

Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC

Policies and Consents

Ashley Sims, LPC

Website: littlelamp.org

Contact Phone: (614) 218-8843

COMPANY INFORMATION

Credentials

- MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Colorado Christian University (MACMHC)
- Licensed Professional Counselor with the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage & Family Counselor Board. Licensed Number: C.2003022 (LPC)
- Board Certified Telemental Health Counselor (BC-TMH)

Clinical Supervisor

In accordance with the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage & Family Counselor Board, my counseling services are under the supervision of a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor Supervisor who may provide me with feedback to ensure that quality care is being provided.

Cindy Smiley LPCC-S, Phone: 614-882-9338

Professional Services of Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC

I provide individual counseling for adults ages 18 and up, via teletherapy. The teletherapy format may include videoconferencing through the Doxy.me platform, or phone calls between company and client phones. Phone sessions will require a password to be given at the beginning of each session. All initial sessions will be conducted via videoconference for form completion.

I have been trained to work with the following presenting issues: anxiety disorders and phobias, depression, grief and loss, phase-of-life adjustment, relationship or dating problems, ADHD, chronic stress, anger management, and codependency.

My therapeutic approach is integrative, meaning I incorporate elements from different schools of psychotherapy in the treatment of a client, including but not limited to Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral, Psychodynamic, Mindfulness-based, Person-Centered, Adlerian, Narrative, Emotionally-focused, Interpersonal, Exposure, Faith-Based, and Psychoanalysis.

I understand that therapy is not “one size fits all”, therefore I strive to use the therapeutic approach that works best for each client on an individual basis. However, if the client feels the method being used is not beneficial for them, I will gladly work with the client to determine a more effective approach or, if needed, provide a referral to another agency that may be able to meet the client’s needs.

As a born-again Christian and Christian counseling practice, all evidenced-based interventions are administered from a Christian worldview. Clients may request prayer and Biblical readings in session, as well as Biblically-based homework assignments. Clients may also request counseling without Christian values, beliefs, or ideals integrated into the process.

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RISKS AND BENEFITS TO TREATMENT POLICY

As with any form of treatment, there are risks and benefits associated with counseling. Clients are encouraged to consider both when making treatment decisions.

Most risks are expected when confronting negative emotions and making changes in life. Clients may recall unpleasant memories that cause distressing symptoms, such as feelings of anxiety, guilt, sadness, loneliness, frustration, helplessness, anger, or other negative feelings. Clients' personal relationships may be disrupted, and in some cases, the client may need to make difficult decisions about relationships, such as deciding to end a friendship or separate from a partner. Occasionally, symptoms may temporarily worsen before improving. While there is hope for improvement, there is no guarantee and in some cases, therapy may not work well for the client.

If at any point you, the client, feel that therapy is not working for you, please tell the counselor. Together you and the counselor can discuss what is working, what is not, and adjust the treatment plan as needed or prepare a referral to another counselor.

Just as there are risks, there are also benefits to counseling. Clinical counseling has been proven to be effective for many forms of psychological distress. Well-designed, peer-reviewed research studies have provided a deeper understanding of mental illness and various evidence-based interventions to aid in symptom reduction or removal. The counselor will use this information to help the client find healing. Sometimes clients find they are experiencing improvement in symptoms rather quickly. This could be due to the client confronting issues they have been ignoring, repressing, or fearing. While confronting these emotions, memories, or traumas may be distressing, the client is not confronting them alone; the counselor will help facilitate and guide this process. The counselor will point out strengths the client may have forgotten they had or were perhaps never aware of. The counselor will provide the client with new skills to use when alone to manage symptoms, such as challenging negative or intrusive thoughts or finding calm when experiencing or approaching anxiety.

While the counselor will work hard to help the client, for psychotherapy to be effective the client must be willing to change. Clients must be willing to participate in sessions and make efforts towards goal attainment. This can be done by sharing/talking during sessions and completing homework assignments. Homework typically consists of new skills learned and practiced in session that the client will be asked to practice at home without the counselor. Change will sometimes be easy and quick, but can also be slow and frustrating. Sometimes a few new skills will be all that is required to reduce or remove symptoms. Other times the client may need to make large lifestyle changes to prevent symptoms from returning. The counselor will work with the client to determine what will work best for their lifestyle. While counseling may at times be difficult, it is a process and a personal journey that in the end can be deeply rewarding.

