

Privacy of Information Policies

This form describes the confidentiality of your medical records, how the information is used, your rights, and how you may obtain this information.

My Legal Duties:

State and Federal laws require that we keep your medical records private. Such laws require we provide you with this notice informing you of our privacy of information policies, your rights, and our duties. We are required to abide by these policies until replaced or revised. We have the right to revise our privacy policies for all the medical records, including records kept before policy changes were made. Any changes in this notice will be made available upon request before changes take place. The contents of material disclosed to us in an evaluation, intake, or counseling sessions are covered by the law as private information. We respect the privacy of the information you provide us and we abide by ethical and legal requirements of confidentiality and privacy of records.

Use of Information:

Information about you may be used by the personnel associated with this clinic for diagnosis, treatment planning, treatment, and continuity of care. We may disclose it to health providers who provide you with treatment, such as doctors, nurses, mental health professionals, and mental health students and mental health professionals or business associates affiliated with this clinic such as billing, quality enhancement, training, audits, and accreditation. Both verbal information and written records about a client cannot be shared with another party without the written consent of the client or the client without a signed release of information except in certain emergency situations or exceptions in which client information can be disclosed to others without written consent. Some of these situations are noted below, and there may be other provisions by legal requirements.

Duty or Warn and Protect:

When a client discloses intentions or a plan to harm another person or persons, the health care professional is required to warn the intended victim and report this information to legal authorities. In cases in which the client discloses or implies a plan for suicide, the health care professional is required to notify legal authorities and make reasonable attempts to notify the family of the client.

Public Safety:

Health records may be released for the public interest and safety for public health activities, judicial and administrative proceedings, law enforcement purposes, serious threats to

public safety, essential government functions, military, and when complying with worker's compensation laws.

Abuse:

If a client states or suggests that he or she is abusing a child or vulnerable adult, or has recently abused a child or vulnerable adult, or a child or vulnerable adult is in danger of abuse, the health care provider is required to report this information to the appropriate social service and/or legal authorities. If a client is the victim of abuse, neglect, violence, or a crime victim, and their safety appears to be at risk, we may share this information with law enforcement officials to help prevent future occurrences and capture the perpetrator.

Prenatal Exposure to Controlled Substances:

Health care professionals are required to report admitted prenatal exposure to controlled substances that are potentially harmful.

In the Event of a Client's Death:

In the event of a client's death, the spouse or parents of a deceased client have the right to access their child's or spouse's records.

Professional Misconduct:

Professional misconduct by a health care professional must be reported by other health care professionals. In cases in which a professional or legal disciplinary meeting is being held regarding the health care professional's actions, related records may be released in order to substantiate disciplinary concerns.

Judicial or Administrative Proceedings:

Health care professionals are required to release records of clients when a court order has been placed.

Minors/Guardians:

Parents or legal guardians of non-emancipated minor clients have the right to access the client's records.

Other Provisions:

When payment for services are the responsibility of the client, or a person who has agreed to providing payment, and payment has not been made in a timely manner, collection agencies may be utilized in collecting unpaid debts. The specific content of the services (diagnosis, treatment plan, progress notes, etc) is not disclosed. If a debt remains unpaid it may be reported to credit agencies, and the client credit report may state the amount owed, the

time frame, and the name of the clinic or collection source. Insurance companies, managed care, and other third-party payers are given information that they request regarding services to the client. Information which may be requested includes the types of services, dates/times of services, diagnosis, treatment plan, description of impairment, progress of therapy, and summaries. Information about clients may be disclosed in consultations with other professionals in order to the best possible treatment. In such cases, the name of the client, or any identifying information, is not disclosed. Clinical information will only be discussed. In the event in which the mental health professional must telephone the client for purposes such as appointments cancellations and reminders, efforts are made to preserve the confidentiality. I will document on the intake informational sheet how you would best like to be contacted.

Your Rights:

You have the right to request to review or receive your medical files. The procedure for obtaining a copy of your information is as follows: you may request a copy of your records in writing with an original signature. If your request is denied, you will receive a written explanation of the denial. The charge for this request is \$5 per page, plus postage. You have the right to cancel a release of information by providing that request in writing. If you desire to have your information sent to a different location than the address on file, you must provide this in writing. You have the right to disagree with the medical records on file. You may request that this information be changed. Although I may deny changing the record, you have the right to make a statement of disagreement, which will be placed in your file. You have the right to know what information in your record has been provided to whom. If you desire for a written copy of this notice, please obtain it from Tracy Carter, M.S., L.P.C. by contacting her at cartertracy@comcast.net or visit her website at TracyCarterTherapist.com or by calling her at 410-598-3186.

Complaints:

If you have any complaints or questions regarding these procedures, please contact Tracy Carter, M.S., L.P.C. I will get back to you in a timely manner. You may also submit a complaint to the U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services and/or the State Board of Maryland Board of Professional Counselors. If you file a report, I will not retaliate in any way.

Direct all correspondence to: Tracy Carter, M.S., L.P.C. 126 E. Burke St. Martinsburg, WV 25401