

---

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

### Privacy of Information Shared in Therapy

*Although confidentiality is covered in my Consent for Treatment form, a separate form is also warranted in order to provide more detail about the limits of confidentiality and minor's rights with confidentiality. This form is written to address the client who is receiving services and is of mature age to understand the content of the form. I recognize that most clients who are conserved or under the age of 18 will also require their parent/guardian's signature regarding confidentiality. Parents agree to explain the following agreement to their child to the best of their ability or the child's ability to understand.*

#### What To Expect with Confidentiality:

The purpose of meeting with a therapist is to get help with problems in your life that are bothering you or that are keeping you from being successful in important areas of your life. You may be here because you wanted to talk to a therapist about these problems. Or, you may be here because your parent, guardian, doctor, employer or teacher had concerns about you. When you meet with your therapist, you will discuss these problems. Your therapist will ask questions, listen to you and suggest a plan for improving these problems. It is important that you feel comfortable talking to your therapist about the issues that are bothering you. Sometimes these issues will include things you don't want your spouse, parents or guardians to know about. For most people, knowing that what they say will be kept private helps them feel more comfortable and have more trust in their therapist. As a general rule, your therapist will keep the information you share in sessions confidential, unless your therapist has your written or verbal consent to disclose certain information, or the issues are serious enough that clinical judgment requires notification to your parent or legal guardian in order to ensure safety and wellbeing. In addition, there are legal exceptions to this rule that are important for you to understand before you share personal information in a therapy session. In some situations, your therapist is required by law or by the guidelines of my profession to disclose information whether or not your therapist has your permission. Listed below are some of these situations.

#### Confidentiality Cannot Be Maintained When:

- You tell your therapist you plan to cause serious harm or death to yourself, and he/she believes you have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future. Your therapist must take steps to inform a parent/guardian and/or legal authority of what you have told me and how serious he/she believes this threat to be. Your therapist must make sure that you are protected from harming yourself.
- You tell your therapist you plan to cause serious harm or death to someone else who can be identified, and he/she believes you have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future. In this situation, your therapist must inform a parent/guardian and/or legal authority, and he/she must inform the person who you intend to harm.
- You are doing things that could cause serious harm to you or someone else, even if you do not *intend* to harm yourself or another person. In these situations, your therapist will need to use their professional judgment to decide whether a parent or guardian should be informed.
- You tell your therapist you are being abused-physically, sexually or emotionally, or that you have been abused in the past. In this situation, your therapist is required by law to report the abuse to the local authorities.
- You are involved in a court case and a request is made for information about your counseling or therapy. If this happens, your therapist will not disclose information without your written agreement *unless* the court requires her to do so. Your therapist will do all she can within the law to protect your confidentiality, and if your therapist is required to disclose information to the court, she will inform you that this is happening.

For Minors or Conserved Adults: Communicating with your parent(s) or guardian(s):

Except for situations such as those mentioned above, your therapist will not tell your parent or guardian specific things you share in private therapy sessions. This includes activities and behavior that your parent/guardian would not approve of, or would be upset by, but that do not put you at risk of serious and immediate harm. However, if your risk-taking behavior becomes more serious, then your therapist will need to use their professional judgment to decide whether you are in serious and immediate danger of being harmed. If your therapist feels that you are in such danger, he/she will communicate this information to your parent or guardian.

Even if your therapist has agreed to keep information confidential, she may believe that it is important for your parents/guardian to know what is going on in your life. In these situations, your therapist will encourage you to tell your parent/guardian and will help you find the best way to tell them. Also, when meeting with your parents, your therapist may sometimes describe problems in general terms, without using specifics, in order to help them know how to be more helpful to you. You should also know that, by law in California, your parent/guardian has the right to see any written records your therapist keep about our sessions.

Communicating With Other Adults and Services:

**Doctors:** Sometimes your doctor and your therapist may need to work together; for example, if you need to take medication in addition to seeing a therapist. Your therapist will get your written permission and permission from your parent/guardian in advance to share information with your doctor. Your therapist may need to communicate and share information with your doctor, even if he/she does not have your written authorization, in cases where there is serious threat of self-harm.

**School:** your therapist will not share any information with your school unless she has your permission and permission from your parent or guardian. Sometimes your therapist may request to speak to someone at your school to find out how things are going for you. Also, it may be helpful in some situations to give suggestions to your teacher or counselor at school. If your therapist wants to contact your school, or if someone at your school wants to contact your therapist will discuss it with you and ask for your written permission. There may be situations in which your therapist does not have your permission but both your therapist and your parent/guardian believe that it is very important to be able to share certain information with someone at your school. In this situation, your therapist will use their professional judgment to decide whether to share any information.

Signing below indicates that you have reviewed the policies described above and understand the limits to confidentiality. If you have any questions, you can ask your therapist at any time.

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Client Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

