

Notice of Privacy Practices

This notice describes how protected health information about you, the client, may be used and/or disclosed, and how you may gain access to this information if necessary. There are federal laws, state laws, and professional ethical requirements that govern your privacy and limitations to confidentiality as the client. I, the therapist, am required to inform you of my privacy practices as it pertains to the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Due to HIPAA and the state law's complex nature, I have simplified and outlined the most relevant information in this notice. This notice explains how I handle information about you: in specific, it details how your information might be used in office, with third parties (e.g. with other professionals, insurance companies etc.), and how you can access your medical information. If you have any additional questions please contact me for clarification.

WHAT IS PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION ("PHI")

PHI is any information that can be used to identify you individually. This may include:

- Personal History (e.g. familial, school, work, marital status, and personal history)
- Reasons for Seeking Service (e.g. presenting issues, symptoms, goals)
- Diagnostic Information (e.g. medical codes and terminology regarding your symptoms and challenges)
- Treatment Plan (i.e. you and your therapists' collaborative decision on how to best support your needs)
- Session Notes/ Documentation (i.e. professional observation recorded during sessions)
- Records/ Evaluations from other Healthcare Professionals
- Legal Documents
- Billing Information

This information may be used for many purposes, such as:

- Planning for your care and treatment
- Progress evaluation
- Collaboration with other healthcare professionals working with you
- Financial records
- Insurance submission
- For legal proceedings if subpoenaed by a court of law

It is my professional and ethical responsibility to ensure that your PHI is kept confidential by all means necessary. Knowing what may be in your records and what your PHI may be used for allows you to make educated decisions regarding who, when and why third parties may have access to this information.

HOW YOUR PHI CAN BE USED AND SHARED

When I am viewing your PHI, it is considered "in use". PHI that is shared with any third party is called a "disclosure". I will only disclose your PHI to a third party with your written authorization, unless the law requires that I do so outside of your consent (e.g., subpoenas, if you are at risk of harming yourself or others, if there is knowledge of abuse or neglect towards a child, older adult, or dependent adult).

Uses and Disclosures That Require Your Consent

Typically, if I need to share your PHI, it will be for the purpose of providing or coordinating treatment for you, to arrange for payment of services, or for other healthcare-related procedures. In all situations, I must receive written authorization by you in order to disclose PHI. Below are examples of use and disclosure:

1. **Treatment:** Your therapist uses your information to provide you with counseling and psychological services, whether for individual, couple, family, or group therapy. In addition, there may be times when it is beneficial for your therapist to consult with others who are also involved in your care (e.g., doctors, teachers, other therapists).
2. **Payment:** Your therapist may use your information to receive payment for services rendered. This includes credit card information, invoices, or other financial documentation regarding your therapy service. Invoices may include dates and times of appointments, diagnostic information, and similar information insurance companies require to process claims.
3. **Healthcare Operations:** Your therapist might use your PHI for other purposes, such as researching best practices, or disclosing information to government health agencies. This happens infrequently and your name and all personally identifying information must be first removed.

Uses and Disclosure of PHI Not Requiring Client Consent