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CLIENT CONDUCT POLICY

The time in session is to be utilized for the purpose of assisting the client to reach their goals. As such the client must agree to the following:

- If a client is suspected of, or determined to be under the influence of drugs (including marijuana), or is observed consuming alcohol during session, they will be asked to reschedule their appointment without a refund. If the client has prescribed medication that causes disorienting effects, they should, if possible, schedule sessions for a time when the medication's effects are minimal.
- Any displays of confrontational behavior, verbal threats, and aggression toward the counselor will result in immediate termination of services without refund, and a police report may be filled.
- Any displays of flirting or sexual misconduct toward the counselor will first be addressed by the counselor, after which one of the following will occur: continuation of sessions with agreed-upon behavior modification, referral to another counselor with termination of sessions through this practice, or immediate termination of services without refund. A police report may also be filed if warranted.
- Clients are expected to have a confidential space free of distractions during sessions. If a client is distracted, or if other persons are present, the counselor will address it.
- Clients may choose either to reschedule, without refund, or to proceed with verbal consent. If the client chooses to proceed, they must verbally acknowledge they understand that the level of care provided may be lessened due to this choice.
 - If clients choose to be located in a public space during a session, they must be wearing headphones so that non-clients cannot hear the counselor.
- Clients must be physically located in the State of Ohio during sessions. This is a legal requirement. If the client is anywhere outside of Ohio, the session must be rescheduled without refund. Even with online counseling, clients must be physically located in Ohio.
 - If the client permanently relocates outside of Ohio, then all sessions will be canceled immediately, and the Counselor will offer resources to find a Counselor located within the clients' state of residence.
- Though teletherapy often happens in the clients' home, it is expected that the client will treat the session in the same way they would if going to a practice site in person. As such, during videoconferencing clients must:
 - Be fully clothed.
 - Be visible in session, meaning the camera must be turned "ON".
 - Be sitting upright, with hands quickly visible. The client may sit on their bed, but the client must be sitting, and have their hands above the covers.
 - NOT drive during session. The client may sit in a parked car, but the client is not permitted to drive, even with an ear piece, speaker phone, or other hands-free method.
- Any violation of the above list will first be addressed by the Counselor. If the client refuses to alter their behavior, the session will be terminated, without refund. The client will be able to schedule a follow up session at a later date. If the issue occurs during three separate sessions, then all sessions will be terminated, without refund, and the client will be provided with alternative sources for therapeutic services.

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COMMUNICATIONS & EMERGENCY POLICY

After-Hours Contact

Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC is not an “on-call” facility. The company phone is not monitored when the company is closed. The client may leave a voicemail or text message at any time, however, these messages will only be checked and responded to during regular business hours.

In Case of EMERGENCY

- Do **not** wait until the following business hours to get help!
- If you feel your life is in immediate danger, call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, or contact the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by dialing 988.

Notice of Counselor Unavailability

- In the event of a planned closure (i.e. vacation) lasting one week or more, the client will be notified at least one month in advance (unless the client has not been in counseling that long), and counselor will discuss coping mechanisms and emergency procedures to help keep the client safe during the counselors’ absence.
- In the event that the counselor becomes ill, the client’s appointment will be rescheduled to the following week and any payment already processed for that appointment will be either refunded, or applied to the next appointment.
- In the event of prolonged incapacitation or death, the client will be contacted by the counselor’s supervisor who will assist the client in finding new counseling services and discuss next steps.

