

OBJECTIVE

This provides useful information for new patients of Dr. Abess. Please take time to read this important information and sign the last page to indicate you have read and understand.

WHAT IS PSYCHIATRY

Psychiatry is a specialty of Medicine. Psychiatrists are Medical Doctors (MD's) who undergo 4 years of additional training after completing Medical School to specialize in understanding human development and behavior as well as psychological disorders. Psychiatrists, unlike counselors and psychologists, understand both the psychological and biological factors that influence behavior. The practice of psychiatry has sometimes been called Behavioral Medicine.

All medical conditions affect the brain, either directly or indirectly. Because of this, modern medical treatment of illness involves treatment of both the body and the mind. It is also because of this that Psychiatrists are often asked by primary care physicians to assist in treating their patients. Your primary care physician may have referred you to see a psychiatrist because it is estimated that 50 to 80% of patients who visit primary care specialists would benefit from co-treatment by a psychiatrist. Being a medical doctor, a psychiatrist can communicate knowledgeably with your personal physician regarding your condition and together, they can develop the best treatment strategy. Chronic medical conditions require life long changes in attitudes and behavior. Such changes are difficult to achieve and yet unless they are achieved, outcome can become more devastating. Medical illness can stretch normal coping mechanisms. Unless adaptive coping skills are restored, illness often has a more tragic outcome. A psychiatrist is best equipped professional to help you deal adaptively with illness and to sustain a high quality of life.

Conversely, psychiatric illness can lead to medical illness. One of five individuals will require treatment for depression within their lifetime. One half of all individuals have a treatable psychiatric disorder at some point in time. Unless psychiatric disorders are well managed, they lead to intensification of existing medical problems, or development of new physical problems. In addition to the adverse impact upon quality of life from physical and mental illness, the treatment for these conditions can be expensive and draining upon economic, emotional and social resources.

OFFICE PERSONNEL

Dr. Abess

Undergraduate training occurred at LeMoyne College with degree of B.S. in Multiple Science. Dr. Abess served 4 ½ years in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged with rank of Captain. His Medical Degree was obtained from the Medical University of South Carolina. He completed his Rotating Medical Internship and Psychiatric Residency at the Medical University of South Carolina and was elected Chief Resident. Dr. Abess worked for the Hospital Consultation and Liaison Service of the Medical University of South Carolina for 6 months before entering full time private practice. Dr. Abess has been working in the Charleston

Community in the practice of psychiatry since January, 1978. He has been involved the entire time in both outpatient and inpatient psychiatry. He has helped to develop inpatient treatment programs at a number of hospital facilities. Dr. Abess is on the Active Staff of Roper Hospital and Courtesy Staff of St. Francis Hospital. He previously served as Chief of the Division of Psychiatry at Roper and St. Francis Xavier Hospitals. Dr. Abess has special expertise in clinical psychopharmacology (use of medications), individual psychotherapy (talk therapy), medical hypnosis (habit control, pain control, etc.), and the treatment of mood and anxiety disorders (depression, bipolar disorder, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, phobic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder). Additionally, Dr. Abess has participated in community television events, and has published or contributed to articles in local and national media. He has moderated a monthly chat group for AmericasDoctor.com. He has worked as a consultant to Internet companies involved with medicine. He also provides consultation services to small business and corporations regarding health related and human dynamics issues. You can learn more about Dr. Abess and his office by visiting the office website at <http://abess.com> or <http://3po.com>

Ann

Ann Abess is a licensed Registered Nurse. She attended St. Joseph's School of Nursing in Syracuse, NY. She served as president of the student government of the School of Nursing. She has worked in numerous hospitals in medical surgical and pediatric units. She frequently functioned as charge nurse and was the head nurse of a pediatric unit. She worked as an office nurse for her father, an internal medicine doctor. She furthered her professional education by becoming a Certified Nurse Midwife at the Medical University of South Carolina where she worked until coming to this office. She has been active in La Leche League. Ann has extensive experience managing doctor offices. She runs the office for Dr. Abess and combines her nursing and administrative expertise to run an efficient, pleasant office.

LOCATION

The office is located in downtown Charleston at 46-c State Street. It is adjacent to the Lodge Alley Inn Complex. Call for specific instructions on how to find the office or finding parking if not familiar with the area.

OFFICE HOURS & APPOINTMENTS

The office is open regularly from 10 AM until 5 PM Monday through Thursday. All appointments must be scheduled. **You will be charged for missing appointments** (unless due to emergencies) because the time for your appointment is reserved only for you. Insurance companies and Medicare will not pay for missed sessions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We consider your privacy to be of utmost importance. You will be hard pressed to find another medical office that provides as much security and confidentiality for your medical information. No information will ever be released to any person or agency without your specific consent. **However, South Carolina Law permits your medical records to be obtained by a judge with a court order. In such an instance, Dr. Abess is required to abide by the law.** (This has never occurred to any of our patients.) Our office takes special precautions to protect your privacy and confidentiality. For example, our office does **not** submit claims information via electronic means. Additionally, for your protection records are never stored on a "cloud." We maintain our own record system with multiple levels of security.

