

Communications Policy

CONTACTING ME

When you need to contact Fred Matheson for any reason, these are the most effective ways to get in touch in a reasonable amount of time:

By phone (206.569.4937): You may leave messages on voicemail, which is confidential. I will check these messages on a regular basis. Please limit your phone contacts to appointment scheduling and emergencies; barring prior arrangement, our work will take place face-to-face. There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate to conduct one or more scheduled sessions by phone. Unscheduled telephone conversations initiated by a client will result in a fee being charged on a prorated basis according to the client's established fee schedule.

By e-mail (fredmathesontherapist@gmail.com): If you wish to communicate with me by normal email or normal text message, please read and complete the Communication by Email, Text Message, and Other Non-Secure Means form included with these office policies, as my e-mail is not secure. My e-mail address is available to simplify contacts from new clients, to facilitate scheduling of appointments, and to send files such as PDFs or other digital documents. However, e-mail is not a viable means of communicating other information to me. Please note that e-mails will be printed and placed in your file. I do not respond in depth to e-mails from clients. If you require urgent contact, you may choose to schedule a session sooner than your previously scheduled appointment time, if available.

Please refrain from making contact with me using social media messaging systems such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. These methods have very poor security and I am not prepared to watch them closely for important messages from clients. It is important that we be able to communicate and also keep the confidential space that is vital to therapy. Please speak with me about any concerns you have regarding my preferred communication methods.

RESPONSE TIME

I may not be able to respond to your messages and calls immediately. For voicemails and other messages, you can expect a response within 48 hours (weekends are excepted from this timeframe). I may occasionally reply more quickly than that or on weekends, but please be aware that this will not always be possible.

Be aware that there may be times when I am unable to receive or respond to messages, such as when out of cellular range or out of town.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

If you are ever experiencing an emergency, including a mental health crisis, please call:

- General Emergencies – 911
- Crisis Line (Snohomish County) – 425.258.4357 or 1.800.223.8145
- Crisis Line (King County) – 206.461.3222

If you need to contact me about an emergency, the best method is:

- By phone (206.569.4937).
- If you cannot reach me by phone, please leave a voicemail.

Please note that SMS (normal phone text messages) are not designed for emergency contact. SMS text messages occasionally get delayed and on rare occasions may be lost. So, please refrain from using SMS as your sole method of communicating with me in emergencies.

Communication by Email, Text Message, and Other Non-Secure Means

It may become useful during the course of treatment to communicate by email, text message (e.g. "SMS") or other electronic methods of communication. Be informed that these methods, in their typical form, are not confidential means of communication. If you use these methods to communicate with Fred Matheson, there is a reasonable chance that a third party may be able to intercept and eavesdrop on those messages. The kinds of parties that may intercept these messages include, but are not limited to:

- People in your home or other environments who can access your phone, computer, or other devices that you use to read and write messages
- Your employer, if you use your work email to communicate with Fred Matheson
- Third parties on the Internet such as server administrators and others who monitor Internet traffic

If there are people in your life that you don't want accessing these communications, please talk with Fred Matheson about ways to keep your communications safe and confidential.

CONSENT FOR TRANSMISSION OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION BY NON-SECURE MEANS

I consent to allow Fred Matheson to use unsecured email and mobile phone text messaging to transmit to me the following protected health information:

- Information related to the scheduling of meetings or other appointments
- Information related to billing and payment

I have been informed of the risks, including but not limited to my confidentiality in treatment, of transmitting my protected health information by unsecured means. I understand that I am not required to sign this agreement in order to receive treatment. I also understand that I may terminate this consent at any time.

Client Signature

Date

Second Client Signature (if applicable)

Date