**PFA Domestic Violence Welcome Packet!**

The following are some FAQs to remember in your journey through our program.

**Question: How late can I be to group (in person sessions when allowed)?**

Answer: This is tricky because in our experience, if we give a timeframe – people tend to show up late because we said it is okay. Therefore, try not to be late and if you are, we may let you stay or will ask you to “try again next time”. Please know, this isn’t personal, if we have started check-in and your arrival will be disruptive – we may not let you stay. We like to honor those who show up consistently on time but not giving equal credit to those who are often late. **DO NOT CALL** to report that you are running late, this is unnecessary as we are typically in group and by the time we check our messages it may be the next day. It will not influence our decision to let you stay, it only fills up our voicemail and further disrupts our work activities.

**What are the rules around video therapy?**

Video therapy should be similar to in person therapy as far as what you are doing during group. You must be in front of the video, paying attention, fully dressed, awake and sober etc. If we suspect you are not appropriately “in” the group we may remove you from the group and email you regarding what needs to be changed for future groups. If you get disconnected from the video call – you need to continue to attempt to reconnect. If you cannot reconnect, you must email the therapist with why you are unable to connect and you may not be given credit for the group. YOU MUST BE ALONE, preferably using headphones and mindful of the privacy of others.

**Question: How many groups can I miss?**

Answer: Attendance and consistency are important to the treatment and therapeutic process. Do your best to not miss group or individual session. The state of Colorado requirement allows no more than 3 excused absences throughout the duration of the program. Unexcused absences and no call/no shows are not tolerated, and you will be charged a fee for those occurrences. More than 3 excused absences or more than 1 unexcused absence/no call/no show may result in being placed on a Strict Compliance contract, marked as “Non-Compliant” on your progress reports (which extends your time in treatment) or even a discharge from the program. It is your responsibility to coordinate, organize, and prioritize your requirements in order to be compliant in treatment. If you need help figuring out how to get more organized, we are happy to help.

**Question: Can I attend if I can’t pay?**

Yes, but payment is EXPECTED PRIOR TO ATTENDING, with permission from your therapist you for situations such a those who get paid bi-weekly or have a temporary financial issue you may owe up to $90 and cannot stay at $90 for more than two weeks. Remember to show up even if you don’t have money - we want to have a face to face conversation to come up with a plan even if we turn you away from group. **DO NOT MISS GROUP DUE TO LACK OF MONEY** (you pay for the group whether you attend or not because we are still working on your treatment and holding a space on our calendars or in the groups). Additionally, financial responsibility is one of the required DV competencies – so not being consistent/responsible with payment can extend your treatment or result in discharge. We have a limited “Sliding Scale” fee program for those unemployed without skills/ability to work or on disability. We reserve this program for our clients who are experiencing homelessness or disabled. Please ask your therapist for information if those circumstances apply to you to see if you qualify and if there are openings in the program. If you are expecting vouchers from probation – it is YOUR responsibility to request them, we cannot/will not do it for you and you are responsible for payment if vouchers are not provided/paid.

**Question: Why do I have to do an extra session in addition to weekly DV?**

This is a requirement of the State of Colorado – Domestic Violence Offender Management Board. This is a required part of your program. If you choose not to attend those sessions you may result in being placed on a Strict Compliance contract, marked as “Non-Compliant” on your progress reports (which extends your time in treatment) or even a discharge from the program. Also, AA/NA (any anonymous group cannot count as this contact because its “anonymous”) If you want to know more about regulations for Domestic Violence Offenders in Colorado you can visit the following DVOMB site: <https://dcj.colorado.gov/dcj-offices/domestic-violence-and-sex-offender-management/dvomb-standards-approved-revisions>

**Question: How many weeks is the program, how many classes/groups?**

Domestic Violence treatment in Colorado is progress based. Every client has a different history, case details, risks, needs etc. There is no comparing to others when it comes to progressing through treatment. Asking your therapist “how many” groups you have left may actually sends the message that you are interested in being done and are more worried about the number of groups rather than the content or material- focus on growth and you can’t go wrong.

**Question: What does “progress” mean?**

The Domestic Violence Offender Management Board sets guidelines on what someone needs to understand/demonstrate and internalize. Examples are: Taking responsibility for your actions (past & current), attending all treatment sessions, participating and cooperating overall in treatment, learning the tools, talking about using the tools, improving passive language to using “I” statements, staying off of the “Victim loop”, completing 2-3+ Treatment Plan Reviews and completing Personal Change Plans and in general showing the ability and desire to live a life free of violence.

