

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

I. MY PLEDGE REGARDING HEALTH INFORMATION: I understand that health information about you / your child is personal. I am committed to protecting health information about you / your child. I create a record of the care and services you / your child receive(s) from me. I need this record to provide you / your child with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice applies to all of the records of your / your child's care generated by this mental health care practice. This notice will tell you about the ways in which I may use and disclose health information about you / your child. I also describe your rights to the health information I keep about you / your child, and describe certain obligations I have regarding the use and disclosure of your / your child's health information. I am required by law to:

- Make sure that protected health information ("PHI") that identifies you / your child is kept private.
- Give you this notice of my legal duties and privacy practices with respect to health information.
- Follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.
- I may need to update this Notice according to official regulation guidelines, and such changes will apply to all information I have about you / your child. The new Notice will be available upon request.

II. HOW I MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU: The following categories describe different ways that therapists are permitted to use and disclose health information. For each category of uses or disclosures I will explain what I mean and try to give some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways I am permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

For Treatment, Payment, or Health Care Operations:

We will make all attempts to keep your health information private. Federal privacy rules (regulations) allow health care providers who have direct treatment relationship with the patient/client to use or disclose the patient/client's personal health information without the patient's written authorization, in order to carry out the health care provider's treatment, payment or health care operations. For example, a clinician is permitted to use and disclose a client's person health information, which is otherwise confidential, to insurance companies on the client's behalf.

Therapists may also disclose a client's protected health information for treatment activities. This too can be done without written authorization. For example, if a therapist is unsure of a diagnosis and/or wants support for a treatment plan, the therapist is allowed to consult with a licensed clinician (i.e., a consultant) not a part of their practice and provide the clients' self reported information or results of an inventory/assessment in order to receive consult without expressed written consent of the client. These kinds of consultations are permitted in order to assist the clinician in diagnosis and treatment of clients. Although these kinds of disclosures are permitted, I will work to protect your identity and only disclose as much information as is needed for the consultation.

The regulations are also explained as such: "Disclosures for treatment purposes are not limited to the minimum necessary standard. Because therapists and other health care providers need

access to the full record and/or full and complete information in order to provide quality care. The word “treatment” includes, among other things, the coordination and management of health care providers with a third party, consultations between health care providers and referrals of a patient for health care from one health care provider to another.” But, again, if I seek consultation, I will avoid sharing identifying information, and will change your name / age so as to protect your personal identity. And I will only make referrals to other health care providers with your explicit written consent, even though it is not required, to protect your identity and to support the trust necessary for our therapeutic relationship.

Lawsuits and Disputes:

If you are involved in a lawsuit, I may disclose health information in response to a court or administrative order. I may also disclose health information about your child in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

III. CERTAIN USES AND DISCLOSURES REQUIRE YOUR AUTHORIZATION:

1. **Psychotherapy Notes.** I do keep “psychotherapy notes” as that term is defined in 45 CFR § 164.501, and any use or disclosure of such notes requires your Authorization unless the use or disclosure is: a. For my use in treating you. b. For my use in training or supervising mental health practitioners to help them improve their skills in group, joint, family, or individual counseling or therapy. (Identifying information will be changed in order to protect your identity.) c. For my use in defending myself in legal proceedings instituted by you. d. For use by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to investigate my compliance with HIPAA. e. Required by law and the use or disclosure is limited to the requirements of such law. f. Required by law for certain health oversight activities pertaining to the originator of the psychotherapy notes. g. Required by a coroner who is performing duties authorized by law. h. Required to help avert a serious threat to the health and safety of others.
2. **Marketing Purposes.** As a psychotherapist, I will not use or disclose your PHI for marketing purposes.
3. **Sale of PHI.** As a psychotherapist, I will not sell your PHI.

IV. CERTAIN USES AND DISCLOSURES DO NOT REQUIRE YOUR AUTHORIZATION.

Subject to certain limitations in the law, I can use and disclose your PHI without your Authorization for the following reasons:

1. When disclosure is required by state or federal law, and the use or disclosure complies with and is limited to the relevant requirements of such law.
2. For public health activities, including reporting suspected child, elder, or dependent adult abuse, or preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone’s health or safety.
3. For health oversight activities, including audits and investigations.
4. For judicial and administrative proceedings, including responding to a court or administrative order, although my preference is to obtain an Authorization from you before doing so.
5. For law enforcement purposes, including reporting crimes occurring on my premises.
6. To coroners or medical examiners, when such individuals are performing duties authorized by law.
7. For research purposes, including studying and comparing the mental health of patients who received one form of therapy versus those who received another form of therapy for

the same condition. (Please Note: I am not likely to engage in research, and will request your written consent if I do engage in research, even though your written consent is not required.)

8. Specialized government functions, including, ensuring the proper execution of military missions; protecting the President of the United States; conducting intelligence or counter-intelligence operations; or, helping to ensure the safety of those working within or housed in correctional institutions.
9. For workers' compensation purposes. Although my preference is to obtain an Authorization from you, I may provide your PHI in order to comply with workers' compensation laws.
10. Appointment reminders and health related benefits or services. I may use and disclose your PHI to contact you to remind you that you have an appointment with me. I may also use and disclose your PHI to tell you about treatment alternatives, or other health care services or benefits that I offer.

V. CERTAIN USES AND DISCLOSURES REQUIRE YOU TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT.

1. Disclosures to family, friends, or others. I may provide your PHI to a family member, friend, or other person that you indicate is involved in your care or the payment for your health care, unless you object in whole or in part. The opportunity to consent may be obtained retroactively in emergency situations.

VI. YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO YOUR PHI:

1. The Right to Request Limits on Uses and Disclosures of Your PHI. You have the right to ask me not to use or disclose certain PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations purposes. I am not required to agree to your request, and I may say "no" if I believe it would affect your health care.
2. The Right to Request Restrictions for Out-of-Pocket Expenses Paid for In Full. You have the right to request restrictions on disclosures of your PHI to health plans for payment or health care operations purposes if the PHI pertains solely to a health care item or a health care service that you have paid for out-of-pocket in full.
3. The Right to Choose How I Send PHI to You. You have the right to ask me to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address, and I will agree to all reasonable requests.
4. The Right to See and Get Copies of Your PHI. Other than "psychotherapy notes," you have the right to get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record and other information that I have about you. I will provide you with a copy of your record, or a summary of it, if you agree to receive a summary, within 30 days of receiving your written request, and I may charge a reasonable, cost based fee for doing so.
5. The Right to Get a List of the Disclosures I Have Made. You have the right to request a list of instances in which I have disclosed your PHI for purposes other than treatment, payment, or health care operations, or for which you provided me with an Authorization. I will respond to your request for an accounting of disclosures within 60 days of receiving your request. The list I will give you will include disclosures made in the last six years unless you request a shorter time. I will provide the list to you at no charge, but if you make more than one request in the same year, I will charge you a reasonable cost based fee for each additional request.
6. The Right to Correct or Update Your PHI. If you believe that there is a mistake in your PHI, or that a piece of important information is missing from your PHI, you have the right

to request that I correct the existing information or add the missing information. I may say “no” to your request, but I will tell you why in writing within 60 days of receiving your request.

7. The Right to Get a Paper or Electronic Copy of this Notice. You have the right get a paper copy of this Notice, and you have the right to get a copy of this notice by e-mail. And, even if you have agreed to receive this Notice via e-mail, you also have the right to request a paper copy of it.