefits for this service. We are here to support you in navigating these commitments so your family can safely move toward healing while remaining in your home environment.

2.8 Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

PCIT is an evidence-based treatment for young children (2-6 years old) and their caregivers.

Program Expectations:

- Weekly coaching sessions
- Daily practice of strategies at home
- Regular progress-tracking questionnaires

The program often takes 12-26 weeks to complete.

PCIT helps strengthen the parent-child relationship while building positive parenting skills, improving communication, increasing emotional regulation, and reducing challenging behaviors. Parents and caregivers play an active role throughout treatment, learning practical skills they can continue using long after therapy ends.

2.9 Telehealth Services

Life is busy, and we know that getting to the office isn't always easy. When it's appropriate for your child's care, many of our services are available through secure telehealth appointments.

Telehealth gives your family more flexibility without compromising on quality. To make sure your child's session is effective and private, we just

ask that you find a quiet, private spot with a reliable internet connection.

Your clinician will help determine whether telehealth is an appropriate option based on your treatment needs, safety, age, and the type of service being provided.

2.10 Partnering with Your Child's Care Team

We believe the best care often involves your child's whole support system.

With your permission, we can coordinate with your child's pediatrician, school, or other specialists. This helps everyone stay on the same page, simplifies communication, and ensures your child receives consistent, coordinated support.

Whenever information is shared, we only disclose the information necessary to support your care while continuing to protect your privacy and confidentiality.

2.11 Finding the Right Path for Your Family

You don't need to have all the answers or know exactly what service you need before you call, that's exactly what we're here to help you figure out.

During our first few conversations, we'll learn about your concerns and help you decide which path is best for your child. Whether that's starting with

outpatient therapy, an evaluation, or one of our specialized programs like DBT or PCIT, we'll guide you through every step.

If we feel another provider or a different level of care would serve your family better, we'll explain why and help connect you with the right resources. Our goal is simple: to help every child, family, and individual receive the right care at the right time so they can move toward greater health, stronger relationships, and more shared joy.

Section 3: Getting Started

3.1 Beginning Your Journey With KCFC

Our goal is to make the process of getting started as simple and welcoming as possible, from your first phone call through your first appointment.

3.2 Starting Services

Families may begin services by calling our office, submitting an inquiry through our website, or being referred by a physician, school, hospital, or another community provider.

When you contact us, it is helpful to have your insurance card, any secondary insurance information, your Health Savings Account (HSA) or

Flexible Spending Account (FSA) card if you plan to use one, and your calendar or schedule available so we can discuss appointment availability. If your child has received previous behavioral health services or has important medical information, having those details available can also be helpful.

Once we receive your request, our Intake Team will gather information to better understand your concerns, verify your insurance benefits, answer any initial questions you may have, and help determine which services may best meet your family's needs.

Our goal is to connect you with the right service and the right clinician as quickly as possible while considering your child's and family's unique strengths, needs, and preferences.

Whenever possible, we strive to offer every new family an initial appointment within seven (7) business days of their request for services.

While occasional circumstances such as provider availability, specialty service needs, or insurance requirements may affect scheduling, we are committed to providing timely access to care and will keep you informed throughout the process.

3.3 Finding the Right Provider

No two families are exactly alike, and neither are our clinicians.

Rather than assigning appointments at random, we carefully consider several factors when matching you with a provider, including:

- Your child's age and developmental needs
- The concerns bringing you to treatment
- The type of service being requested
- A clinician's specialty, training, and experience
- Insurance participation and payer requirements
- Scheduling availability
- The level of care that may be needed
- Your family's preferences whenever possible

Although we cannot guarantee a specific clinician or appointment time, we work hard to make thoughtful matches that give treatment the best opportunity for success.

3.4 Your Intake Appointment

Your first appointment is an opportunity for us to begin getting to know you and your family.

During this visit, your clinician will ask questions about your concerns, your child's development and history, current symptoms, family relationships, medical history, previous treatment, strengths, and goals for care.

You don't need to have every answer before your first appointment. Many families arrive feeling uncertain about where to begin, and that's completely okay. Your clinician will guide the conversation and help you feel comfortable throughout the process.

3.5 Clinical Fit

One of our responsibilities is making sure the services we provide are appropriate for your needs.

As we learn more about your situation, we may determine that KCFC is an excellent fit, recommend a different service within our practice, or occasionally suggest another provider or level of care that can better meet your needs.

Although we strive to serve as many children and families as possible, there are times when another provider or organization may be better equipped to meet your needs.

Examples include situations where:

- A higher level of care is needed.
- The requested service is outside KCFC's scope of practice.
- A specialized service that we do not offer would better meet your needs.
- Your insurance does not cover the requested service at KCFC.
- We are unable to reasonably meet a communication or accessibility need.

- Whenever possible, we'll help guide you toward appropriate community resources so you can continue moving forward with care.

3.6 Waitlists

We are committed to providing timely access to care and strive to offer appointments as quickly as possible. However, some specialized services, programs, or clinicians may have limited availability due to high demand or enrollment capacity. For example, group-based programs, intensive outpatient services, psychological testing, or clinicians with specialized training may occasionally reach capacity.

If your preferred service or clinician is not immediately available, we will discuss your options with you. Depending on your family's needs and current availability, those options may include:

- Remaining on the waitlist for a specific clinician or program
- Scheduling with another qualified clinician who is available sooner
- Choosing a different appointment day or time
- Receiving referral recommendations to another community provider if more immediate services are needed

Waitlists are managed based on clinical need, the type of service

requested, referral date, and appointment availability. Our team regularly reviews waitlists and will contact you as soon as an appropriate opening becomes available. We encourage you to let us know if your availability or contact information changes while you are waiting for services.

If your child or family's needs change while you are on the waitlist, please contact our office. We will review your situation with you and determine whether a different level of care, an earlier appointment, or a referral to another provider may be more appropriate.

3.7 Services We Do Not Provide

To ensure we provide the highest quality care within our areas of expertise, there are some services we do not offer.

These include:

- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
- Primary treatment for eating disorders
- Moderate to severe substance use disorders and/or dependency
- Treatment of Conversion Disorders
- Custody evaluations
- Forensic evaluations

If you're unsure whether KCFC offers a particular service, we're always happy to answer your questions.

3.8 Court-Ordered Services

KCFC may accept court-ordered therapy referrals on a case-by-case basis. These referrals are reviewed by our Clinical Director before acceptance to ensure they are clinically appropriate and consistent with our scope of practice.

3.9 Comprehensive Child and Family Assessments

Although KCFC does not perform custody evaluations, we may provide comprehensive child and family assessments for families experiencing significant conflict or complex family dynamics. These assessments are designed to identify each family member's strengths, needs, and contributing factors affecting family functioning in order to develop a coordinated, individualized plan of care. Recommendations may include therapeutic interventions, parenting supports, family-based services, coordination with community resources, and strategies to help family members work together as effectively as possible while supporting the child's emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs. These assessments are therapeutic in nature and are intended to guide treatment planning and service coordination.

