

LETTER OF TERMINATION TO CLIENT FOR MISSED APPOINTMENTS

Therapists may choose to terminate services for clients who frequently do not show up for appointments and do not offer any explanation. Most professional ethical codes encourage therapists to terminate clients who are not benefiting from therapy; it is difficult for clients to benefit when their attendance at therapeutic sessions is erratic.

It is best to develop clear policies about how you will handle frequent and/or unexplained “no-shows” and to have clients read and sign these policies at the first session. This would include the responsibility of clients to notify their therapist at least 48 hours in advance if they can’t make an appointment, unless an unforeseeable situation arises.

Most therapists will call or send letters to reach out to clients who do not show up for appointments, and will discuss inconsistencies in attendance with clients during therapy sessions. If a client persists in missing appointments and you believe termination is the best option, it is helpful to send a letter to inform the client and document the reasons for the termination.

You should check with your professional association to see if there are additional guidelines for termination under these circumstances. Also, be sure you have obtained permission from the client at the outset of treatment to send written correspondence, so that you are not breaching confidentiality.

The following termination letter is meant to be a guide only. Please modify it to suit your own policies and practices.

Date: _____

Dear _____ (*client name*):

You have missed _____ (*number*) sessions without notifying me in advance since we began working together on _____ (*therapy start date*). As my policies state, therapy may be terminated for excessive missed appointments without notification.

I am attaching a copy of the policy to which you agreed at the beginning of treatment.

It is my ethical obligation to discontinue treatment when a person is no longer benefiting from therapy. As we have discussed, it is difficult to make progress in therapy without regular attendance. I have asked about possible reasons for these attendance issues.

I have attached a referral list of other service providers in case you believe it would be easier to attend therapy regularly elsewhere.

If you would like to discuss this further, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Therapist signature