



# Joyful Hearts Counseling

## Confidentiality Policy

Joyful Hearts Counseling regards confidentiality with the utmost importance, therefore it is essential that clients understand the limits and boundaries of confidentiality. In general, all information disclosed within a psychotherapy session, whether written or spoken, is confidential and legally privileged. Your therapist is the only individual who has access to your file, unless you direct your therapist, in writing, to disclose information to specific entities. However there are a few circumstances under which a therapist is legally and ethically bound to disclose information:

### Duty to Warn and Protect

1. When a client discloses intentions or a plan to harm another person, the mental health professional is required to warn the intended victim and report this information to legal authorities.
2. 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.
3. Abuse of children and vulnerable adults: 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 mental health professional is required to report this information to the appropriate social service and/or legal authorities.
4. Prenatal Exposure to Controlled Substances. Mental Health care professionals are required to report admitted prenatal exposure to controlled substances that are potentially harmful.

**Other circumstances that allow for disclosure include the following:**

### Legal Proceedings:

A court may require disclosure of confidential information in a legal proceeding in which your condition or treatment is a relevant concern. This may include, but is not limited to, legal proceedings such as a child custody hearing, board complaint, or criminal action.

### Professional Consultation:

As an independently licensed therapist I am not required to receive clinical supervision, however, in an effort to provide services that reflect best practices I belong to a group of therapists that meets regularly to discuss client care. When a client is discussed identifying information is kept confidential to the extent necessary.

### Confidentiality in Group/Family Counseling

Members of a counseling group are not bound to the same ethical and legal mandates that therapists are, however, if you do participate in a group or family counseling all members are asked to respect and maintain the confidentiality of what is disclosed during the course of treatment.



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## **Minors in treatment (under the age of 18)**

Parents/guardians of minors in treatment have the legal right to information that is shared during the counseling process, however parents/guardians are encouraged to respect their child’s right to privacy and confidentiality. Parents/guardians can be assured that their child will be encouraged to share critical information and feelings with them, and the therapist will ensure parents/guardians are informed if a minor is in danger of serious threat or harm.

## **Secrets Policy**

Secrets, when held from a family or significant other, can be destructive to the relationships of the individuals involved, including the holder of the secrets. When working with families the therapist reserves the right, when asked to maintain a secret, to work towards its disclosure as the therapist and individual together determine the appropriate time.

## **Treatment Records**

The therapist is required to maintain treatment notes, which include but are not limited to: dates of treatment, diagnosis, treatment interventions, and goals. The client (or parent/guardian in case of a minor) has a right to request records, however if examination of any part of these records would have an adverse effect on the client (or parent/guardian), the therapist is permitted to withhold that information and will provide justification for doing so.

## **Use of electronic and phone communication**

Although Joyful Hearts Counseling utilizes firewall and password protection for computer use, e-mail is not an encrypted form of professional exchange, therefore confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in this form of communication. When a client chooses to communicate using e-mail the client assumes the risk that the exchange may be intercepted. Joyful Hearts also employs the use of a password to protect any voicemail or text messages. If a client chooses to text the therapist and/or gives permission for the therapist to leave voicemails, the client again assumes responsibility that these messages could be viewed by another party.

\_\_\_\_\_(initial) **I give permission to Joyful Hearts Counseling to leave a voicemail/text on this number \_\_\_\_\_.**

\_\_\_\_\_(initial) **I give permission to Joyful Hearts Counseling to correspond through e-mail using this e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_.**

**I understand that only necessary information will be conveyed in any message left for me/my child.**

## **Insurance Claims**

In the event that an insurance company requests information other than on the claim form, this office will provide only a summary, with your written permission. Copies of progress notes from your confidential file will not be released. Most insurance companies require a diagnosis in order to pay for services.



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As you can see the laws and rules on confidentiality are complicated. However you should now have enough information to enter treatment well informed about the confidentiality policy. Please let your therapist know if you have any questions or would like further information.

**I have read the information on the Confidentiality Policy of Joyful Hearts Counseling, and my signature indicates that I understand and comply with this policy.**

_____	_____	_____
Client signature	Date	Name printed

_____	_____	_____
Parent/guardian signature	Date	Parent/guardian name printed

_____	_____	_____
Parent/guardian signature	Date	Parent/guardian name printed