3.10 Consent for Services for Minors

Before providing services to a minor, we must obtain consent from a parent or legal guardian who has the legal authority to authorize treatment.

We understand that custody arrangements can sometimes be complicated. The documentation we request is not intended to create additional stress. It helps us ensure we are respecting everyone's legal rights while focusing on your child's care.

When parents are divorced, separated, or subject to a custody order, we may ask for copies of court orders, divorce decrees, guardianship documents, foster care placement paperwork, powers of attorney, or other legal documents that identify who has the authority to make healthcare decisions.

When parents share joint legal custody, we generally require consent from both parents before services begin unless a court order specifically states otherwise.

If there is disagreement between parents regarding treatment, we may require additional documentation or a court order before beginning or continuing services. We are not able to accept assenting minors for treatment without parental consent.

To ensure we are respecting everyone's legal rights while focusing on your child's care, we may ask you to provide documentation such as:

- Divorce judgments
- Custody orders
- Guardianship paperwork
- Foster care placement documentation
- Adoption records
- Powers of attorney
- Other legal documents affecting healthcare decision-making

3.11 Forms We'll Ask You to Complete

Before services begin, we'll ask you to review and complete several forms. These help us understand your family's needs, protect your privacy, verify legal authority, explain financial responsibilities, and ensure we're able to provide safe, effective care.

Completing these forms before your first appointment allows us to spend more time focusing on what matters most, getting to know you and beginning your care.

Section 4: What to Expect with Us

4.1 Beginning the Therapy Journey

We want you to know what to expect during your first few visits. Usually, an initial appointment is held with a caregiver to gather background information, followed by an

appointment with your child to begin building a therapeutic relationship.

4.2 Creating Your Treatment Plan

Treatment begins with getting to know you, your family, and understanding what brought you to KCFC. We use a person-centered planning approach, which means you and your family are active partners in developing your care. Rather than creating a plan for you, we create it with you.

Together, you and your clinician will identify goals that are meaningful to your child and family. Your treatment plan will be guided by your concerns, clinical assessment, diagnosis (when appropriate), your family's strengths, preferences, culture, values, available supports, and the outcomes you hope to achieve. We will work together to identify priorities, determine the services and interventions that best meet your needs, and establish realistic goals that support your family's success.

As therapy progresses, your treatment plan will grow and change with you. We will regularly review your progress together, celebrate successes, discuss challenges, and make adjustments as your family's needs, goals, and circumstances evolve. We believe families are essential partners throughout the therapeutic process, and your voice will continue to guide

the care we provide every step of the way.

4.3 Families Are Part of the Healing Process

Children do best when the important adults in their lives are involved in their care.

Depending on your child's age, developmental level, and treatment goals, parents and caregivers may participate in assessment, treatment planning, family sessions, skill building, progress reviews, and transition planning.

Your observations, questions, and involvement provide valuable insight that helps guide treatment. We encourage you to share changes you've noticed at home, school, or in other settings, including concerns about safety, medications, family stressors, medical issues, or significant life events. Many of the skills learned during therapy become even more effective when they're supported outside the therapy office. Together, we'll work to help your child apply what they're learning in everyday life.

4.4 Measuring Progress Together

Progress in therapy doesn't always happen in a straight line. Some weeks

will feel easier than others, and that's a normal part of the process.

Throughout treatment, we'll regularly talk about how things are going and whether your treatment plan continues to meet your needs. We may also use symptom questionnaires, caregiver feedback, your observations, school input (with your permission), and other clinical tools to help measure progress.

If something isn't working, we'll talk about it together and adjust the plan. Therapy should always feel like a collaborative process.

4.5 Evidence-Based Care

We are committed to providing care that is grounded in research while recognizing that every child and family is unique.

Our clinicians use evidence-based practices that are developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and tailored to each family's individual circumstances. Evidence-based care means using treatment approaches that have been carefully studied and shown to be effective. For example, a child who has experienced trauma may receive Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), an approach supported by extensive research to help children process difficult experiences, develop healthy coping skills, and strengthen their relationship with a safe caregiver.

Rather than applying the same approach to every family, we carefully select interventions based on your child's needs, strengths, goals, and the best available clinical evidence, while partnering with you throughout the treatment process.

4.6 How Long Will Therapy Last?

Every family's journey is different.

Some concerns can be addressed in a relatively short period of time, while others require longer-term support. The length of treatment depends on many factors, including your goals, symptoms, attendance, participation, outside stressors, and the progress being made.

Rather than focusing on a specific number of sessions, we focus on helping you make meaningful progress toward your goals.

As treatment continues, we'll regularly discuss whether therapy should continue, change, pause, or transition to another level of care.

4.7 How Often Will We Meet?

Appointment frequency is based on your clinical needs, treatment goals, and the type of service you're receiving.

Many families begin with weekly appointments, while others may attend every other week or on another

schedule recommended by their clinician. Specialized services, such as DBT, DBT IOP, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), medication management, and psychological evaluations, have their own scheduling expectations.

As progress is made, your appointment schedule may change to best support your continued growth.

4.8 Understanding Diagnosis

Some services require a mental health diagnosis for treatment planning or insurance billing.

A diagnosis is simply one tool that helps us better understand symptoms, guide treatment recommendations, communicate with other healthcare providers when appropriate, and meet insurance requirements.

A diagnosis does **not** define who your child is or determine their potential. We encourage you to ask questions about diagnoses, recommendations, or treatment at any time. We believe families make the best decisions when they have clear information and feel included in the process.

4.9 If Your Provider Doesn't Feel Like the Right Fit

One of the strongest predictors of success in therapy is a trusting relationship between the client and their therapist.

If something doesn't feel like the right fit, we encourage you to talk with your clinician or contact our leadership team. Sometimes a conversation helps clarify expectations, while other times another provider may be a better match.

Requesting a different clinician is completely okay and will never be viewed as a complaint. We'll carefully consider your request and do our best to accommodate it based on clinical needs, provider availability, and scheduling.

Our goal is to help you find the therapeutic relationship that best supports your family's success.

4.10 Growth Happens Between Sessions

While therapy sessions are important, much of the real growth happens in everyday life.

Your clinician may encourage you or your child to practice new coping skills, communication strategies, parenting techniques, relaxation exercises, or other activities between appointments. These experiences help turn new skills into lasting habits.

There is no expectation of perfection. Learning something new takes practice, and setbacks are a normal part of the process. What matters most is continuing to learn, grow, and keep moving forward together.

Section 5: Your Rights as a Client and Family

5.1 Our Commitment to You

At KCFC, every child, adolescent, adult client, parent, caregiver, and family deserves to be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect.

