

Individual vs. Family Therapy when working with Children here at Life Practice

Children under the age of 12 years old

For any child under 12 years of age, we will be approaching the therapy as **Family Therapy**. We will include parents, which if parents are not together, we will still include both parents regardless of what is in the custody agreement if the parent is in the child's life at all. This will include any concerns either parent has, any information the parents want to share, and having the parents in the session as necessary. (Parents are the biological parents or the legal guardians of the child) The child will be informed and understand to their best ability that this therapy is **Family Therapy**, and we are not the child's individual therapist, we are the Family Therapist. Each parent will need to fill out an informed consent packet and sign a consent to treat a minor. There is no Individual therapy offered here for children under the age of 12.

Children 12 years of age – 17 years of age

Individual Therapy: For children that are 12 years of age – 17 years of age, California law has deemed that they can consent on their own to treatment without parental consent. So, if **Individual Therapy** for a child between the ages of 12-17 is requested that would mean that the child will fill out their own informed consent packet, *consent to their own treatment*, and all communication (including payment and scheduling) will go through the child. There would be no communication between either parent and the therapist. No information would be given to either parent about the therapy.

Family Therapy: If either parent wants to be involved, included, share concerns, know information, or in any way wants to communicate with the therapist, then the best option would be to consider it **Family Therapy**. It would be clear to the child that this is **Family Therapy**, and we are not the child's individual therapist. Ideally, we would include both parents (meaning biological and/or legal guardians of the child). Each parent involved and the child 12 or over would fill out an informed consent packet and each parent would sign a consent to treat a minor.