

Notice of Privacy Practices/HIPAA Compliance

As required by law, **Neutral Point, LLC** is providing this **Notice of Privacy Practices** to inform you of how we may use and disclose your **Personal Health Information (PHI)** to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations, and for other purposes permitted or required by law. This notice also describes your rights to access and control your PHI. PHI includes demographic information that may identify you and relates to your past, present, or future physical or mental health conditions and the healthcare services provided. Please review this notice carefully and keep it for your records. You may request an additional paper copy at any time.

Limits of Confidentiality:

All information disclosed to your therapist is kept confidential, except in the following circumstances where confidentiality must be broken by law:

1. **Abuse or Neglect:** There is reasonable suspicion of elder or dependent adult abuse or neglect. This includes, but is not limited to, physical harm, or failure to provide care.
 2. **Risk to Others:** You reveal information that suggests a reasonable suspicion that you may pose an imminent danger of violence to others.
 3. **Risk to Self:** There is reasonable suspicion that you may harm yourself physically or attempt suicide in the near future unless protective measures are taken.
 4. **Coordination of Care:** If you have signed a **Release of Information** form allowing your therapist to consult with other healthcare providers involved in your care.
 5. **Court Orders:** If a court of law issues an order (not a subpoena) for the release of your records, we must comply. However, this is rare and only under specific legal circumstances.
 6. **Legal Defense:** If you file a malpractice complaint against your therapist, your records may be used as part of the legal defense.
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Participants in Family Therapy:

In working with a family, your therapist considers the **family as a whole** (the “treatment unit”) to be their client. During the course of therapy, your therapist may work with a smaller part of

the treatment unit (such as an individual family member) for one or more sessions. These sessions are considered part of the therapist's work with the entire family.

Information shared in individual sessions is generally kept confidential; however, if any information disclosed impedes the effectiveness of treatment for the family as a whole, it may be necessary to share that information with the entire treatment unit. Your therapist will use their best judgment as to whether, when, and to what extent such disclosures are necessary. Before disclosing any information, the therapist will give the individual the opportunity to make the disclosure themselves.

If the therapist is unable to use their clinical judgment regarding these disclosures, they may need to terminate treatment and provide appropriate referrals. If you have matters you wish to discuss that you do not want shared with the family, it may be best to seek guidance from another therapist. **Neutral Point, LLC** can provide referrals upon request, and your request will be kept confidential.

Online Applications:

While online communication tools can be convenient, it's important to recognize that they may not always be completely secure. Systems could be vulnerable to hacking, and the servers hosting these services may record or review activity. When using these services, be mindful of potential privacy risks and decide carefully where and when to access them.

For the online tools **Neutral Point, LLC** uses:

- **Schedulicity:** Efforts have been made to minimize identifiable information, and no professional credentials or titles are listed to protect your privacy.
- **FaceTime and Skype:** These platforms utilize encryption to enhance security, but neither the therapist nor the client is allowed to record therapy sessions or interactions.
- **PayPal:** This platform is one of the most secure payment systems available, and it is used for secure transactions.

Public Encounters:

In order to safeguard your privacy, if your therapist encounters you in a public setting (outside of therapy), they will not acknowledge or engage with you unless you initiate contact. If you choose to acknowledge your therapist, they will not disclose how they know you to others present. It will be your choice whether or how to introduce your therapist to others.

Client Records:

Your clinical file will consist of legal forms, clinical progress notes, and records of visits and payments. You have the right to view your records at any time, and **Neutral Point, LLC** may provide either a complete set of records or a summary, and may require a meeting to review them with you. This process is intended to prevent misunderstandings or harm to the therapeutic relationship.

Communication Between Sessions:

Neutral Point, LLC values your privacy and uses secure communication methods where possible. However, we cannot fully guarantee the confidentiality of **email, text messages, or online applications**, as these methods are susceptible to unauthorized access. By signing a **Client Contact Information** form, you can choose to consent to communication via these channels.

Please be aware that email, voicemail, and text messaging are not appropriate for emergency or urgent situations. If you are experiencing a crisis, please call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room for immediate assistance.

Client Records:

Your clinical file will consist of legal forms, clinical progress notes, and records of visits and payments. You have the right to view your records at any time, and **Nancy Jo Smith-Vickery, PhD** may provide either a complete set of records or a summary, and may require a meeting to review them with you. This process is intended to prevent misunderstandings or harm to the therapeutic relationship.

Amendments to This Policy:

Neutral Point, LLC reserves the right to change the terms of this notice. You will be informed of any changes either in person or by mail.

Concerns/Complaints:

If you have concerns about the privacy or security of your PHI, please contact **Neutral Point, LLC** directly. You also have the right to file a complaint with the **Secretary of Health and Human Services** if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.