When you receive services with us, you become our partner in care. We are committed to creating an environment where you feel safe, heard, informed, and involved in decisions about your treatment.

The following rights are designed to protect your privacy, promote quality care, and ensure every person we serve is treated fairly and respectfully.

5.2 The Right to Respectful Care

You have the right to receive services in a safe, professional, and welcoming environment.

We are committed to treating every person with dignity regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, socioeconomic status, or any other protected characteristic.

You also have the right to receive services that are free from:

- Abuse

- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Harassment
- Humiliation
- Discrimination
- Retaliation
- Coercion
- Violations of privacy or confidentiality

5.3 The Right to Participate in Your Care

We believe the best outcomes happen when clients and families are active participants in treatment.

You have the right to:

- Participate in developing your treatment goals.
- Ask questions about recommendations or services.

5.4 The Rights of Your Children and Teens

Children and adolescents deserve to feel safe, respected, and heard.

We believe young people benefit when they have a trusting relationship with their therapist while also receiving the support and involvement of their parents or caregivers.

Depending on a child's age, developmental level, and treatment needs, clinicians will work with families to balance therapeutic privacy with caregiver involvement. Parents and guardians will always be included

when significant safety concerns arise or when their involvement is necessary to support treatment.

5.5 Assent: Giving Children and Teens a Voice

While parents and legal guardians provide legal consent for treatment, we also believe it is important to involve children and adolescents in decisions about their care whenever it is developmentally appropriate. This process is called **assent**.

Assent means that, although a child may not be legally able to consent to treatment, we take the time to explain therapy in a way they can understand, answer their questions, listen to their concerns, and invite them to participate in the process. We want children to understand why they are coming to therapy, what they can expect, and how they can work together with their therapist.

Whenever possible, we will seek a child's willingness to participate in treatment and respect their thoughts, feelings, and preferences. While there may be situations where treatment continues based on a parent or guardian's legal authority and the child's clinical needs, we believe therapy is most successful when children feel heard, respected, and included.

As children grow into adolescence, we encourage increasing participation in decisions about their care. Our

clinicians will work with both adolescents and their parents or guardians to balance the young person's developing independence with the important role families continue to play in supporting treatment, safety, and overall well-being.

5.6 The Right to Make Informed Decisions

You have the right to receive the information you need to make informed decisions about treatment.

This includes information about:

- Recommended services
- Treatment options
- Potential benefits and risks
- Available alternatives
- Financial responsibilities
- Limits of confidentiality
- Coordination with other providers

You also have the right to refuse treatment or withdraw your consent when permitted by law. If you choose to do so, we'll discuss how that decision may affect your care and help you understand any available options.

5.7 The Right to Request a Different Provider

The relationship between you and your clinician is one of the most important parts of successful therapy.

If you feel another provider may be a better fit, you have the right to request a change. We'll carefully review your request and do our best to accommodate it based on clinical needs, provider availability, scheduling, and insurance requirements.

Requesting a different provider will never be viewed as a complaint.

5.8 The Right to Privacy and Confidentiality

Your privacy is important to us.

We protect your health information in accordance with federal and state law, professional ethics, and KCFC policies. Information about your care is shared only when you provide authorization or when disclosure is permitted or required by law.

5.9 The Right to Access Your Records

You have the right to request access to your health records as permitted by law. To request your records, please contact our office in writing. We will verify your identity before releasing any health information.

5.10 The Right to Understand Costs

You have the right to receive clear information about the financial aspects of your care.

We're happy to answer questions about:

- Insurance benefits
- Copays
- Deductibles
- Coinsurance
- Private-pay fees
- Account balances
- Payment plans
- Billing questions

If you have questions about your account, please contact our Billing Department at **269-615-7637 ext. 303**. We're here to help.

5.11 The Right to Voice Concerns

We value your feedback because it helps us continue improving the care we provide.

If something isn't meeting your expectations, we encourage you to let us know. Many concerns can be resolved through open communication, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you to find a solution whenever possible.

You have the right to file a complaint or grievance without fear of retaliation. Raising a concern or asking questions will never affect the quality of care you or your family receive.

5.12 The Right to Advocacy

You have the right to seek assistance from advocacy organizations, legal

representatives, insurance providers, licensing boards, or other agencies if you have concerns about your care or your rights.

While we hope to address concerns directly whenever possible, we fully support your right to access outside resources when needed.

5.13 Accessibility and Accommodations

We believe that everyone deserves equal access to care. If you have questions about accessibility or need an accommodation—related to mobility, sensory needs, or communication—please let us know.

5.14 Language Access

While we do not provide in-house translation, we are committed to helping you find appropriate referral options to ensure you receive quality care in the language most comfortable for your family.

Section 6: Partnering for Success

6.1 Mental Health Care Is a Partnership

Mental health care is a partnership. Meaningful change happens when clinicians and families work together

toward shared goals, staying engaged and communicating openly.

6.2 How You Can Help Support Treatment

You can help your child, or yourself get the most from services by:

- Attending scheduled appointments or notifying us as soon as possible if you need to cancel or reschedule.
- Participating honestly and openly during treatment.
- Asking questions whenever something is unclear.
- Following safety plans and treatment recommendations when they are developed together.
- Letting us know about important changes in your life, such as hospitalizations, medication changes, school concerns, legal involvement, or significant family events.
- Supporting the practice of skills and strategies between appointments.
- Treating our staff, clinicians, other clients, and our office with kindness and respect.
- Keeping your account current according to your financial agreement.
- Sharing feedback so we can continue improving your experience.

6.3 Helping Us Keep Information Current

Providing accurate and up-to-date information allows us to deliver safe, coordinated care.

Please let us know if any of the following change during treatment:

- Address, phone number, or email address
- Insurance coverage
- Pharmacy information
- Medications, drug allergies, and supplements used
- Emergency contacts
- Custody or guardianship arrangements
- Primary care provider
- Hospitalizations
- Significant changes in your child's safety or mental health

Keeping this information current helps us communicate effectively and respond appropriately if concerns arise.

6.4 A Safe and Respectful Environment

Everyone deserves to feel safe while receiving care.

We ask all clients, family members, visitors, and staff to treat one another with courtesy, patience, and respect. Disruptive, threatening, discriminatory, intimidating, abusive, or harassing behavior is not consistent with our values and may result in changes to

services when necessary to protect the safety of others.

Whenever possible, we will work with families to resolve concerns before considering changes to treatment.

6.5 Participating Safely in Services

6.5.1 Tobacco and Vape-Free Campus

To help us keep our campus a healthy and comfortable space for you and your child, we maintain a tobacco and vape-free environment. Please refrain from using tobacco, e-cigarettes, or vaping devices anywhere on our campus, including the building and the parking areas. We truly appreciate your help in keeping our space fresh and healthy for everyone.