EMERGENCY & AFTER HOURS COVERAGE

When the office is closed, either Dr. Abess or an “on call” psychiatrist will be available to respond to existing patients. Your call will be handled by a professional answering service operator. Identify yourself as a patient of Dr. Abess and give your name and telephone number along with the nature of the problem so that an appropriate response will be expedited. All calls will be returned within a 24 hour time period. Generally, calls will be returned on the same day. If you believe you have a genuine emergency, you are to take yourself or arrange to be taken to the nearest hospital emergency room.

FEE PAYMENT

Fees are due and payable at the time of the session. Dr. Abess makes it a practice to discuss finances openly. Initial appointments are charged at \$300. 45-60 minute sessions are charged at \$230. 20-30 minute sessions are charged at \$115. Medicare fees are different and change on an annual basis according to Federal law.

There is a concierge service available for individuals desiring the highest level of access, privacy and convenience. If this interests you please discuss your interest with Ann or Dr. Abess.

INSURANCE

Your insurance coverage is based on a contract between you and your insurance company. Dr. Abess is not a party to that agreement. Dr. Abess’ services are charged to you, not to your insurance company. With few exceptions, Dr. Abess does not accept assignment for office visits. (This is when the insurance company pays Dr. Abess directly.) Ann Abess is familiar with a variety of insurance issues and is willing to assist patients when necessary.

All Medicare claims are filed by this office, in accordance with Federal law.

MANAGED CARE

Dr. Abess intentionally avoids participation in managed care. He believes the best health decisions are those made between the patient/patient’s family and the doctor. In managed care, important health decisions are determined by companies trying to save money. Yet, these companies do not have responsibility for the well being of patients. In most situations, managed care means your health is managed by others who have more to gain by withholding care. Ultimately managed care will fail as it restricts the patients choice of doctor, and limits availability to the best care available.

PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Abess believes all individuals should be treated with respect and dignity. He enjoys the practice of psychiatry and derives satisfaction when people feel better and enjoy their lives more fully. By intentionally remaining small and having a great deal of control over his practice, Dr. Abess hopes to be able to provide exceptional service for his patients. If ever there develops a problem with office procedures or personnel or with Dr. Abess himself, he hopes you will bring the problem to his attention in order that a satisfactory resolution might be possible.

E-MAIL

For your convenience and privacy, Dr. Abess has arranged for his patients to be able to contact his office via **secure** Internet email. This form of communication can be used at any time provided the matter is not urgent. **Urgent matters need always to be handled by the telephone.** Secure Internet email enables you to conveniently communicate with the office at any time of day / night and whether you are traveling or home. To utilize this service, you must go to <http://www.relayhealth.com> and register on the site. After doing so, you will be approved by Dr. Abess to send and receive messages to him and office staff. Turn around time for secure Internet email is generally less than 24-48 hours.

Secure E-mail is considered appropriate for medication instructions, clarification of information provided during office visits, checking of laboratory results, appointment scheduling, or timely feedback regarding success or failure of treatment strategies. Secure E-mail is not the correct medium in which to discuss urgent or emergency medical matters. Neither is Secure E-mail the correct medium in which to engage in psychotherapy or psychotherapeutic issues.

Though precautions are taken to insure that your messages are secure, your decision to use e-mail indicates that you absolve Dr. Abess of any liability in the event of accidental loss of confidentiality or loss of information or failed communications regardless of how this occurs

E-mail messages and telephone calls that require Dr. Abess to substantially engage in a review of records and/or engage in significant medical decision making will entail a charge that is proportionate to the time required to properly address the issue. This fee is not reimbursable by your health insurance company. Routine administrative communications with the office will not entail a charge.

Your e-mail address will never be sold or provided to other companies. Unless you choose not to participate, however, Dr. Abess may use your e-mail address to provide you with newsletters, medical information, medical news, and information regarding new products and services provided by his office.

A MESSAGE FROM DR. ABESS:

Visit Dr. Abess' website at <http://abess.com> or <http://3po.com> to learn more about staff and office policy. If you are a patient of Dr. Abess visit <http://relayhealth.com/patients> to initiate secure E-mail with the office. If you want to subscribe to the latest news pertaining to the brain, behavior, and psychiatric medication as deemed important by Dr. Abess, then subscribe to his mailing list at <http://www.3po.com/subscribe/> I look forward to meeting and working with you.



John Frederick Abess, MD



SIGNATURE

New Client / Patient

My signature below indicates I have read and understand the policies of Dr. Abess' office as provided in this patient information brochure revised as of October 5, 2014.

Signature of New Client / Patient

Date of Signature