

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

I place a high value on the confidentiality of the information that my clients share with me. This sheet was prepared to clarify my legal and ethical responsibilities regarding this important issue.

Personal information that you share with me may be entered into your records in written form. However, an effort is generally made to avoid entry of information that may be especially sensitive or embarrassing. The only individual with access to my files is a staff member performing related clerical tasks. This person is aware of the strict confidential nature of the information in the records. Persons from outside my office are not allowed access to my files.

Release of Information to Others

If for some reason there is a need to share information in your record with someone not employed here (for example, your physician or another therapist), you will first be consulted and asked to sign a form authorizing transfer of the information. Because of the sensitive nature of the information contained in some records, you may wish to discuss the release of this material and related implications very carefully before you sign. The form will specify the information that you give me permission to release to the other party and will specify the time period during which the information may be released. You can revoke your permission at any time by simply giving me a written notice.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

There are several important instances when confidential information may be released to others. First, if the Court (“Court ordered”) has referred you to my practice, you can assume that the Court wishes to receive some type of report or evaluation. You should discuss with me exactly what information might be included in a report to the Court **BEFORE** you disclose any confidential material. In such instances, you have a right to tell me only what you want me to know.

Second, if you are involved in litigation of any kind and inform the Court of the services that you received from me (making your mental health an issue before the Court), you may be waiving your right to keep your records confidential. You may wish to consult your attorney regarding such matters before you disclose that you have received treatment.

Third, if you threaten to harm yourself or someone else and I believe your threat to be serious, I am obligated under the law to take whatever actions seem necessary to protect people from harm. This may include divulging confidential information to others and would only be done under unusual circumstances where someone’s life appears to be in danger.

Fourth, if I have reason to believe that you are abusing or neglecting children, I am obligated by law to report this to the appropriate state agency. The law is designed to protect children from harm and the obligations to report suspected abuse or neglect is clear in this regard.

Fifth, if your account balance remains unpaid for greater than 90 days and you have not made arrangements for payment, your account may be sent to a collection agency for collection. No clinical information of any kind will be shared with this agency.

In addition, there may be some other rare instances in which you have waived your rights to have your records protected. If you are involved in any type of current or potential legal difficulties, I suggest that you discuss such matters with your attorney before informing others of the services you have received here.

In summary, I make every reasonable effort to safeguard the personal information that you may share with me. There are, however, certain instances when I may be obligated under the law to release such information to others. If you have any questions about confidentiality, please discuss them with me.

I have read and understood the above policy on confidentiality.

Patient or Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____