6.5.2 Drug-Free Campus

We want our campus to be a safe and supportive environment for you and your family, so we are a drug-free facility. We prohibit the possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs or the misuse of substances on our property. Because your child's care depends on everyone being fully present and engaged, we ask that you and any caregivers arrive ready to participate fully. If you or any participant appears to be under the influence of substances that might affect judgment or participation, we may need to pause or reschedule your

appointment to ensure safety and support for your child's care.

6.5.3 Weapons Policy

Your safety, and the safety of your child, is our top priority. To ensure our office remains a secure and peaceful space for healing, we ask that you please leave firearms, knives, and other weapons at home. This policy applies to all visitors, clients, and staff, unless you are a law enforcement officer acting in your official capacity. Thank you for your understanding and for helping us keep our space safe for everyone.

6.5.4 Recording and Surveillance Policy

To protect the privacy and therapeutic environment of your child's session, we expressly forbid the recording or surveillance of any kind. This includes audio or video recording, as well as the use of note-taking devices. We want your child to feel safe and completely free to express themselves. If you have a specific need to use a recording or note-taking device, please submit this request to our staff in writing for review prior to your session.

6.6 Caregiver Availability During Appointments

Parents and caregivers are an important part of treatment, even when they are not participating in the therapy session itself.

For children under the age of 12, we ask that a parent, legal guardian, or approved caregiver remain in our office or be immediately available during the appointment unless another arrangement has been approved by your clinician.

This allows us to involve you quickly if your child needs support, if important clinical information needs to be discussed, or if an unexpected situation arises.

Children under 12 should not be dropped off for appointments without an approved caregiver remaining available.

For adolescents, caregiver availability may vary depending on age, developmental level, treatment goals, safety concerns, and the type of service being provided.

6.7 Communicating With Us

Open communication is essential to successful treatment. For routine matters, please use the **Client Portal**. The Client Portal is the secure, preferred way to send routine messages, complete paperwork, receive documents, and request medication refills.

Section 7: Privacy, Records, and Legal Considerations

7.1 Your Privacy Matters

Seeking mental health care requires trust, and protecting your family's privacy is one of our most important responsibilities. We safeguard your personal and health information in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), applicable Michigan law, and professional ethical standards.

When you begin services, you'll receive our Notice of Privacy Practices, which explains in greater detail how your information may be used and shared. This section provides an overview of those practices and answers many of the questions families commonly ask.

7.2 Understanding Confidentiality

Confidentiality means that the information you share with us is kept private and protected by law.

Your protected health information may include:

- Appointment information
- Diagnoses
- Treatment recommendations
- Progress notes
- Psychological testing results

- Medication management records
- Billing and insurance information
- Other records related to your care

We may use or share your information for purposes such as:

- Providing treatment
- Coordinating care with other healthcare providers when appropriate
- Billing insurance and processing payments
- Healthcare operations, including quality improvement and accreditation
- Other situations permitted or required by law

Whenever information is shared, we disclose only the minimum information necessary for the intended purpose whenever possible.

7.3 Confidentiality for Children and Adolescents

One of the most common questions parents ask is:

"Will my child's therapist tell me everything they say during therapy?"

Usually, the answer is no, and that's intentional.

Children and adolescents benefit most from therapy when they know they have a safe place to talk openly about their thoughts, feelings, and

experiences. Building that trust allows therapy to be more honest, productive, and effective.

At the same time, parents and caregivers remain essential partners in treatment. Protecting a child's therapeutic privacy does **not** mean keeping parents out of the process. Throughout treatment, your clinician will regularly discuss:

- Progress toward treatment goals
- Clinical recommendations
- Ways you can support your child at home
- Concerns affecting treatment

If significant safety concerns arise, parents or guardians will always be involved whenever clinically appropriate and legally permitted.

Our goal is to balance your child's need for a trusted therapeutic relationship with your important role as a parent or caregiver.

7.4 When Information Must Be Shared

Although most information remains confidential, there are situations where we are legally or ethically required—or permitted—to disclose information without your written authorization.

Examples include:

- Suspected child abuse or neglect

- Suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult
- Serious concerns that someone may harm themselves
- Serious concerns that someone may harm another person
- Emergencies requiring immediate intervention
- Court orders or other legal requirements
- Certain court-ordered treatment situations
- Other circumstances permitted or required by law

Whenever appropriate, we will discuss these situations with you before sharing information unless doing so would increase the risk of harm or is prohibited by law.

7.5 Your Medical Record

When you begin services with KCFC, we create a confidential medical record to help coordinate your care, document treatment, and support continuity of services.

Depending on the services you receive, your record may include:

- Contact and demographic information
- Intake assessments
- Medical and behavioral health history
- Treatment plans
- Progress notes
- Diagnoses
- Psychological testing reports

- Medication management records
- Safety plans
- Consent and authorization forms
- Billing and insurance information
- Other documents necessary to support your care

We maintain these records securely and protect them in accordance with applicable federal and Michigan law.

Accessing Your Records

Adult clients generally have the right to access their own records.

Parents and legal guardians generally have the right to access their child's records, although certain portions of the record may be limited when permitted by law or when disclosure could result in harm.

Requests for records must be made through our office so we can verify identity before releasing protected health information.

Records may be provided electronically or in paper format as permitted by law.

Sharing Records

We will not release your records to schools, physicians, attorneys, family members, or other organizations without your written authorization unless disclosure is permitted or required by law.

Complex requests, subpoenas, or legal matters may require additional processing time and applicable administrative fees.

Record Retention

KCFC retains medical records according to federal and Michigan law.

- Adult records are retained for at least seven (7) years after the last date of service.
- Records for clients treated as minors are retained until the later of the client's twenty-fifth (25th) birthday or seven (7) years after the last date of service.

After the required retention period, records are securely destroyed to protect your privacy.

7.6 Legal Considerations

Mental health treatment for children sometimes involves legal issues such as custody, guardianship, or court orders. Our responsibility is to follow applicable laws while keeping the focus on your child's well-being.

Consent for Treatment

Before treating a minor, we must verify that the person providing consent has the legal authority to make healthcare decisions.

For additional information about required documentation, please refer

to **Section 3.10: Consent for Services for Minors.**

Shared Custody

When parents share legal custody, both parents may need to participate in treatment decisions depending on the custody order and applicable law.

If parents disagree about treatment, we may delay beginning or continuing services until the disagreement is resolved, additional documentation is provided, or a court issues further direction.

KCFC does not determine custody or parenting time. We follow applicable law and court orders.

Changes in Legal Status

Please notify us promptly if there are changes involving:

- Custody
- Guardianship
- Foster care placement
- Adoption
- Court orders affecting parental rights
- Other changes in legal decision-making authority

Providing updated documentation helps ensure we communicate with the appropriate individuals and comply with legal requirements.

