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Health Insurance portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

This refers to a federal law that provides protection and patient rights with regards to the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) used for the purpose of treatment, payment, and health care. HIPAA requires that I provide you with a Notice of Privacy Practices for use and disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI) for treatment, payment, and health care operations. The law requires that I obtain your signed signature acknowledging that I have provided you these disclosures at the end of this session. A description of the circumstances in which I may disclose information is provided for you. Please review it carefully so you understand fully what confidentiality does and does not mean in therapy. I am happy to discuss any of these rights with you.

Notice of Privacy Practices

With your signature on the Authorization form that I provide, I may disclose information in the following situations.

- Consultation with other health and mental health professionals
- Disclosures required by health insurers
- Disclosures required in collecting overdue fees. If your account has not been paid for more than 90 days and arrangements have not been agreed upon, I have the option of using legal means (small claims court) to secure payment. This requires me to disclose otherwise confidential information. If legal action is necessary, costs are included in the claim.
- Government Agency requests for information in health oversight activities
- Patient-initiated complaint or lawsuit against me. (I may disclose relevant information regarding that patient to defend myself.)
- Patient-initiated worker's compensation claim and the services I am providing that are relevant to the injury for which the claim was made. I must, upon request, provide a copy of the patient's record to the patient's employer and the Department of Labor and Industries.
- If I have reasonable cause to believe a child has suffered abuse or neglect.
- If I have reasonable cause to believe that abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation or neglect of a vulnerable adult has occurred, the law requires that I file a report with the appropriate agency, usually the Department of Social and Health Services. Once such a report is filed, I may be required to provide additional information.
- If I reasonably believe there is imminent danger to the health or safety of the patient or any individual.

Expanded Clinical Records Rights

HIPAA provides you with several new or expanded rights with regards to your clinical records and disclosures of protected health information. These rights include:

- Requesting that I amend your record
- Requesting restrictions on what information from your clinical records is disclosed to others
- Requesting an accounting of most disclosures of protected health information that you have neither consented or authorized
- Determining the location to which protected information disclosures are sent.
- Having any complaints you make about my policies and procedures recorded in your records.

- The right to a paper copy of your signed Agreement, the attached Notice form, and my privacy policies and procedures.

Communication

Based on the new HIPAA Guidelines I am including the following information about the use of cell phones and emails for communication. Please know that I will take every precaution to be careful with my cell phone and computer. However, it is important that you know the potential risks involved with confidentiality using these devices.

Voicemail, Telephone and Mobile Phone Communication: Please note that if we communicate via my mobile phone by voice or text, your phone number will be stored in the phone's memory for a period of time and therefore if my mobile phone is lost or stolen, it is theoretically possible that your contact information might be accessed. Note that my mobile phone and laptop are password protected and kept with me providing one line of defense against such a breach.

Email Communication: If you elect to communicate with me by email, please be aware that email is not completely confidential. All emails are retained in the logs of your and/or my internet service provider. While under normal circumstances no one looks at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the internet service provider. Any email I receive from you, and any responses that I send to you, will be considered part of your treatment record.

1. Please be aware that I regularly access email communications via my password-protected mobile phone and laptop. It is theoretically possible that if my mobile phone is lost or stolen and the password is somehow circumvented our email communications could be accessed.