Social Media and Public Settings

To comply with legal standards, the counselor can only be the clients’ Counselor. The law places ethical limits on the relationship between a client and a counselor that must be adhered to. To prevent dual relationships and/or a conflict of interest as a past or present client, counselors may not adopt any other role in the clients’ life. This means that during counseling, and once counseling ends, counselors cannot be friends with clients, even if no longer a client. If client and counselor cross paths in a social, public setting, the counselor will not say “hello” or approach the client. This is to protect the clients’ privacy and maintain confidentiality. The client may choose to approach the counselor, but any conversation will be no more than “small talk” to ensure no psychotherapy is taking place outside of a confidential, professional client session. The counselor will not engage in any online correspondence (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) with the client. This is not a personal reaction to the client, but a way to maintain the confidentiality of our relationship, adhere to the law, and respect the personal boundaries of each party involved.

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TEXT MESSAGING POLICY

This counseling practice utilizes text messaging as it offers an easy and convenient way for clients and counselors to communicate with one another and, in many circumstances such as for confirming appointments, text messaging has advantages over telephone calls (or messages back and forth) and other means of communication.

There are disadvantages as well. Given that many text messages now show up on computers as well as phones, HIPAA rules now consider text messages to be Protected Health Information (PHI) if associated with your treatment. Thus Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC cannot guarantee the security or confidentiality of unencrypted electronic communications. This means that text messages are not confidential. By providing your phone number at the bottom of this page, you agree to receive text messages from Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC.

Policy:

- Text messages should **not** be used to communicate sensitive health information or to discuss therapeutic needs or concerns; that information should be shared in session.
- In some circumstances, your text messages may become part of your health record.
- In emergency situations, the counselor may agree to allow a session to be conducted via text messaging. This is up to the counselor's discretion.
- The phone number you provide below is the only number that will be authorized for the purposes of receiving and responding to text communications, and the only number to which the counselor will respond. Should the number change at any time, you, the client, must inform the counselor as soon as possible with an update.
- Because the number below will be provided by you, the client, it will be assumed that you are the one using it; no verification code will be required.
- The entity texting you will be Ashley Sims, LPC. No automated system or secretary will be contacting you. Your phone number will not be shared with any third parties.

APPOINTMENT REMINDER POLICY

To help you keep track of your counseling appointments, Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC provides text confirmations and reminders:

- You will receive a confirmation text immediately after scheduling with Ashley Sims, LPC.
- You will also receive a reminder text prior to your scheduled session.
- Text reminders will include only the date and time of your session.
- If you prefer not to receive text reminders, you may let the counselor know at any time.

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SCHEDULING & SESSIONS POLICY

Initial Screening

- Clients will first call the company number and engage in a 15-minute screening, free of charge, to determine if the client and counselor are a good match. Clients may leave a message to receive a return call by the counselor for initial screening.
- If they are not a match, counselor will provide alternative counseling companies for client to contact.
- If they are a match, the clients' phone number and technology requirements will be confirmed, and the initial appointment will be scheduled by the counselor. The counselor will send the client a text with the link to Doxy.me, and the date/time of the next appointment. The client will then be asked to visit the website (littl Lamp.org) to acquire intake paperwork to review and complete.

First Session

- The first session will be **50 minutes** in length, at the agreed upon rate due at the beginning of the session, paid through Stripe, Inc.
- During the first video session, the client will upload intake documents to Doxy's secure platform to be retrieved by the counselor. The first session will be utilized for reviewing procedures and consents, as well as client assessment and diagnosis. A phone call password will be established during this session if needed.
- The next session will be scheduled at the end of the first session.

Ongoing Sessions

- Each additional appointment will be scheduled at the end of each session.
- Therapy begins with once-a-week sessions lasting **50 minutes** each.
- Clients will be allotted a therapy period of **six months**, at which point client and counselor will reevaluate and determine if further therapy is needed. If so, a revised or new treatment plan will be created.
- In the event of a fee increase of services, clients within their 6-month period will not receive an increase in cost. If, however, clients continue therapy with Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC past the 6 month period, those sessions will be billed at the new rate. Refer to the "**Fees Policy**" below for further information.

