

Notice of Privacy Practices

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

I understand that health information is personal. I am committed to protecting health information about you. I will create a record of the care and services you receive from me. I need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice applies to all the records of your care generated by this mental health care practice, and about the ways in which I may use and disclose health information about you. Described in this notice are your rights to the health information I keep about you, and certain obligations I have regarding the use and disclosure of your health information. By law I am required to:

- Make sure that protected health information (“PHI”) that identifies you is kept private.
- Give you this notice of my legal duties and privacy practices with respect to health information.
- Follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.
- I can change the terms of this Notice, and such changes will apply to all information I have about you. The new Notice will be available upon request, in my office, and on my website.

WHEN DISCLOSURE IS REQUIRED OR MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW

The following categories describe different ways I use and disclose health information. Not every specific use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all the ways I am permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories:

- For Treatment Payment, or Health Care Operations: Federal and State privacy laws allow health care providers who have direct treatment relationship with the client to use or disclose the client’s personal health information without the client’s written authorization, to carry out the health care provider’s own treatment, payment, or health care operations. I may also disclose your protected health information for the treatment activities of any health care provider that is involved directly or indirectly with your care. This too can be done without your written authorization. For example, if a clinician were to consult with another licensed health care provider about your condition, we would be permitted to use and disclose your personal health information, which is otherwise confidential, to assist the clinician in diagnosis and treatment of your mental health condition.
- Disclosures for treatment purposes are not limited to the minimum necessary standard. Because therapists and other health care providers need access to the full record and/or full and complete information to provide quality care. Treatment includes, among other things, the coordination and management of health care providers with a third party, consultations between health care providers and referrals of a patient for health care from one health care provider to another.

- Lawsuits and Disputes: If you are involved in a lawsuit, I may disclose health information in response to a court or administrative order. Your records may include information about a child, and the law would treat this information as part of your record.

WHEN DISCLOSURE REQUIRES YOUR AUTHORIZATION

- Psychotherapy Notes are made and kept. Psychotherapy notes are used by a therapist to analyze the contents of a conversation and are part of the medical record that includes frequency and duration of counseling sessions, symptoms, diagnoses, treatment plans, and progress. Any use or disclosure of such notes requires your Authorization unless the use or disclosure is:
 - a) For my use in treating you.
 - b) For my use in training or supervising mental health practitioners to help them improve their skills in group, joint, family, or individual counseling or therapy.
 - c) For my use in defending myself in legal proceedings.
 - d) For use by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to investigate my compliance with HIPAA.
 - e) Required by law and the use or disclosure is limited to the requirements of such law.
 - f) Required by law for certain health oversight activities pertaining to the originator of the psychotherapy notes.
 - g) Required by a coroner who is performing duties authorized by law.
 - h) Required to help avert a serious threat to the health and safety of others.
- As a psychotherapist, I will not use or disclose your PHI for marketing purposes.
- As a psychotherapist, I will not sell your PHI.

WHEN DISCLOSURE DOES NOT REQUIRE YOUR AUTHORIZATION

Subject to certain limitations in the law, I can use and disclose your PHI without your Authorization for the following reasons:

- When disclosure is required by state or federal law, and the use or disclosure complies with and is limited to the relevant requirements of such law.
- For public health activities, including reporting suspected child, elder, or dependent adult abuse, or preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone's health or safety.
- For health oversight activities, including audits and investigations.
- For judicial and administrative proceedings, including responding to a court or administrative order, although my preference is to obtain an Authorization from you before doing so.
- For law enforcement purposes, including reporting crimes occurring on my premises.
- To coroners or medical examiners when such individuals are performing duties authorized by law.
- For workers' compensation or other insurance purposes. Although my preference is to obtain an Authorization from you, which may be part of you submitting a claim for an insurance benefit. I may provide your PHI to comply with workers' compensation or other insurance requirements.

- Appointment reminders and health related benefits or services. I may use and disclose your PHI to contact you to remind you that you have an appointment with me.

CERTAIN USES AND DISCLOSURES REQUIRING YOUR OBJECTION

I may provide your PHI to a family member, friend, or other person that you indicate is involved in your care or the payment for your health care, unless you object in whole or in part.

YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO YOUR PHI

- **The Right to Request Limits on Uses and Disclosures of Your PHI.** You have the right to ask me not to use or disclose certain PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations purposes. I am not required to agree to your request, and I may say “no” if I believed it would affect your health care, or I am not able to reasonably accommodate your request.
- **The Right to Request Restrictions for Out-of-Pocket Expenses Paid for In Full.** You have the right to request restrictions on disclosures of your PHI to health plans for payment or health care operations purposes if the PHI pertains solely to a health care item or a health care service that you have paid for out-of-pocket in full.
- **The Right to Choose How I Send PHI to You.** You have the right to ask me to contact you in a specific way or to send mail to a different address, and I will agree to all reasonable requests.
- **The Right to See and Get Copies of Your PHI.** Other than psychotherapy notes, you have the right to get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record and other information. I will provide you with a copy of your record, or a summary of it, if you agree to receive a summary, within 30 days of receiving your written request, and I may charge a reasonable fee for doing so.
- **The Right to Get a List of the Disclosures I Have Made.** You have the right to request a list of instances in which I have disclosed your PHI for purposes other than treatment, payment, or health care operations, or for which you provided me with an Authorization. I will respond to your request for an accounting of disclosures within 60 days of receiving your request. This list will include disclosures made in the last six years unless you request a shorter time. I will provide the list to you at no charge, but if you make more than one request in the same year, I may charge you a reasonable fee for each additional request.
- **The Right to Correct or Update Your PHI.** If you believe that there is a mistake in your PHI, or that a piece of important information is missing from your PHI, you have the right to request that I correct the existing information or add the missing information. I may say “no” to your request, but I will tell you why in writing within 60 days of receiving your request.
- **The Right to Get a Paper or Electronic Copy of this Notice.** You have the right get a paper copy of this Notice and get a copy by e-mail. Even if you have agreed to receive this Notice via e-mail, you also have the right to request a paper copy of it.

UNEXPECTED THERAPIST ABSENCE

In the event of my unplanned absence from practice, whether due to injury, illness, death, or any other reason, I maintain a detailed Professional Will with instructions for an Executor to inform you of my status and ensure your continued care in accordance with your needs. Please let me know if you would like the name of my Executor. You authorize the Executor to access your treatment and financial records only in accordance with the terms of my Professional Will, and only if I experience an event that has caused or is likely to cause a significant unplanned absence from practice.

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 at (802) 227-2670, or in writing at PO Box 189, Colchester, VT 05446.

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated and wish to file a complaint with me you may send your written complaint to PO Box 189, Colchester, VT 05446. You may also send a written complaint to the Vermont Secretary of State, Office of Professional Regulation, 89 Main Street, 3rd Floor Montpelier, VT 05620-3402. You may also send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights (“OCR”). You may also submit a complaint to the OCR Complaint Portal: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/>. You have specific rights under the Privacy Rule. I will not retaliate against you for exercising your right to file a complaint.