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HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices & Client Rights

HIPAA is the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1997.

Notice of Counselor's Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information.

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. Effective Date: January 1, 2008

I will only release information in accordance with state and federal laws and the ethics of the counseling profession.

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 mental health care provider.
 - **Payment** is when I obtain reimbursement for your health care. Examples of payment are when I disclose your PHI to your health insurer to obtain reimbursement for your health care or to determine eligibility or coverage.
 - **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 my office, 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. I will also need to obtain an authorization before releasing your psychotherapy notes.

You may revoke all such authorizations (of PHI or psychotherapy notes) 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:

- **Child Abuse:** If there is a child abuse investigation, I may be compelled to turn over your relevant records.
- **Adult and Domestic Abuse:** If there is an elder abuse or domestic violence investigation, I may be compelled to turn over your relevant records.
- **Health Oversight:** Relevant records may be subpoenaed from me should I be the subject of a complaint.
- **Judicial or Administrative Proceedings:** If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about your evaluation, diagnosis and treatment and the records thereof, such information is privileged under state law, and I must not release your information without written authorization by you or your personal or legally-appointed representative, or a court order. This 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:** I may disclose confidential information when I judge that disclosure is necessary to protect against a clear and substantial risk of imminent serious harm being inflicted by you on yourself or another person. I must limit disclosure of the otherwise confidential information to only those persons and only that content which would be consistent with the standards of the profession in addressing such problems.
- **Worker's Compensation:** If you file a worker's compensation claim, this constitutes authorization for me to release your relevant mental health records to involved parties and officials. This would include a past history of complaints or treatment of a condition similar to that in the complaint.

IV. Patient's Rights and Counselor'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 any written communications to another address.)
- **Right to Release Your Records** - You have the right to have your records released to others with your written authorization. You may revoke such authorizations in writing. Revocation is not valid to the extent that that I have acted in reliance on such previous authorization.
- **Right to Inspect and Copy** - You have the right to inspect or obtain a copy (or both) of PHI and psychotherapy notes in my mental health and billing records used to make decisions about you for as long as the PHI is maintained in the record. I may deny your access to PHI under certain circumstances, but in some cases, you may have this decision reviewed. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the request and denial 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.
- **Right to an Accounting** – For a period of six years, you generally have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your records. Exceptions include disclosure for treatment, payment or healthcare operations; disclosures pursuant to a signed release; disclosures made to the client; and disclosures for national security or law enforcement.
- **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.

Counselor'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 you with a revised notice by mail or at our first meeting following these revisions.

V. Questions and Complaints

If you have questions about this notice, disagree with a decision I make about access to your records, or have other concerns about your privacy rights, you may contact me. If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated and wish to file a complaint with my office, you may send your written complaint to me: Brooke Riehl, MA, LPC, 28633 SW Coffee Lake Dr. Wilsonville, OR 97070

You may also send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. You have specific rights under the Privacy Rule. I will not retaliate against you for exercising your right to file a complaint.