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

- It is the client's responsibility to ensure that they make it to their appointments on time. If the client will be late to an appointment, they must notify the counselor as soon as possible.
- The counselor will contact the client via text once, at the five-minute mark, to inquire whether the client intends to join the session.
- If the client does not notify the counselor of their intent to join the session, the counselor will wait no more than 30 minutes. After that time, the session will be considered a "no call/no show," and the client will be charged the full session rate. The counselor will send a text to the client informing them that they have missed their appointment. An invoice for the missed payment will be sent, and they may not be allowed to reschedule until it is paid in full.
- If the client arrives prior to the 30 minute limit, the appointment will proceed as a "late start" and will be noted in the client's record. Please note tardiness means the session will be less than 50 minutes due to other scheduling commitments, and the session rate will **not** be prorated. The client will be permitted 3 "late starts" before client and counselor will discuss the reason for client tardiness and try to rectify the situation. If tardiness continues or cannot be resolved, the counseling relationship may be terminated.
- If the client needs to cancel or reschedule an appointment, they must notify the counselor at least 24 hours in advance by text or call to the company phone number. Client may leave a voicemail message. Failure to provide at least 24 hours' notice will result in the client being charged the full cost of the missed session.
- If the client accumulates three no call/no shows within a two-month period (non-consecutive), the counselor and client will discuss the reason for the missed sessions and attempt to resolve the issue. If another no call/no show occurs, or the issue cannot be resolved, the counseling relationship will be terminated. All no call/no shows will be charged at the full rate.
- If the client commits three consecutive no call/no shows, the counselor will attempt to contact the client to discuss continuation of services. If the client wishes to continue therapy, they may schedule another appointment; however, a fourth consecutive no call/no show will result in termination of services. The counselor will mail a formal Letter of Termination, and the client's case will be closed. Please note that all no call/no shows are charged at the full rate.
- If the client misses an appointment, and has no contact with the counselor for two weeks, despite counselor attempts to contact the client, it will be assumed the client no longer wishes to continue counseling and the counselor will mail a formal Letter of Termination to the client, and the clients' case will be closed.
- If the client chooses to end an appointment earlier than 50 minutes, they will still be charged the full rate.
- If the counselor ends the session early for reasons not related to client conduct, the session rate will be prorated or refunded accordingly.
- It is up to the counselor's discretion whether to omit charge, or charge a lesser fee for emergency situations.

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FEE POLICY

1. Counseling Charge

- Appointments are 50 minutes in length. The standard rate of services is \$100 per session. A reduced rate may be provided at the counselor's discretion. Counselor retains the right to change the rate. All quoted rates remain valid for six months from the start of counseling.
- **Insurance is not accepted.** All fees are the responsibility of the client.
 - Fees will be discussed during the initial screening call, and an agreed-upon rate will be documented in the "Fee for Service Agreement," signed by both counselor and client during the first session.
 - All fees are due at the time of service, at the beginning of each teletherapy session, via Stripe Inc.

2. Payment Methods

- Accepted card types include Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover.
- By submitting your credit or debit card information, you authorize Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC to charge your card for services rendered, including any applicable fees or outstanding balances.

3. Security and Compliance

Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC does not store or have access to clients' payment information. All payment processing is handled through Stripe Inc., which is PCI-DSS compliant (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards) to ensure the security and confidentiality of all transactions.

4. Refund Policy

If a refund is applicable, it will be processed in accordance with Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC's refund policy and Stripe Inc.'s established guidelines.

5. Chargebacks & Liability

- In the event of a chargeback initiated by the client or their financial institution, Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC will work with both the client and Stripe Inc. to resolve the issue.
- Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC is not responsible for unauthorized transactions, chargebacks, payment delays, or errors arising from incorrect payment information or third-party processing issues through Stripe Inc.
- If a client's payment is declined, the current session will proceed as scheduled; however, no future appointments will be scheduled until the outstanding balance is paid in full. An invoice will be sent to the client reflecting the amount due.