**Question: What do I get for my money?**

Answer: We recognize that treatment is expensive and often, you weren’t expecting to get in trouble and have the extra expenses. The $30 group fee covers your admittance into the group, a monthly report sent to your PO/DO/CM every month, meetings with your PO/DO/CM every 2-3 months, Victim advocate services, group supplies, space etc. We have had the same prices since the 1980’s - we are committed to keeping costs low for our clients if possible. Individual sessions also provide more in depth and personalized counseling. This time is for you! Private individual therapy outside of the agency tends to be near double the cost of what PFA offers. Comments about cost only send the message that you are not accepting of consequences (which is another part of progress) and honestly, therapists here at PFA average $200k+ in student debt to be here with you and many years in college - we take comments about our pay personally... as you would likely in our shoes (empathy - another competency).

**Question: What if I can’t make it to group?**

**Answer: CONTACT US ASAP!!!** We can’t stress enough that you must contact us regarding absences **PRIOR** to the missed appointment. It is preferred that you email or text the *counselor providing the servic*e/appointment you will be missing (documenting your absence can be important), you can call and leave a message but that doesn’t give you documentation of the contact. We have busy schedules so if you call to report an absence we typically cannot call you to confirm that we have received your message. You must give the following information: NAME, phone number, the reason for your absence. **You must also contact your PO/DO/CM and let them know why you are missing your treatment.**

*\*We cannot return ANY phone calls if a voicemail is not left for ethical and confidentiality purposes and only return calls if there is a necessary exchange of information -NOT to confirm we “received” your voicemail.*

**Why am I being charged $30 when I miss a group or $60 when I miss an individual session?**

Answer: If you “no call-no show” to a group, we have to document it, report it to your PO/DO/CM and the victim advocate per policy (extra work costs money). It also tends to help people be accountable for their attendance. Also, we may contact the victim advocate/law enforcement if we are concerned about your absence being safety related. Make sure you call us *as soon as possible.* Also, individual sessions are not easy to reschedule, and many clients may want the same appointment time. When you don’t show as expected, you are taking time away from the therapist and other clients that could have benefitted from a session.

**Question: Do I get charged if the absence is excused?**

Answer: No, but the only things we can excuse and absence for are the following (with documentation upon request): Dr. Appointments (that could not be scheduled otherwise),

Court related items or meetings with you PO/DO/CW. Pre-arranged vacation, family bereavement, illness/hospitalization, jail, incarceration. *\*\*Please note that even if the absence is excused - in a progress based program absences will still set you back.*

**Question: Can I make up the group or attend twice per week after I missed?**

Answer: No, the content is the same in every group for that week which would make attending two of them unnecessary. Additionally, the DVOMB State Guidelines are clear that you may only progress through treatment by attending one DV group per week.

**Question: The paperwork says I can’t come to group under the influence but I have a prescription/red card for marijuana use, what do I do?**

Answer: If you have a legal prescription/red card you need to let us know. We cannot allow anyone visibly under the influence to attend a session for ethical purposes and per PFA policy (marijuana or even prescription pills, if you appear to be under the influence of anything, we may ask you to leave). Additionally, if someone has a drug related odor we may also ask them to leave as this can trigger people working on their sobriety. We reserve the right to remove you from a group if we suspect you are under the influence and may request that you do sobriety monitoring as needed prior to re-engaging in the group setting.

**Question: What if I need support outside of group or my appointment?**

Answer: We are dedicated professionals, however we cannot provide “on call” services in addition to our current schedules. If you are in crisis please utilize the Colorado Crisis Services at https://coloradocrisisservices.org/ or call 1-844-493-8255 or text “talk” to 38255. If you need additional therapy services aside from what we offer, or resources to help someone else in need please visit www.psychologytoday.com and click on “Find a therapist.”

**Question: Will Medicaid/Insurance Pay for my Domestic Violence treatment?**

Answer: No. If you are required to do other treatment such as Relapse Prevention or CBT or Mental Health it might be covered. *PLEASE NOTE: If Medicaid does not cover the service or you do not keep your Medicaid active, you will be responsible for payment.*

**We hope you find your treatment at PFA valuable -** we get a lot of good feedback about our program. If you feel you are not benefitting from our programs - let us know ASAP so we can transfer you to another agency, we won’t take it personally - this is your treatment.

Also, if we feel that you are not progressing or benefiting, we may transfer you to another agency as we have a duty to give you the greatest chance of success and recognize our program/therapists/curriculum may not be a good fit for everyone.

***Terms to know:*** *PO= Probation officer DO= Diversion officer CM = Case Manager*

*DVOMB = Domestic Violence Offender Management Board*

*TPR = Treatment Plan Review (every 8-12 weeks) you complete paperwork*

*MTT - Multidisciplinary Treatment Team (all of the people involved in your case, PO, Victim advocate etc) The fee for this is included with your $30 group payments*

*PCP = Personal Change plan (you just turned in your first one of 3 done at the same time as TPR)*

*\*Extra Contact Session: 1x per month therapeutic contact session for Level B clients*

*\*2nd Contact = Weekly additional therapeutic contact session for Level C clients*

*\*Some clients may have modified treatment requirements depending on the case\**