

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/01/2023

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. OUR PLEDGE REGARDING HEALTH INFORMATION:

We understand that health information about you and your health care is personal. We are committed to protecting your health information about you. We create a record of the care and services you receive from us. We need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with specific legal requirements. This notice applies to all forms of your care generated by this mental health care practice. This notice will tell you how we may use and disclose your health information. We also describe your rights to the health information we keep about you and the obligations we have regarding using and disclosing your health information. We are required by law to:

- Make sure that protected health information (“PHI”) that identifies you is kept private.
- Give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices concerning health information.
- Follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.
- We can change the terms of this Notice, which will apply to all information we have about you. The new Notice will be available upon request in our office and on my website.

II. HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU:

The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose health information. We will explain what we mean by each type of use or disclosure and try to give some examples. Only some uses or disclosures in a category will be listed.

However, all the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories. For Treatment Payment or Health Care Operations: Federal privacy rules (regulations) allow healthcare providers who have a direct treatment relationship with the client to use or disclose the client’s personal health information without the patient’s written authorization to carry out the healthcare provider’s treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. We may also disclose your protected health information for the treatment activities of any healthcare provider. This, too, can be done without your written authorization. For example, if a clinician were to consult with another licensed healthcare provider about your condition, we would be permitted to use and disclose your personal health information, which is otherwise confidential, to assist the clinician in diagnosing and treating your mental health condition.

Disclosures for treatment purposes are not limited to the minimum necessary standard. Because therapists and other health care providers need access to the entire record and complete information 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 client for health care from one health care provider to another.

Lawsuits and Disputes: If you are involved in a case, you may disclose health information in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose health information about your child in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful processes 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. We 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:
 - For our use in treating you.
 - For our use in training or supervising mental health practitioners to help them improve their skills in group, joint, family, or individual counseling or therapy.
 - For use in defending ourselves in legal proceedings instituted by you.
 - For use by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to investigate our compliance with HIPAA.
 - Required by law, and the use or disclosure is limited to the requirements of such law.
 - Required by law for certain health oversight activities about the originator of the psychotherapy notes.
 - Required by a coroner who is performing duties authorized by law.
 - Required to help avert a serious threat to the health and safety of others.
2. Marketing Purposes. As a therapeutic facility, we will not use or disclose your PHI for marketing purposes.
3. Sale of PHI. As a therapeutic facility, we will not sell your PHI in the regular course of our business.

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

Subject to certain limitations in the law, we 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 executive order, our preference is to obtain Authorization from you before doing so.
5. For law enforcement purposes, including reporting crimes on my premises.
6. To coroners or medical examiners, when such individuals perform 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 treatment for the same condition.
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 our preference is to obtain Authorization from you, we may provide your PHI to comply with workers’ compensation laws.
10. Appointment reminders and health-related benefits or services. We may use and disclose your PHI to contact you to remind you that you have an appointment with us. We may also use and disclose your PHI to tell you about treatment alternatives or other healthcare services or benefits that we offer.

CERTAIN USES AND DISCLOSURES REQUIRE YOU TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT:

1. Disclosures to family, friends, or others. We may provide your PHI to a family member, friend, or other people you indicate are 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 emergencies.

V. YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS CONCERNING YOUR PHI:

1. The Right to Request Limits on the 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. We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say “no” if we believe it would affect your health care.
2. The Right to Request Restrictions for Out-of-Pocket Expenses Paid in Full. You have the right to request restrictions on disclosures of your PHI to health plans for payment or healthcare operations purposes if the PHI pertains solely to a healthcare item or a healthcare service you have paid for out-of-pocket in full.
3. The Right to Choose How We Send PHI to You. You have the right to ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, by home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address, and we will agree to all reasonable requests.
4. The Right to See and Get Copies of Your PHI. Other than “therapy notes,” you have the right to get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record and additional information that I have about you. We will provide you with a copy of your document or a summary of it if you agree to receive a summary within 30 days of receiving your written request, and we may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for doing so.
5. The Right to Get a List of the Disclosures We Have Made. You have the right to request a list of instances in which we have disclosed your PHI for purposes other than treatment, payment, health care operations, or for which you provided us with Authorization. We will respond to your request for an accounting of disclosures within 60 days of receiving your request. The list we will give you will include disclosures made in the last six years unless you request a shorter time. We will provide the list to you at no charge, but if you make more than one request in the same year, we may 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, you have the right to request that we correct the existing information or add the missing data.
7. The Right to Get a Paper or Electronic Copy of this Notice. You have the right to 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.

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Privacy Notice

Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), you have certain rights to use and disclose your protected health information. By signing below, you acknowledge that you have received a copy of the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices.

BY SIGNING BELOW, I AGREE THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD, AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

