

Policies Regarding Confidentiality (HIPAA)

The federal government and Massachusetts law that I provide you with the following information. It is important that you understand these laws. Please review this material carefully, and discuss any questions at your next session. It is also necessary that you sign this indicating that you have read and understand each important point.

In general, law protects the confidentiality of all communication between client/patient, and your therapist can only share information with your written permission. Exceptions occur if a judge issues an order requiring your therapist to testify. This would most likely occur in child custody or adoption proceedings or in a lawsuit where your mental condition is an important question.

In addition, in the event that one or more of the following three situations are present I am mandated by law to report them to the appropriate authorities. They are:

1. In cases of child abuse or neglect, or if I believe an elderly or disabled person is being abused. If I suspect this abuse, we must inform the Department of Social Services.
2. If I believe that you are in serious danger of harming yourself I may refer or report you for a psychiatric evaluation, report to the police or any other party in order to ensure your safety.
3. If I believe that you are planning to harm somebody, we must inform the police and the intended victim.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. I am required to keep appropriate records in case of legal action, or to use for written summaries as needed. A judge can order information from your file.
2. I may consult with other clinicians in order to ensure highest quality clinical care. The same laws of confidentiality bind these professionals.
3. If you are using third party reimbursement, usually we must provide your insurance carrier with a diagnosis as well as treatment plans or progress reports. The law prohibits all insurers from releasing any outpatient mental health data without your written consent.
4. If an account is overdue and you have not made arrangement for payment, we may turn the account over for collection or file a claim in court. Only dates, types of service, and charges would be disclosed.
5. If you are under 18, your parents do have a right to receive general information (not specific) on how your treatment is proceeding.
6. While there is no legal precedent, information shared in group therapy may not be protected in court proceedings.

Signature of Client

Signature of Therapist

Date