6. Rate Change

- If the counseling rate increases, existing clients will continue to pay their originally agreed-upon rate for the duration of their current six-month counseling period.
- Example: You begin counseling in January. Your six-month period runs from January to July. If the rate increases from \$100 to \$120 in March, you will continue paying \$100 until July. Clients beginning after the increase will pay the new rate. At the end of your six-month period, you and Ashley will review your treatment plan and discuss continuation and the applicable rate.
 - This does not mean your rate will increase every six months. Rate adjustments will only occur if necessary to maintain a livable wage.
 - You are not limited to six months of counseling. The six-month mark is simply a structured point for reviewing treatment progress, rates, and any company policy updates.

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NO SURPRISES ACT & GOOD FAITH ESTIMATE

The “No Surprises Act,” effective January 1, 2022,, aims to increase price transparency, and reduce the likelihood that clients receive a “surprise” medical bill. The standard rate for each session is \$100.00. If a reduced rate is agreed upon, it will be determined prior to your first session and reflected in your “Fee for Service Agreement.”

As previously stated, late sessions, cancellations, and no-show sessions are all charged at the full session rate, regardless of whether the client attends. This means that whether the client arrives on time or late, they are still expected to pay the full rate for the reserved session time. It is the client’s responsibility to arrive on time or to cancel at least 24 hours in advance.

TERMINATION OF TREATMENT POLICY

Formal Termination

Counseling begins with once-a-week sessions. The counselor retains the right to adjust session frequency. As the client progresses, sessions may be expanded to once every two weeks, or once a month. Once the client has achieved their goals and shows improvement in symptoms, termination of therapy will be discussed.

If the client feels ready to terminate, then the final session will involve preparation for life without therapy. The sessions will consist of reviewing the goals the client set in the beginning, coping skills to utilize should the client experience a relapse, and information on emergency services and how to return to therapy if needed, whether with Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC or a different company.

The client can request a copy of their case file at any time within seven years of the last appointment. To request a copy after sessions have been terminated, the client will need to call the company phone number and leave a message stating that they are a previous client and would like a copy of their file. After verifying the clients’ identity, the counselor will provide the information to the client by mail or technological means.

If at any point after discharge the client feels they would like to return to therapy with Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC, whether for the same issue or something new, the client may do so by calling the company phone number. The client will need to fill out paperwork and sign forms again. Please note that fees for therapy may have changed during the client’s absence.

Premature Termination

The client has the right to terminate treatment at any time, for any reason, without notice.

If the client chooses to terminate treatment, it is requested they speak with the counselor about their reasoning first. The therapeutic process is one the client and counselor do together, not providing adequate care, please inform the counselor. If you do not feel comfortable with this, simply state in a text that you do not wish to continue therapy, and do not wish to discuss it further.

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CONFIDENTIALITY, IDENTITY AND RECORDS POLICIES

Confidentiality Policy

State law requires counselors to maintain client confidentiality. Everything shared during counseling sessions remains confidential except in situations where the counselor is legally required to disclose information. The “Notice of Privacy Practices” provides additional details regarding confidentiality laws. This document is available on the company website (littlelamp.org) on the “Company Information” page, listed in the footer of each page.

If the client wishes for private information to be shared with another entity (e.g., a medical doctor), the client must sign a “Release of Information” form before the counselor can disclose any information.

As previously mentioned under “Clinical Supervisor,” this counselor has a supervisor who may access the client’s file to ensure that the counselor is providing care in accordance with ethical and legal standards.

Identity Policy

Clients will be asked to provide a copy of their state-issued identification card because:

1. Clients need to prove they are an adult – Ethical guidelines prohibit counseling to minors without parental consent.
2. The Counselor will use this as proof that the client is who they say they are, by comparing photo and name to the individual seen by the counselor.
3. The Counselor will use this proof of identity to release records to the client, if requested.
4. The counselor will never request a client’s Social Security Number.
5. Clients may blacken out their Driver’s ID number if they wish.

Records Policy

Counselor will maintain clinical records of sessions to facilitate continuity of care and to assess progress on client goals for therapy. These notes may include information discussed in the session and progress made toward clients’ goals. All records are stored securely.

Clients may request a copy of these records at any time. Counselor is required by law to maintain records for seven years after termination of services. To retrieve a copy of records, client will need to contact the Counselor and provide proof of identity.

