

Cancellation and no-show policy template

A short, fair client policy, with a plain-language summary clients will actually read.

What this is

A ready-to-edit policy for late cancellations and missed sessions. It covers notice, fees, when no fee applies, medical aid, online sessions, couples, reminders and what happens if you need to cancel. It ends with a short "in short" summary box and a client acknowledgement.

How to use it

- Replace every highlighted [placeholder] with your own notice period, fee and contact details. Keep the wording friendly and clear.
- Give the policy to every client when they book, and put the same notice and fee in your consent form. Keep a signed copy or a dated message as proof.
- Use the "In short" box on your booking confirmation or website.
- Delete this page and the last page before you give the policy to clients.

Before you use it

Give it before the first session. The Council's guidance says a practitioner can only charge if there is proof the client received the policy beforehand.

Keep fees reasonable. The Council also says a fee must be reasonable, only charged where you cannot fill the time, and not charged after a death or hospitalisation. The 24-hour period it names is for specialists; 24 hours is the usual choice in counselling, but confirm it with your professional body or indemnity insurer.

Check with your own policy. This is a template, not legal advice. Have it reviewed, and do not describe it as approved by the Health Professions Council of South Africa.

What we checked

- Health Professions Council of South Africa guidance on cancellation and no-show fees: policy given in advance, fee reasonable, charged only if the time cannot be filled, no fee after death or hospitalisation. Charges are governed by the Consumer Protection Act. [Council guidance](#)
- Barit (2019), Appointment cancellations and no shows: to charge or not to charge? University of Pretoria. The main reason patients miss appointments is forgetting; reminders are among the quickest and cheapest fixes. [University of Pretoria](#)

Last checked: 2 October 2026. General information only, not legal or professional advice. Not approved or endorsed by the Health Professions Council of South Africa.

[Practice name]

[Practice address] · [Telephone] · [Email]

Cancellation and no-show policy

I reserve each session time for you. This policy explains how cancellations and missed sessions work so that there are no surprises. I will go through it with you before your first session, and it forms part of the consent form you sign.

In short

Please tell me at least [24 hours'] before if you cannot come.

A fee may apply for a late cancellation or a missed session, but only if I cannot offer your time to someone else.

No fee for illness, an emergency, a death in the family, hospital, or a power, network or transport failure you could not avoid.

Medical aids do not pay these fees, so you pay them directly.

If I cancel, there is no charge and I will offer you another time.

The full policy

1. Giving notice

Please give at least [24 hours'] notice if you need to cancel or move a session. You can do this by [WhatsApp, phone call, email or booking link] on [contact details]. A message sent outside office hours counts from the time you sent it.

2. Late cancellations and missed sessions

If you cancel with less than [24 hours'] notice, or you do not arrive, [a fee of R amount / a percentage of the session fee] may be charged. I only charge when I cannot offer the time to another client. Before I charge, I will ask you what happened.

3. When there is no fee

- You are ill or there is an emergency.
- There is a death in your family, or you or a close family member is in hospital.
- A power, network or transport failure stops you from attending and you could not have avoided it.
- I cancel, or I am late.
- [Optional: it is the first time you have cancelled late. I will send a reminder of this policy instead.]

4. Medical aid

Fees for late cancellations and missed sessions are not billed to your medical aid. They are payable by you directly, [within 7 days of my invoice].

5. Arriving late

If you arrive late, we will finish at the scheduled time so the next person is not kept waiting. The full session fee applies.

6. Online sessions

If you have not connected within [15] minutes of the start time and have not contacted me, I will treat the session as missed. If the technology fails on my side, there is no fee and we will arrange another time. If it fails on your side and we cannot reconnect, [explain what you will do, for example: we will use the phone for the rest of the time, or reschedule at no charge].

7. Couples

A couple is charged one fee, which you may share as you agree between you. If one of you cannot attend, please tell me beforehand so we can decide whether to go ahead with the partner who can come, use the time differently, or move the session.

8. Reminders

I send a reminder [24 hours] before your session by [WhatsApp or email]. This is a courtesy. If you do not receive one, you are still responsible for your appointment.

9. If I need to cancel

I will give you as much notice as I can and offer you another time at no charge.

10. If you miss several sessions

If you miss [two] sessions in a row without contacting me, I will get in touch to check that you are well and to ask whether you would like to continue. I may pause new bookings until we have spoken.

11. Changes to this policy

If I change this policy I will give you written notice before the change applies.

Your acknowledgement

- ☐ I have read and understood this policy.
- ☐ I received it before my first session, or when I made my booking.
- ☐ I agree to it as part of my counselling consent.

Client name (print)

Signature

Date

Practitioner name

Date policy was given to the client

ONLINE BOOKING

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A policy only helps if clients can easily act on it. In **Wholistic Private Practice**, clients book, change and cancel their sessions online, and automatic reminders help them remember to show up.

- **Online booking** takes the back-and-forth of finding a time out of your WhatsApp and inbox.
- **Automatic reminders** go out before each session, because forgetting is the most common reason people miss an appointment.
- **Less time chasing**, so you can keep your calendar full and your admin short.

See Online booking →

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Built by Sumarie Engelbrecht, a Registered Counsellor in active practice in Mbombela, for South African psychologists and Registered Counsellors.