Court Referrals

KCFC may accept court-ordered therapy referrals when clinically appropriate.

Although we may provide treatment for families involved in the legal system, our role remains that of a treating behavioral health provider.

We do **not**:

- Conduct custody evaluations
- Recommend custody arrangements
- Determine parenting time
- Advocate for either parent
- Provide forensic evaluations

Court Testimony

Whenever possible, we encourage attorneys to obtain the information they need through medical records rather than requiring a treating clinician to testify.

If a clinician is subpoenaed or otherwise required to participate in legal proceedings, professional fees will apply according to our current fee schedule.

7.7 Communication at KCFC

We want communicating with our team to be easy, convenient, and secure. Choosing the right method of communication helps us respond appropriately while protecting your privacy.

Client Portal

The Client Portal is our preferred

method for routine communication. Through the portal, you can:

- Send secure, non-urgent messages to your clinician.
- Complete forms and questionnaires.
- Receive documents and updates related to your care.
- Request medication refills.
- Exchange non-urgent clinical information.

Using the Client Portal helps protect your privacy while ensuring important communications become part of your medical record when appropriate.

Phone Calls

Our office is available to assist with scheduling, billing questions, and other administrative needs. If you leave a voicemail, we will return your call as soon as reasonably possible during regular business hours.

Email

Email may be used for limited administrative communication when appropriate. Because standard email is not always secure, we ask that you avoid sending confidential or clinical information by email whenever possible. For secure communication, please use the Client Portal.

Text Messaging

Most KCFC clinicians do not communicate with clients by text message. Limited exceptions may exist for specific services, such as Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), where skills coaching by text is part of the

treatment model. Your clinician will discuss these expectations with you if they apply to your care.

Response Times

We strive to respond to routine, non-urgent messages within **two (2) business days**. Response times may vary depending on weekends, holidays, or clinician availability.

Important Reminder

KCFC is an outpatient behavioral health practice. Messages sent through the Client Portal, voicemail, email, or text message are **not monitored continuously** and should never be used during an emergency. If you or your child is experiencing a mental health emergency, call **911**, call or text **988**, or go to the nearest emergency department.

Privacy Officer

Tammy Walls
269-615-7637 ext. 303
twalls@kzoofamilycounseling.com

Section 8: Safety, Crisis, and After-Hours Care

8.1 Your Safety Is Our Priority

Nothing is more important than the safety and well-being of our clients and their families.

While we are committed to supporting you throughout your treatment, it's important to understand that KCFC is an outpatient behavioral health

practice. This means we provide scheduled outpatient services and are **not** an emergency department or crisis response provider.

This chapter explains what to do if you or your child experiences a mental health emergency, how to access help after our office is closed, and how we work with families to support safety throughout treatment.

8.2 Mental Health Emergencies

If you believe you or your child is in immediate danger or experiencing a mental health crisis that cannot safely wait for your next appointment, please seek emergency assistance immediately.

You should:

- Call **911** if there is an immediate risk to someone's safety.
- Go to the nearest emergency department for an urgent mental health evaluation.
- Call or text **988**, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, for immediate crisis support.
- If you live in Kalamazoo County, call or text **988** and request **Kalamazoo County Mobile Crisis Response** when appropriate.

Please do not wait for a response from KCFC if immediate help is needed.

8.3 When to Use the Emergency Department

As a parent or caregiver, it can be difficult to know when a situation has become an emergency. If you're ever unsure, it's always appropriate to seek emergency evaluation. You know your child best, and we'd rather you seek help than wait too long.

A mental health evaluation at the nearest emergency department may be appropriate if your child or adolescent is:

- Talking about suicide and has a plan, intent, or cannot agree to stay safe.
- Engaging in serious self-harm or has injuries that require medical attention.
- Making credible threats to seriously harm another person.
- Experiencing hallucinations, delusions, or significant confusion that makes it difficult to distinguish reality.
- Experiencing extreme emotional distress that cannot be safely managed at home.
- Displaying aggression or behaviors that place themselves or others at immediate risk of harm.
- Experiencing a severe reaction to a medication or a medical condition affecting their mental health.
- Unable to be safely supervised in the home or community.

If you believe your child or someone else is in immediate danger, call **911** right away.

If the situation is urgent but not life-threatening, you can also call or text **988**, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, for immediate support and guidance. Crisis counselors can help determine the safest next steps, including whether an emergency department evaluation or mobile crisis response may be appropriate.

Remember, seeking emergency care does not mean therapy has failed. Mental health crises can occur even when families are actively engaged in treatment. Getting immediate help is an important step in keeping your child safe, and once the crisis has stabilized, we'll work with you to continue supporting your family's care.

8.4 When to Contact KCFC

Many situations feel urgent without being emergencies.

Questions about treatment, medications, appointments, school concerns, family stressors, or changes in symptoms can usually wait until regular business hours and should be communicated through the **Client Portal** or by contacting our office.

If you're ever unsure whether a situation is an emergency, it's always safest to seek immediate medical or crisis assistance first.

8.5 Crisis and Emergency Resources

Your family's safety is our highest priority. Mental health challenges can sometimes feel overwhelming, and there may be times when you or your child experience a crisis or need immediate support. Reaching out for help during those moments is an important step in keeping yourself or your child safe.

KCFC does not provide emergency or after-hours crisis services. Messages sent through the Client Portal, voicemail, email, text message, or other routine communication methods are not monitored continuously and may not be reviewed until the next business day. If you are experiencing an emergency, please do not wait for a response from our office.

If you or your child needs immediate assistance, contact one of the following resources:

- **Call 911** for life-threatening emergencies or if someone is in immediate danger.
- **Call or text 988** to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline for immediate mental health crisis support.
- **Go to your nearest emergency department** if urgent psychiatric evaluation or medical care is needed.
- **Kalamazoo County residents:** Call **988** and request **Mobile Crisis Response** for in-person

crisis intervention when appropriate.

- **Poison Control:** Call **1-800-222-1222** if someone has been exposed to or ingested a poisonous substance. Poison Control specialists are available 24 hours a day to provide immediate guidance and determine whether additional medical care is needed.

We encourage you to discuss any concerns related to safety with your clinician during treatment. Together, we can develop a safety plan and identify resources to help you and your family respond effectively if a crisis occurs.

8.6 Safety Planning

Sometimes therapy includes developing a safety plan.

A safety plan is a personalized plan created by you, your family, and your clinician to help prepare for times when emotions become overwhelming or safety concerns arise.

Depending on your needs, a safety plan may include:

- Warning signs that additional support may be needed.
- Healthy coping strategies.
- People you can contact for support.
- Emergency resources.
- Steps caregivers can take to increase safety.

- Recommendations for reducing access to potentially dangerous items when appropriate.

Safety plans are designed to help families feel prepared rather than overwhelmed and are reviewed whenever circumstances change.