Further Information

The Breach Protocol, the Incapacitation or Death of Counselor Procedure, and the Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPAA) are available on the company website (littlelamp.org) on the “Company Information” page, listed in the footer of each page.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have been informed of the availability of these documents on the website and may review them in full at your discretion.

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TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Doxy.me

- This practice uses Doxy.me for videoconferencing sessions. Doxy.me is a telemedicine platform that implements state-of-the-art security and encryption protocols to ensure data integrity and privacy. As a result, Doxy.me complies with HIPAA, GDPR, PHIPA/PIPEDA, and HITECH requirements. Doxy.me does not store patient information.
- The initial session will always be conducted via videoconference for the purpose of collecting intake forms, and verifying identity.
 - Follow-up sessions may be conducted via phone call.
- The link for Doxy.me is <https://doxy.me/ashleysims>; it will always be the same link. It is advised that clients save this link to their computers. Upon accessing the link, the client must enter their name, click “Check In,” and wait for the counselor to begin the session. Fees are due at the beginning of each session.
 - Clients are encouraged to test their setup in the Doxy.me waiting room prior to the session.

Technological Requirements for Doxy.me

Clients should ensure they have the following:

- A device with a camera, microphone, and speakers (e.g., laptop, phone, or tablet).
- An Internet connection with a minimum bit rate of 350 Kbps; recommended bandwidth speeds are 15–20 Mbps or higher.
- A supported browser: Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or Safari.
- JavaScript enabled (this is enabled by default; Doxy.me will notify clients if it needs to be enabled).

Technological Difficulties

- If Doxy.me is not functioning, the session will switch to a phone call, with the counselor calling the client.
- If neither Doxy.me nor phone is available, the session will be rescheduled for a later date.
- In cases of urgent need, clients should refer to the “In Case of Emergency” policy for immediate assistance.

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AUDIO RECORDING CONSENT

There may be occasions when a session is audio recorded to ensure clinical notes accurately reflect the session. This is not typical for every session and may occur due to fast-talking clients or limitations from the counselor's carpal tunnel.

- Counseling sessions may be audio recorded by your counselor, Ashley Sims, LPC, only with your authorization.
- Recordings will only by your counselor and, if necessary, her supervisor, Cindy Smiley, LPCC-S. The supervisor is bound by the same legal and ethical confidentiality requirements as your counselor.
- You will always be informed prior to any session being recorded.
- Recordings will be destroyed after review.
- No identifying information will be shared without your written consent.
- Recordings are used solely to assist in maintaining accurate counseling notes for your personal case file.
- You have the right to refuse or withdraw consent for recording at any time. Your counseling services will not be affected by your decision.

EMAIL CONSENT

The counselor may use email solely for sending homework assignments, worksheets, or general non-confidential information to the client.

- Email is not a secure method for conducting therapy or transmitting protected health information (PHI).
- The counselor cannot guarantee the privacy or security of information sent via email and is not held liable for information sent by the client.
- The counselor will not respond to emails containing PHI.

Clients should **not** use email to:

- Request therapy sessions or engage in therapy.
- Send sensitive personal or health information.
- Share any information they wish to remain confidential.

GIFT POLICY

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 4757-5-03 (6) states:

- “Licensees and registrants should decline gifts. Gifts from a client may be considered as establishing a multiple relationship. Examples of gifts may include but are not limited to food, material goods, gift certificate/gift card, artwork or products resulting from treatment. A licensee may accept a gift of nominal value if the licensee determines that for treatment reasons not accepting the gift will result in diminishing the licensee's ability to provide appropriate client care. In accepting a gift of nominal value, the license must discuss with the client the ethical limitations of accepting gifts. The licensee shall have the burden of proof to explain why a gifted was accepted.”

As such, this counselor will **not** accept gifts from clients.

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REFERENCE POLICY

This counselor will not write reference letters of any kind on the client's behalf. This includes:

- Job references or letters of employment.
- Letters of character or personal recommendation.
- Letters for housing, academic, or legal purposes.

Writing references can create conflicts of interest, dual relationships, or liability for the counselor. The counselor's role is to provide therapeutic support and guidance, not to advocate for clients outside of therapy sessions.

