

PRIVACY POLICY - CONSENT FORM FOR COLLECTION, USE AND DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Privacy Policy information is an important principle to this counseling practice. We understand the importance of protecting your personal information. We are committed to collecting, disclosing, and using personal information responsibly and only to the extent necessary for the services we provide. We also try to be as open as possible about the way we handle your personal information. It is important to us to provide this service to our clients. This document describes our privacy policy.

Attached to this consent form, we have outlined what this practice is doing to ensure that:

- we only share information with your consent
- storage, retention and destruction of your personal information complies with existing legislation and privacy policy protocols.
- our privacy protocols comply with privacy legislation, the law, and the standards of our regulatory body, The College of Social Workers of Ontario.

WE COLLECT PERSONAL INFORMATION: PRIMARY PURPOSES

Like all members of the College of Social Workers of Ontario, we collect, use and disclose personal information (PI) in order to serve our clients. The primary purpose for collecting PI is to:

- provide psychotherapy treatment
- obtain a baseline of health and social information so that in providing ongoing treatment, we can identify changes that occur over time.

WE COLLECT PERSONAL INFORMATION: RELATED & SECONDARY PURPOSES

- to advise clients of treatment options
- to enable us to contact you
- to establish and maintain communication with you and book and confirm appointments
- to communicate with other health care providers with your consent, including referring Doctors, Social Workers, Psychologists, and specialists
- The cost of psychotherapy is often paid for by third parties (eg. private insurance companies). These third party payers often have your consent or legislative authority to direct us to collect and disclose to them certain information in order to demonstrate client entitlement to this funding.
- to ensure that if a practitioner were to move, all files are kept confidential in accordance with the outlined provisions of our regulatory body.
- To invoice clients for services that were not paid for at the end of a session or to collect unpaid accounts.

- To collect on delinquent accounts by sharing PI with a judicious organization or collections agency.

PROTECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION

We understand the importance of protecting PI. For that reason, we have taken the following steps.

- Paper Information is secured in a locked and restricted area.
- Electronic hardware is secured in a locked and restricted area at all times. In addition, passwords are used on computers.
- All of our cell phones are digital as these signals are more difficult to intercept.
- Paper Information is transmitted through sealed, addressed envelopes to specified designated recipients.
- Staff is trained to collect, use, or disclose PI only as necessary to fulfill their duties and in accordance with our privacy policy.
- External Consultants and agencies with access to PI must enter into privacy agreements with us.

RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION OF PI

We need to retain PI for some time to ensure that we can answer any questions you might have about the services provided and for our own accountability to external regulatory bodies. However we do not want to keep PI too long in order to protect your privacy.

Clients or other individuals we deal with may have questions about our services after they have been received. We often provide ongoing services to many of our clients over a period of months or years for which previous records are helpful. We retain our client information for a minimum of 7 years after the last contact to enable us to respond to those questions and provide these services. Our regulatory College also requires us to retain our client records.

We remove client and contact directories when it appears that we will be not be contacting you again. However, if you ask, we will remove such contact information right away. We destroy paper files, reports and drafts, containing PI by shredding. We destroy electronic information by deleting it and when the hardware is discarded, we ensure that the hard drive is physically destroyed.

I (we), have reviewed the above information that explains how your office will use my (our) personal information, and the steps your office is taking to protect my (our) information.

Signature(s): _____ Date: _____