8.7 Keeping Parents Informed

Parents and caregivers play an essential role in helping children stay safe.

If significant safety concerns arise during treatment including concerns about suicide, self-harm, violence, abuse, neglect, or other situations that may place a child or someone else at risk we will involve parents or legal guardians whenever clinically appropriate and legally permitted.

Whenever possible, we encourage children and adolescents to participate in those conversations so families can work together toward safety, healing, and recovery.

8.8 Weather Closures and Unexpected Events

Occasionally, severe weather, power outages, building issues, or other unexpected events may affect our ability to provide services.

If this happens, we'll make every effort to notify you as quickly as possible through one or more of the following:

- The KCFC Client Portal
- Phone calls or text notifications, when appropriate
- Our website
- KCFC social media

Our Clinical Director or designee is responsible for making decisions regarding office closures or service interruptions.

8.9 Telehealth During Closures

When clinically appropriate, your appointment may be converted to a telehealth visit instead of being canceled.

Whether telehealth is available depends on:

- Your clinician's availability.
- The type of service being provided.
- Clinical appropriateness.
- Technology availability.
- Safety considerations.

If telehealth is not appropriate, we'll work with you to reschedule your appointment as soon as possible.

Section 9: Attendance, Cancellations, No-Shows, and Late Arrivals

9.1 Logistics and Consistency

We understand that life happens. Children get sick, work schedules change, weather can be unpredictable, and unexpected emergencies arise. We know there will be times when you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment, and we'll always do our best to work with you.

At the same time, every appointment reserved for your family is time set aside specifically for you. When appointments are missed or canceled without enough notice, it delays your progress and prevents another child or family from receiving care.

Our attendance policy is designed to support logistical consistency and ensure that set-aside appointment times are used effectively for the benefit of all families.

9.2 Keeping Scheduled Appointments

Regular attendance is one of the strongest predictors of successful treatment.

Coming to your appointments regularly is one of the best ways to see the progress you're looking for. It helps

us build a strong relationship with you or your child, stay on top of how things are going, and keep moving toward your goals together.

If you're having difficulty attending appointments because of transportation, work schedules, childcare, financial concerns, or other barriers, please let us know. We want to work with you whenever possible to identify solutions that support your continued care.

9.3 Canceling or Rescheduling an Appointment

If you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment, we ask that you notify us at least **24 business hours** before your scheduled appointment.

Providing advance notice allows us to offer that appointment to another family who may be waiting for services.

Appointments canceled with less than 24 business hours' notice may be considered a late cancellation.

You may cancel or reschedule an appointment by:

- Calling our office
- Using the KCFC Client Portal
- Responding to an appointment reminder, when available

9.4 Late Cancellations

We understand that unexpected situations sometimes occur.

Examples include:

- Illness
- Family emergencies
- Severe weather
- Vehicle breakdowns
- Other unexpected circumstances

Whenever possible, we'll consider these situations individually.

Appointments canceled with less than **24 business hours' notice** may be subject to a **\$75 late cancellation fee**. This fee helps offset the time that was reserved specifically for your family and could not be offered to another client.

Repeated late cancellations may interfere with treatment progress and limit appointment availability for other families. If attendance becomes a concern, your clinician will discuss the situation with you and work together to identify ways to improve consistency.

9.5 Missed Appointments (No-Shows)

A missed appointment, or **no-show**, occurs when:

- You do not attend a scheduled appointment.
- You cancel too late for the appointment to reasonably be offered to another client.
- You fail to arrive for your scheduled appointment without contacting us.

Because your clinician has reserved that time specifically for you, repeated missed appointments make it difficult to provide effective treatment and reduce appointment availability for other families.

A **\$75 no-show fee** will be charged for appointments that are missed without appropriate notice. This fee is the responsibility of the client or responsible party and is not billable to insurance.

If repeated missed appointments become a concern, we'll first discuss the situation with you, explore any barriers affecting attendance, and work together to identify solutions that support continued participation in treatment whenever possible.

9.6 Late Arrivals

If you arrive late, we'll do our best to see you.

However, depending on how late you arrive, your clinician may need to shorten the appointment to avoid delaying other clients.

If you arrive so late that there is not enough time to safely or effectively provide treatment, the appointment may need to be rescheduled and may be considered a late cancellation or missed appointment in accordance with this policy.

9.7 Attendance Expectations

Therapy is most effective when appointments occur consistently.

Repeated missed appointments, repeated late cancellations, extended gaps in treatment, or difficulty maintaining regular participation may affect our ability to provide safe and effective care.

When attendance concerns arise, we will first discuss them with you. Together, we'll review any barriers, consider possible solutions, and determine the best path forward.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- Adjusting appointment times.
- Transitioning to another clinician if scheduling is a better fit.
- Recommending a different level of care.
- Developing an attendance improvement plan.
- Discharging services if regular participation cannot be maintained.

Whenever possible, we will work collaboratively with you before making changes to your treatment.

9.8 Appointment Reminder Services

As a courtesy, KCFC may provide appointment reminders by text

message, email, phone call, or through the Client Portal.

Reminder messages are intended to help families remember upcoming appointments.

Because technology can sometimes fail, not receiving a reminder does **not** change your responsibility to attend scheduled appointments or cancel within the required timeframe.

9.9 Our Commitment to Fairness

We know that life is full of surprises. Our attendance and cancellation policies aren't meant to be strict—they're simply here to help us stay consistent and make sure we can offer every available time slot to the families who need them.

Section 10: Financial Responsibility and Insurance

10.1 Understanding the Financial Side

We know that insurance, billing, and healthcare costs can sometimes feel confusing. Our goal is to make the financial side of your care as clear and transparent as possible so you can focus on what matters most—your or your child's treatment.

We're committed to helping you understand your financial responsibilities, answer your questions, and work with you whenever possible.

10.2 Insurance Coverage

KCFC participates with many insurance plans; however, every insurance policy is different.

While we are happy to verify your insurance benefits as a courtesy, **you are ultimately responsible for understanding your insurance coverage and any financial responsibility associated with your care.**

Your insurance company determines:

- Whether services are covered.
- Whether prior authorization is required.
- Your copayment, deductible, or coinsurance.
- Any limitations on the number or type of services covered.

Insurance benefits may change during the course of treatment. We encourage you to contact your insurance company if you have questions about your coverage.

10.3 Your Financial Responsibility

Regardless of insurance coverage, you are responsible for:

- Copayments

- Coinsurance
- Deductibles
- Non-covered services
- Services denied by your insurance when you are financially responsible under your policy
- Late cancellation and no-show fees
- Outstanding account balances

Payment is expected at the time services are provided unless other arrangements have been made.

10.4 Payment Methods and Authorized Charges

To simplify the billing process and help keep accounts current, KCFC requires a valid credit or debit card to be securely maintained on file.