COURT POLICY

This counselor will not act on a client's behalf in any legal proceeding unless subpoenaed by a court. Progress notes may be provided upon request, but irrelevant information may be redacted to protect client privacy. Documentation of attendance or participation in therapy will be provided if requested.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL POLICY

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an emotional support animal (ESA) is any animal that provides emotional support alleviating one or more symptoms or effects of a person's disability. ESAs provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and may help with depression, anxiety, or certain phobias, but they do not have specialized training to perform tasks for people with disabilities.

Note: Emotional Support Animals and Service Animals are not the same.

While Ohio law does not have specific ESA regulations, federal Fair Housing laws protect individuals who require emotional support animals from discrimination by landlords. Clients' rights include:

- The right to live in residences, including apartments and condos, even if there is a no-pets policy.
- Exemption from pet fees, including deposits, monthly fees, and application charges.
- Protection against pet breed, weight, and size restrictions.

This counselor will provide Emotional Support Animal documentation on the client's behalf if the counselor determines that the animal is therapeutic in nature.

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CONSENT TO TELETHERAPY & CLINICAL TREATMENT

By signing this document you, the client, are stating the following:

- I understand that teletherapy uses electronic information and communication technologies to deliver counseling services when I am at a different location than the counselor, and I consent to receiving services via secure video conferencing or phone call.
- I understand that privacy and confidentiality laws protecting my medical information also apply to teletherapy.
- I understand that while teletherapy can be effective for many disorders, there is no guarantee that treatment will be effective for all clients.
- I understand that there are potential risks involving technology, including internet interruptions or technical difficulties.
- I understand that hardware, software, or internet issues may cause service interruptions, and the counselor is not responsible for technical problems and cannot guarantee services will always be available or function as expected.
- I understand that I am responsible for information security on my own devices and for maintaining privacy in my physical location.
- I understand that I am responsible to ensure privacy at my own location by being in a private location so other individuals cannot hear my conversation.
- I understand that either my counselor or I may discontinue teletherapy and discuss referrals if teletherapy is not meeting my needs.
- I understand the potential risks and benefits of counseling and my rights regarding the services I receive.
- I understand that I may ask questions about my treatment and request a review of my progress at any time.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may discontinue treatment at any time.
- I acknowledge that no guarantees have been made regarding the results of counseling.
- I agree to take financial responsibility for my sessions as described in the Fees section.
- I authorize Ashley Sims, LPC to provide counseling services to me.

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SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZATION TO TREATMENT & ACCEPTANCE OF POLICIES

By signing below, I am agreeing that I have read, understood and agree to all items contained in this document, including:

- ✓ Company Information & Professional Services
- ✓ Risks and Benefits to Treatment Policy
- ✓ Client Conduct Policy
- ✓ Communications and Emergency Policy
- ✓ Text Messaging Policy
- ✓ Appointment Reminder Policy
- ✓ Scheduling & Sessions Policy
- ✓ Attendance Policy
- ✓ Fee Policy & No Surprises Act
- ✓ Termination of Treatment Policy
- ✓ Confidentiality Policy
- ✓ Identity Policy
- ✓ Records Policy
- ✓ Technology Policy
- ✓ Audio Recording Consent
- ✓ Email Consent
- ✓ Gift Policy
- ✓ Reference Policy
- ✓ Court Policy
- ✓ Emotional Support Animal Policy
- ✓ Consent to Teletherapy & Clinical Treatment

I further acknowledge that:

- All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I hereby give my informed consent for the use of teletherapy in my care and I consent for myself to receive counseling services with Ashley Sims, LPC, of Little Lamp Christian Counseling LLC.
- I certify that I have the legal right to seek and authorize treatment for myself.
- I acknowledge that my electronic signature is legally binding and considered the equivalent of a handwritten signature, signifying my full agreement to the terms of this document.

Today's Date:

Client Phone number to allow text messaging:

Client Email Address to allow emails:

Client Full Printed Name:

Client Electronic Signature: