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**FLORIDA-HIPAA PRIVACY NOTICE FORM**

**Notice of Psychologists' Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of  
Your Health Information**

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

**I. Uses and Disclosures for Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations**

I may use or disclose your *protected health information (PHI)*, for *treatment, payment, and health care operations* purposes with your *consent*. To help clarify these terms, here are some definitions:

- “*PHI*” refers to information in your health record that could identify you.
- “*Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations*”
  - *Treatment* is when I provide, coordinate or manage your health care and other services related to your health care. An example of treatment would be when I consult with another health care provider, such as your family physician or another psychologist.
  - *Payment* is when I obtain reimbursement for your healthcare. Examples of payment are when a psychologist discloses your PHI to your health insurer to obtain reimbursement for your health care or to determine eligibility or coverage. THIS PRACTICE DOES NOT COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH INSURANCE COMPANIES.
  - *Health Care Operations* are activities that relate to the performance and operation of my practice. Examples of health care operations are quality assessment and improvement activities, business-related matters such as audits and administrative services, and case management and care coordination.
- “*Use*” applies only to activities within my office, such as sharing, employing, applying, utilizing, examining, and analyzing information that identifies you.
- “*Disclosure*” applies to activities outside of this practice such as releasing, transferring, or providing access to information about you to other parties.

**II. Uses and Disclosures Requiring Authorization**

I may use or disclose PHI for purposes outside of treatment, payment, and health care operations when your appropriate authorization is obtained. An “*authorization*” is written permission above and beyond the general consent that permits only specific disclosures. In those instances when I am asked for information for purposes outside of treatment, payment and health care operations, I will obtain an authorization from you before releasing this information.

You may revoke all such authorizations at any time, provided each revocation is in writing. You may not revoke an authorization to the extent that (1) I have relied on that authorization; or (2) if the authorization was obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance coverage, and the law provides the insurer the right to contest the claim under the policy.

### III. Uses and Disclosures with Neither Consent nor Authorization

I may use or disclose PHI without your consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

- **Law Suit:** If a patient files a complaint or lawsuit against us, we may disclose relevant information regarding that patient in order to defend ourselves.
- **Child Abuse:** If I know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare, the law requires that I report such knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Department of Child and Family Services.
- **Adult and Domestic Abuse:** If I know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a vulnerable adult (disabled or elderly) has been or is being abused, neglected, or exploited, I am required by law to immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the Central Abuse Hotline.
- **Health Oversight:** If a complaint is filed against me with the Florida Department of Health on behalf of the Board of Psychology, the Department has the authority to subpoena confidential mental health information from me relevant to that complaint.
- **Judicial or Administrative Proceedings:** If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about your diagnosis or treatment and the records thereof, such information is privileged under state law, and I will not release information without the written authorization of you or your legal representative, or a subpoena of which you have been properly notified and you have failed to inform me that you are opposing the subpoena or a court order. The privilege does not apply when you are being evaluated for a third party or where the evaluation is court ordered. You will be informed in advance if this is the case.
- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety:** When you present a clear and immediate probability of physical harm to yourself, to other individuals, or to society, I may communicate relevant information concerning this to the potential victim, appropriate family member, or law enforcement or other appropriate authorities.
- **Worker's Compensation:** If you file a worker's compensation claim, I must, upon request of your employer, the insurance carrier, an authorized qualified rehabilitation provider, or the attorney for the employer or insurance carrier, furnish your relevant records to those persons.