By signing our financial agreement, you authorize KCFC to charge your card for patient-responsible balances, including copayments, deductibles, coinsurance, no-show fees, late cancellation fees, and other authorized charges.

You'll continue to receive statements and may review your account activity through the Client Portal.

10.5 Weekly Automatic Payments

To help prevent large account balances from accumulating, KCFC processes outstanding patient-responsible balances each **Friday** using the

payment method you have authorized and have on file.

These charges may include:

- Copayments
- Deductibles
- Coinsurance
- Outstanding balances after insurance has processed a claim
- Approved fees outlined in this handbook and your financial agreement

You'll continue to receive monthly statements showing activity on your account.

10.6 Good Faith Estimates

If you do not have insurance or choose not to use your insurance benefits, you have the right under federal law to receive a **Good Faith Estimate** explaining the expected cost of your services.

This estimate is designed to help you understand the anticipated cost of care before services begin.

If you have questions about your estimate, please contact our office.

10.7 Payment Plans

We understand that unexpected financial challenges can arise.

If you're experiencing difficulty paying your balance, we encourage you to contact our Billing Department as soon as possible. In many situations,

we're able to discuss payment arrangements before an account becomes significantly past due.

Communication is important. The sooner we hear from you, the more options we may have to assist you.

10.8 Past-Due Accounts

We make every effort to work with families before balances become significantly overdue and encourage you to contact us if you're experiencing financial hardship.

Accounts that remain unpaid for **more than 90 days**, do not have a valid payment method on file, and are not covered by an approved payment arrangement **may be referred to a third party collection agency.**

Our goal is always to work with you before this becomes necessary. If you're having difficulty paying your balance, please contact our Billing Department as soon as possible so we can discuss your options.

10.9 Returned Payments

If a payment is returned because of insufficient funds, an expired payment method, or another banking issue, we'll notify you and ask that the balance be resolved promptly.

Please help us by keeping your payment information current.

10.10 Financial FAQs

Why do I owe money if I have insurance?

Most insurance plans require members to pay a portion of the cost of care through copayments, deductibles, or coinsurance. Your insurance company determines these amounts based on your specific plan.

Why did my balance change after insurance processed my claim?

When a claim is submitted, your insurance company reviews the services provided and determines the amount they will pay. Any remaining patient responsibility, such as a deductible or coinsurance, becomes your responsibility according to your insurance policy.

Can I use my Health Savings Account (HSA) or Flexible Spending Account (FSA) card?

Yes. We accept HSA and FSA cards for eligible healthcare expenses when allowed by your plan.

Why does KCFC require a credit or debit card on file?

Maintaining a secure payment method on file helps keep accounts current, reduces billing delays, and prevents large balances from accumulating. Your payment information is stored

securely, and you'll continue to receive statements showing all charges and payments applied to your account.

What if I'm having trouble paying my bill?

Please let us know as soon as possible. We understand that financial situations can change unexpectedly, and we're often able to discuss payment arrangements before an account becomes seriously past due.

10.11 Questions About Your Bill

We understand that billing questions happen.

If you have questions about your insurance, statements, payments, or account balance, our Billing Department is happy to help.

Phone: 269-615-7637 ext. 303

We encourage you to contact us whenever something doesn't look right or if you need help understanding your statement.

10.12 Our Commitment to Transparency

Our goal is to make the financial side of your care as straightforward and transparent as possible.

We believe financial policies should never be confusing or unexpected. By communicating openly and addressing questions early, we can

minimize billing surprises and keep the focus where it belongs—on providing exceptional care for you and your family.

Section 11: Transitions, Referrals, and Ending Services

11.1 Your Unique Journey

As your family's needs change, we'll work with you to find the right level of care for the right amount of time, helping you build the skills to grow long after services end.

11.2 Checking in on Your Progress

We'll check in with you regularly to see how things are going. We want therapy to be a collaborative conversation, so we encourage you to share your thoughts and let us know if your priorities have shifted.

During these check-ins, we'll talk about:

- Progress toward your treatment goals.
- New concerns or changing needs.
- Whether your current treatment plan continues to meet your needs.
- Recommendations for continuing, modifying, or concluding services.

If you ever feel like we need to change direction, please just ask. We are in this together.

11.3 When You're Ready to Wrap Up

Most families eventually reach a point where they don't need regular appointments anymore. This is a wonderful milestone!

We'll know you're ready when:

- Treatment goals have been achieved.
- Symptoms have significantly improved.
- Your child or family is consistently using the skills learned in therapy.
- You feel confident managing concerns independently.
- A higher or lower level of care is no longer needed.

Ending therapy is something to celebrate. It shows all the hard work you've put in and the resilience you've built along the way.

11.4 Moving to a Different Service

If we notice that your needs are shifting, we might suggest trying a different service within our practice or another program in the community.

We might recommend transitioning to things like:

- A different type of outpatient therapy.
- Psychological evaluation.
- Medication management.
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT).
- Adolescent Dialectical Behavior Therapy Intensive Outpatient Program (DBT IOP).
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT).
- Another community provider or specialized service.

We'll always explain why we're making a recommendation and help make the transition as smooth and supportive as possible.

11.5 Connecting You with Others

Even though we offer many services, there are times when another specialist might be the best fit for your specific needs.

If that happens, we'll help you connect with resources like:

- Primary care providers.
- Psychiatrists.
- Hospitals.
- Higher levels of behavioral health care.
- Specialized treatment programs.
- Community agencies.
- Other behavioral health providers.

Our goal is simply to make sure you get the best possible care, even if that care happens somewhere else.

11.6 Closing an Episode of Care

In the healthcare world, ending a specific course of treatment is called "discharge." Discharge simply means that your current course of treatment with us has come to an end. Most discharges occur because clients have made meaningful progress and are ready to continue independently. In other situations, discharge may occur because another level of care, provider, or service is more appropriate.

There are also times when we might need to end services for other reasons, such as:

- Treatment goals have been successfully achieved.
- Another level of care is needed.
- The requested services are outside our scope of practice.
- Repeated missed appointments or an inability to participate consistently in treatment.
- Non-payment of balances after reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the account.
- Threatening, abusive, or unsafe behavior toward staff, clients, or others.
- Other circumstances in which continuing treatment would not be clinically appropriate.

We'll always try to talk with you about this in advance. We want to celebrate

your growth and help you feel prepared for whatever comes next.

11.7 If You Decide to Step Away

You always have the right to stop services at any time. If you're considering ending therapy, we encourage you to schedule one final session. This gives us an opportunity to review your progress, celebrate your accomplishments, discuss future resources, and help you maintain the gains you've made.

11.8 Coming Back to See Us

Life changes, and it's very common for families to come back to therapy during a new season. If you find you need support again down the road, please reach out. If more than six months have passed, we might need to do some updated paperwork or a quick new assessment just to make sure we're providing the right care for your current situation.

