

# MARVIN THOMAS M.S.W., LICSW

Washington State Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker  
Board Certified Diplomate in Clinical Social Work  
11013 Alton Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98125 | (206) 364-9494  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 27645, Seattle, WA 98165-2645  
marv@marvthomas.com | www.marvthomas.com

---

## OFFICE POLICIES AND CLIENT TREATMENT DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

As part of our therapeutic working relationship I wish to clarify the rights and responsibilities we share. Please read the following information carefully, return one signed copy to me for my files, and keep the other for yourself. Social workers are required by Washington State law to provide this kind of information to their clients.

I provide a wide range of therapeutic services: individual and marital counseling, psychotherapy, group therapy, and training workshops. I differentiate between counseling and psychotherapy in the following way. Counseling is a problem solving process devoted to resolving some identified situational problem which exists in the life of an individual or a couple. It involves a process of identifying the problem and exploring ways to solve it. In contrast psychotherapy is a process of identifying and rectifying old, out of date response patterns which once worked in an earlier period in life, but are now no longer functional and in fact are causing problems personally or in relationships. It involves exploring in depth the current difficulties an individual or couple is having, identifying the historical roots which created the response patterns and belief systems which exist today and developing new ways of responding.

In reality the work most people do with me is a combination of counseling and psychotherapy, hence the more generic term: "therapy."

My approach is holistic in that I view the difficulties people experience as having their roots in several levels simultaneously. In our work together we will be exploring each of the following:

1. **Current stresses in life** can sometimes create immobility and emotional breakdown. Issues such as a recent move, death, illness, stresses in attempting to manage a full life with limited time, financial crisis, pressures of parenting and difficulties at work are just a few of the current life pressures which can cause a breakdown in functioning and well-being. When these are relevant we will explore together ways to cope with these realistic events.
2. **Lack of knowledge** about how to interpret and/or cope with a particular aspect of life can leave us feeling inadequate and apprehensive. Education is one function of counseling. As we identify together the areas in which you need more information I will share with you what I know about that particular subject and refer you to books, classes and other sources which will give you the information you need. A few examples would be the impact of the differences between men and women and the impact these differences have on a relationship, the approach parents need to take with their children at each growth step, what is realistic to expect in a relationship and what constitutes normal sexual functioning.
3. **Out of date response patterns**, which once were essential at an earlier period in life, are a major source of the problems which people experience in their relationships. When appropriate, we will explore together how current problems have their roots in earlier survival strategies which no longer are appropriate and work together to develop new ways for you to respond.

4. **Coping with loss.** The grief associated with healing the loss of a spouse, lover or child, job, familiar city or circle of friends or loss of a job can sometimes be overwhelming. When grief over a recent or long-ago loss is part of the emotional burden adding to your current life, we will work together to bring that loss into its proper perspective in relation to the rest of your life.
5. **Dealing with the psychological aftermath following a trauma.** Examples would be a sudden death, serious illness, accident, victim of assault or the aftermath of growing up in a very dysfunctional family. In these cases we will explore the actual event together and work to place the emotional reaction to the event into perspective.
6. **Metabolic disturbances** which can lead to loss of energy, mood swings, such as depression or anxiety or difficulty in thinking clearly. This is often what is behind emotional problems such as excessive crying or outbursts of anger. I am trained to recognize when metabolic disturbances may be part of the problem. If I believe this is the case I will refer you to a physician trained to evaluate and treat such disorders.
7. **Spiritual confusion about the purpose of life.** Until we are clear about what is really important to our life path, we will be unhappy. Happiness comes from embracing the path that is uniquely ours and working hard to follow it. When the quest for happiness does not include that clarity a feeling of being lost, and even despair can swirl within us and in our relationships. As Nietzsche, the great German philosopher, once said: "In this world there is one unique path which no one but you may walk". I can help you find that path and walk it.

My therapeutic approach involves exploring each of the above seven areas, in ways that are appropriate to you.

#### **Professional Experience:**

I have been practicing clinical social work since I received my Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Washington in 1966. I worked four years with Family Services of King County as a Senior Social Worker, served three years as Director of the Group Process Institute and since 1970 I have been in private practice of individual and marital and group therapy. I have taught psychology at Antioch University and served as guest lecturer at the University of Washington Schools of Psychiatry, Educational Psychology, Social Work and Architecture. I have been deeply influenced by classical psychodynamic thinking, family systems therapy, Gestalt therapy, Psychodrama, dance therapy and the more recent developments in the field of neurological integration. I am trained in EMDR. In my work with you I bring a synthesis of all these modalities as well as my years of experience with the over 10,000 people I have worked with in individual therapy, couple counseling, group therapy and workshops over the last 45 years. If you have any questions about my professional experience please feel free to ask any questions.

