

HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices

This notice describes how Mental Health information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

This notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose your protected health information (PHI) to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations (TPO) and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information. "Protected Health Information" is information about you, including demographic information relating to your past, present, and future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services.

Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information:

Your protected health information may be used and disclosed by your counselor, our staff and others beyond our office that are involved in your care and treatment for the purpose of providing healthcare services to you, to pay your healthcare bills, to support the operation of the counselor's practice, and any other use required by law.

We may disclose your health information to authorized federal officials who are conducting national security and intelligence activities or providing protective services to the President or other important officials. By law we cannot reveal when we have disclosed such information to the government.

Treatment: We will use and disclose your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services. This includes the coordination or management of your health care with a third party. For example, we would disclose your PHI, as necessary, to a home health agency that provides care to you. For example, your PHI may be provided to a physician to whom you have been referred to ensure that the physician has the necessary information to diagnose or to treat you.

Payment: Your protected health information will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for your health care services. For example, obtaining approval for a hospital may require that your relevant PHI be disclosed to the health plan to obtain approval for the hospital admission.

Healthcare Operations: We may use or disclose, as needed your protected health information in order to support the business activities of your counselor's practice. These activities include, but are not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, training of counseling students, licensing, arranging for other business activities. For example, we may disclose your PHI to counseling school students that see patients at our office. In addition, we may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk where you will be asked to sign your name and indicate your appointment time. We may also call you by name in the waiting room when your counselor is ready to see you. We may also use or disclose your PHI, as necessary, to contact you to remind you of your appointment.

We may use or disclose your protected health information in the following situations without your authorization. These situations include: as required by law, public health issues as required by law, communicable diseases, health oversight, abuse or neglect, food and drug administration requirements, legal proceedings, law enforcement, coroners, funeral directors, organ donations, research, criminal activity, military activity and national security, workers' compensation, inmates, required uses and disclosures. (under the law, we must make disclosures to you and when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of Section 164.500)

Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures will be made only with your consent, authorization or opportunity to object unless required by law.

You may revoke this authorization at any time in writing except to the extent that your counselor or the counselor's practice has taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization.

Your Rights: Following is a statement of your rights with respect to your protected health information

1) You have the right to inspect and copy your protected health information. Under federal law, however, you may not inspect or copy the following records; psychotherapy notes, information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding, and PHI that is subject to law that prohibits access to PHI.

2) You have the right to request a restriction of your protected health information. This means you may ask us not to use or disclose any part of your PHI for the purposes of treatment, payment or healthcare operations. You may also request that any part of your PHI not be disclosed to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. Your request must state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply. Your counselor is not required to agree to a restriction that you may request. If your counselor believes it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your PHI, your PHI will not be restricted. You then have the right to use another healthcare professional.

You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us by alternative means or at an alternative location. You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us, upon request, even if you have agreed to accept this notice alternatively i.e. electronically.

You may have the right to have your counselor amend your protected health information. If we deny your request for amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and we may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy of such a rebuttal.

You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures we have made, if any, of your protected health information.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and will inform you by mail of any changes. You then have the right to object or withdraw as provided in this notice.

Complaints: You may complain to us or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by us. You may file a complaint with us by notifying our privacy contact of your complaint. **We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.**

This notice was published and becomes effective on or before April 14, 2003.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of, and provide individuals with, this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information. If you have any objections to this form, please ask to speak with our HIPAA Compliance Officer in person or by phone at our main phone number.

Signature below is only acknowledgement that you have received this Notice of our Privacy Practices.

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____