Returning isn't a failure, it's a proactive, healthy decision to take care of yourself or your child when new challenges arise.

Section 12: Feedback, Complaints, and Grievances

12.1 We Value Your Voice

Your experience matters to us. Whether you'd like to recognize a staff member who made a difference, share a suggestion, or let us know about an area where we can improve, we welcome your feedback.

We value input from the children, adolescents, adults, parents, guardians, caregivers, advocates, and community partners we serve. Your perspective helps us strengthen communication, improve access to care, enhance safety, and continually improve the quality of our services.

Throughout the year, we invite clients and families to complete brief satisfaction surveys through the Client Portal. We encourage you to take a few minutes to share your experience. Your feedback helps us better understand what's working well and where we can continue to grow.

If something doesn't feel quite right, we encourage you to let us know as soon as possible. Many concerns can be resolved through a simple conversation, and we are committed to listening respectfully, working collaboratively, and finding solutions whenever we can.

Whether your feedback is positive or constructive, thank you for helping us provide the highest quality care possible for the children and families in our community.

12.2 Recognizing Great Care

Feedback isn't just about fixing problems—we also want to know what's working well! If you've had a great experience, please share it. It helps us celebrate our team and keep doing more of what you love.

If you've had a positive experience, we'd love to hear about it. Positive feedback helps us recognize our staff, identify what we're doing well, and continue building on those strengths.

If something has been confusing or frustrating, telling us about it is the best way to help us improve.

12.3 Telling Us When Something is Wrong

If you're dissatisfied with something like scheduling, billing, or communication, we want to hear about it. You can share these concerns with any member of our team, and we'll listen carefully to help make things right.

We're here to help with concerns about:

- Appointment scheduling
- Communication
- Billing questions

- Office environment
- Staff responsiveness
- Access to services
- Treatment expectations
- Customer service
- Other aspects of your experience

Our goal is to understand your perspective and find a way forward that feels fair to you.

12.4 When You Need a Formal Review

When you have a concern that requires a more formal review, we have a specific process to ensure it gets the attention it deserves. This might involve things like your rights, privacy, or the quality of your care.

A **grievance** is a complaint that requires documented review by leadership and may involve a written response, quality improvement, corrective action, or compliance review.

We'll handle a concern through this formal process if it involves things like:

- A concern about your rights
- Privacy or confidentiality
- Discrimination or harassment
- Retaliation
- Humiliation
- Abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Coercion
- Professional boundaries or staff conduct
- Ethical concerns

- Safety concerns
- Billing or informed consent concerns
- Serious dissatisfaction with care
- Repeated unresolved complaints
- Any situation where you request that your concern be handled as a formal grievance

12.5 What You Can Expect from Us

We want you to know exactly where your concern stands. When you submit a formal request for review, we commit to these timelines:

- **Acknowledgment of receipt:** Within **2 business days**
- **Initial review:** Within **5 business days**
- **Written response:** Within **15 business days**

12.6 How to Let Us Know

We want this process to be as easy as possible for you. You can share a concern by:

Filling out a KCFC form, talking to our staff, or using our online portal.

- Complete a **KCFC Complaint/Grievance Form**.
- Ask any member of our staff to help you complete a complaint or grievance form.
- Submit a complaint through our online grievance process.

- Submit your concern anonymously.
- Speak with any member of our staff, who will help document your concern and ensure it is routed appropriately.

No one at KCFC will ever refuse to hear your concern. We are here to listen.

Our online grievance form is available at:

<https://www.kzoofamilycounseling.com/grievance>

12.7 Anonymous Feedback

You're welcome to share your thoughts anonymously through our online grievance form. We'll still review them carefully, though we won't be able to follow up with you directly if we don't have your contact info.

We'll carefully review anonymous concerns to the extent possible. However, if we don't have contact information, we may be unable to ask follow-up questions or let you know the outcome of our review.

12.8 What Happens Next?

Once we receive a formal concern, we'll begin our review promptly. We'll keep you updated along the way so you're never left wondering.

If we need more time to look into things, we'll let you know and give you a new expected date for our response.

If additional time is needed, we'll let you know, explain the reason when appropriate, and provide an updated timeframe for completing our review.

12.9 Who is Involved?

Anyone on our team can receive your feedback. Formal reviews are looked at by our leadership team, including our Associate Clinical Director and Clinical Director, to ensure they are handled with the highest care.

Formal grievances are reviewed by the **Associate Clinical Director** or **Clinical Director**, with the **Clinical Director** serving as the final level of internal review.

Our Compliance Officer also keeps track of all feedback so we can use it to keep improving the way we care for families like yours.

12.10 How We Find Solutions

Every situation is different, so how we resolve a concern will be too. We might clear up a misunderstanding, offer an apology, adjust your schedule, or even change our internal policies to make things better for everyone.

Possible resolutions may include:

- Providing clarification or additional information
- Offering an apology or service recovery when appropriate
- Reviewing or correcting billing concerns

- Adjusting scheduling or access to services
- Clinical consultation
- Discussing a transfer to another clinician
- Reviewing consent or communication expectations
- Staff coaching, supervision, or additional training
- Policy or workflow improvements
- Corrective action when appropriate
- Referral to advocacy or external review resources

Above all, we want to work with you to make sure your family feels supported and heard.

12.11 Protection From Retaliation

No client, parent, caregiver, or family member will be retaliated against for:

- Filing a complaint or grievance
- Helping another person file a complaint
- Participating in a grievance review
- Reporting concerns regarding rights, safety, or quality of care.
- Contacting an outside agency regarding their care

12.12 Other Places to Reach Out

While we always hope we can work things out directly, you also have the right to contact outside agencies if you

have a concern. This might include your insurance company, state licensing boards, or advocacy organizations.

We support your right to find the assistance you need, wherever you need to look for it.

- Your health insurance company
- The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)
- Professional licensing boards
- Advocacy organizations
- Legal representatives
- Other regulatory or accrediting agencies

**Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)
Bureau of Professional Licensing –
Complaint Intake**

Phone: 517-241-0205

Email: BPL-Complaints@michigan.gov

License Verification:
<https://www.michigan.gov/verifylicense>

Complaint Information:
<https://www.michigan.gov/lara>

Section 13: Handbook Acknowledgment

13.1 Handbook Acknowledgment

You will be asked to acknowledge having been given this handbook and confirm you have had the opportunity to review these policies.

Our Shared Commitment

Throughout this handbook, you will find themes of partnership, transparency, and respect. Healing is a collaborative journey, and we believe therapy is most effective when families are active, informed participants. We encourage you to ask questions, share your perspective, and communicate openly with your care team.

Thank you for trusting Kalamazoo Child & Family Counseling to be part of your family's journey. We are committed to providing compassionate, evidence-based care and to honoring the trust you place in us as we work together toward greater health and more shared joy.