My Credentials include:

- Masters Degree in Social Work - UW 1966
- Member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers
- Diplomate in Clinical Social Work with the American Board of Social Work Examiners
- Level II EMDR Certification
- Licensed Certified Clinical Social Worker with the State of Washington, no. 20704 LW00006652\*

*\*Counselors practicing counseling for a fee must be registered or certified with the Department of Licensing for the protection of the public health and safety. Registration of an individual with the department does not include a recognition of any practice standards, nor necessarily implies the effectiveness of any treatment.*

#### **Confidentiality:**

All issues discussed in the course of our work together are strictly confidential. I will not discuss any

aspect of your therapy with anyone without your prior approval. By Washington State law, information concerning treatment or evaluation may be released only with the written consent of the person treated or such person's parent or guardian. The exception to this is the law does allow any health practitioner to see your notes or discuss your case with me without your permission. In practice I disagree with this law and will release information only with your knowledge and permission. I keep only very brief notes to protect your confidentiality. You have a right to review those notes any time you wish. You may request that I not keep notes.

Washington State law requires all health practitioners - including me - to inform the proper authorities in any of the following three situations:

1. If I learn or suspect that child abuse is occurring.
2. If I have reason to believe that you may be at risk to commit suicide.
3. If I have reason to believe that you may pose a threat of physical harm to another person.

In June 1996 the US Supreme court ruled that social workers enjoy the right of privileged information, which means that in a legal action I cannot be required by any court to surrender my records or be required to testify in court regarding my work with you without your express written permission. This ruling guarantees the privacy and confidentiality of our work together. However, the legal and social work profession have different views about the degree of privacy you enjoy in the company of a therapist. You need to be aware that if you have a legal action brought against you, the opposing side will make every effort to discover everything about you they can. This only happens during divorce or child custody cases. I may have to release your records for a divorce or custody case if an action has been filed against you. You can prevent this by filing a petition protecting your privacy. Please remember that my orientation is to be in an alliance with you toward assisting you to accomplish your goals. The legal and ethical requirements about confidentiality are designed to protect you and your loved ones. For your benefit and for my professional growth I regularly seek consultation with other professionals regarding my work with clients. I will not disclose your identity if I consult with a colleague regarding my work with you.

**Fees:**

My fee is \$120 per 60-minute session for individual consultation and \$140 per 60 minute session for couples or family work. The initial 180 minute (three hour) session for couples is \$350. Sliding scale is available for special situations. The fee is payable at each session unless other arrangements are made in advance. Please feel free to discuss fees or payment options with me at any time. Periodically I raise my fees to adjust for increases in the cost of living and doing business. I will give you one month's notice of any fee increase. I may bill at the pro-rated \$120 per hour rate for any letters, reports, e-mail correspondence or research on your behalf. My fee for out of office activities is \$140 per hour with a two hour minimum.

**Tax Information:**

My services as a clinical social worker, including your transportation costs, are tax deductible as a part of your IRS medical deduction, if you itemize. Your cancelled checks are sufficient record for the IRS.

**Appointment Policy:**

A session is 60 minutes in length. When a time period other than 60 minutes is agreed upon, the fee will pro-rated accordingly. The frequency of our meetings will be arranged by mutual agreement. Since the time of your appointment is reserved exclusively for you, it is important for you to be on time. If you come late, you lose the time which you have missed. If you find it necessary to cancel your appointment for any reason, please give me at least 24 hours notice. Missed appointments or appointments cancelled less than 24 hours in advance are subject to full charge for the time reserved. Exceptions to the charge is made if we can mutually reschedule the session later in the same week. Cancellations can be left on my answering service: (206) 364-9494

**Responsibility for Choice of Therapy:**

It is your right and responsibility to decide whether to engage in any course of therapy with me and to decide whether the treatment is suitable for you. The therapy will follow from the requests that you bring to our work together. The means to accomplish them will evolve mutually between us and should be reviewed regularly in our work together. You may terminate treatment at any time at your own option. I encourage you to discuss your decision to end therapy as an important part of the therapy process.

**Answering Service and Emergencies:**

You can leave messages on my answering service 24 hours per day at (206) 364-9494. If your call is urgent I will make every effort to reach you soon. Since my practice is not geared toward working with emergencies I may not be able to respond quickly enough to help you in the event of a true emergency. If you are unable to reach me in the event of an emergency please call the Crisis Clinic (206-461-3222) for 24-hour help.

**Every client is required by law to sign this statement indicating they have read and understood the above content.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I/we have read and understand the above statement. Any questions I had have been discussed with Marvin Thomas and answered to my satisfaction, and I have been supplied with a copy of this disclosure statement.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_