#### IV. Patient's Rights and Psychologist's Duties

##### Patient's Rights:

- *Right to Request Restrictions* – You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information about you. However, I am not required to agree to a restriction you request.
- *Right to Receive Confidential Communications by Alternative Means and at Alternative Locations* – You have the right to request and receive confidential communications of PHI by alternative means and at alternative locations. (For example, you may not want a family member to know that you are seeing me. Upon your request, I will send your bills to another address.)
- *Right to Inspect and Copy* – You have the right to inspect or obtain a copy (or both) of PHI in my mental health and billing records used to make decisions about you for as long as the PHI is maintained in the record. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the request process.
- *Right to Amend* – You have the right to request an amendment of PHI for as long as the PHI is maintained in the record. I may deny your request. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the amendment process.
- *The Right to Get a List of the Disclosures I Have Made.* You are entitled to a list of disclosures of your PHI that I have made. The list will not include uses or disclosures to which you have already consented, i.e., those for treatment, payment, or health care operations, sent directly to you, or to your family; neither will the list include disclosures made for national security purposes, to corrections or law enforcement personnel, or disclosures made before April 15, 2003. After April 15, 2003, disclosure records will be held for six years.
- *Right to a Paper Copy* – You have the right to obtain a paper copy of the notice from me upon request, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically.

##### Psychologist's Duties:

- I am required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with a notice of my legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI.
- I reserve the right to change the privacy policies and practices described in this notice. Unless I notify you of such changes, however, I am required to abide by the terms currently in effect.
- If I revise my policies and procedures, I will provide a revised notice in person or via our websites.

## VI. Effective Date, Restrictions and Changes to Privacy Policy

### **VII. NOTIFICATIONS OF BREACHES**

In the case of a breach, I must notify each affected individual whose **unsecured** PHI has been compromised. Even if such a breach was caused by a business associate, I am ultimately responsible for providing the notification directly or via the business associate. If the breach involves more than 500 persons, OCR must be notified in accordance with instructions posted on its website. This practice FULLY ENCRYPTS its computers so PHI is SECURED.

### **VIII. Individuals' Right to Restrict Disclosures; Right of Access**

To implement the 2013 HITECH Act, the Privacy Rule is amended I am required to restrict the disclosure of PHI about you, the patient, to a health plan, upon request, No need for a complicated explanation here because this practice does not communicate DIRECTLY with ANY insurance/health plan.

**Upon request**, I am supposed to provide a copy of your PHI in electronic form. The electronic format must be provided to you **if it is readily producible**. I only need provide a copy of your record, rather than access to our electronic health record systems. You also have the right to have me transmit an electronic copy of PHI to an entity or person designated by you. Remember such transmittal may be insecure due to email issues. I am allowed to charge a **reasonable fee** for this document. This requirement must be met within 30 days, with a one-time extension of 30 additional days.

**E-MAILS, CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS, AND FAXES:** It is very important to be aware that computers and unencrypted e-mail, texts, and e-faxes communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. E-mails, texts, and e-faxes, in particular, are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers or communication companies may have unlimited and direct access to all e-mails, texts and e-faxes that go through them. Data on our computers is encrypted, and encrypted e-mail is offered via our website contact form. I regularly fax updates to your health care providers. You may also choose to fax or have me fax sensitive information. It is always a possibility that faxes, or email can be sent erroneously to the wrong address and computers. You should not communicate any information with your health care provider that you would not want to be included on a postcard that is sent through the Post Office. My computers are equipped with a firewall, virus protection and a passwords, and I back up all confidential information from the computers on a regular basis onto an encrypted hard-drive and also send this data encrypted to an encrypted cloud. If you leave me a recorded phone message, please understand that this is the standard service offered by the phone company. I do need a passcode to access your voice message. WE ALSO REGULARLY CALL THE PHONE NUMBERS YOU PROVIDE, IN ORDER TO REMIND YOU ABOUT APPOINTMENTS OR OTHER MATTERS. Please notify me if you decide to avoid or limit, in any way, the use of e-mail, texts, cell phones calls, phone messages, or fax. If you communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted e-mail, texts or fax or via phone messages, I will assume that you have

made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and I will honor your desire to communicate on such matters. Please do not use texts, e-mail, voice mail, or faxes for emergencies.

**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 individual who you indicate is involved in your care or responsible for the payment for your health care, unless you object in whole or in part. Retroactive consent may be obtained in emergency situations.

**We do not ever use your PHI for marketing and will NEVER be sold to anyone.**

Complaints

If you are concerned that I have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision I made about access to your records, you may contact the office administrator to discuss this further.

You may also send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C.

XI. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS NOTICE This notice went into effect on Jan. 01, 2015