



NANCY SIGAFOOS, M.A.
REGISTERED
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PRIVACY STATEMENT

At the practice of Nancy Sigafoos, M.A., Registered Psychotherapist, I am committed to protecting and respecting your privacy, which means that I collect, use and disclose your personal information responsibly and only to the extent necessary for the services I provide. This document describes policies and procedures as they relate to collecting, using and disclosing your personal information. It also offers information on how you can access your records and request correction of recorded personal information.

WHO I AM

Nancy Sigafoos, M.A., Registered Psychotherapist, is sole owner of the private practice, which delivers psychotherapeutic services (e.g., psychotherapeutic assessment and psychotherapeutic intervention) to adolescents and adults. I am responsible for all accounting and bookkeeping.

WHAT IS PERSONAL INFORMATION?

Personal information is information about an identifiable individual. It includes information that relates to an individual's personal characteristics (e.g., gender, age, income, home address or phone number, ethnic background, family status); health (e.g., health history, health conditions, health services received by them); or, activities and views (e.g., religion, politics, opinions expressed by an individual, an opinion or evaluation of an individual). Personal information and specifically personal health information is protected by privacy legislation (i.e., the Personal Health Information Protection Act [PHIPA]), and is different from business information (e.g., an individual's business address and telephone number), which is not protected by privacy legislation.

COLLECTION OF YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

The purposes of collecting your personal and health information are to provide you with appropriate and quality psychotherapeutic services, contact you for service-related reasons, and prevent harm (such as reaching an emergency contact). I will not collect information from you for any other purpose.

I will collect personal health information directly from you, except when you have provided consent for me to collect such information from others (such as a spouse, family physician, or mental health professional with whom you have previously worked), or when the law requires me to collect information without your consent (such as emergency situations where the purpose of collecting information is to prevent potential harm).

By law and in accordance with professional standards, I am required to keep a record of our contacts with and services to you. Your record includes information that you have provided to my office including your therapist, or information you have authorized me to receive, such as consent forms, session notes, results of any assessments, billing information, contact records, and correspondence that I have sent to

or received relating to your service. The physical records are the property of Nancy Sigafoos' practice, however, you have rights regarding access to and disclosure from your record (discussed below), regardless of the form in which the information is recorded. In this office, information is recorded in both written and electronic form.

On my website (sigafoopspsychotherapy.ca) , I only collect the personal information you provide and only use that information for the purpose you gave it to me (e.g., to respond to your email message).

USE OF YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Your personal health information is primarily used to provide you with psychotherapeutic services such as psychotherapeutic assessment or intervention. The delivery of psychotherapeutic services includes such tasks as service planning, maintenance of records, monitoring, billing, and collecting unpaid accounts. Other uses of your personal health information include to guide and improve the quality of services provided in the practice. Further, the College of Psychotherapists of Ontario, which is the organization that regulates psychotherapists in this province, may conduct external audits of psychologists' files. Such audits involve accessing and inspecting client records. However I do not permit any identifiable client information to be removed from my premises for the purpose of an external audit without your consent. In addition, all individuals involved in such an activity are professionals required by law to maintain the confidentiality of all information that is accessed. Finally, when psychotherapeutic services are paid for by third parties (such as the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, motor vehicle accident insurance, or the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board), those third-party payers often require clients' consent to collect and disclose to them information that demonstrates their entitlement to this funding or coverage. Discussing what information is shared with third-party payers is an important part of the consent process as well as a topic that can and should be discussed as needed during service delivery, and I encourage you to ask me questions or raise any concerns you may have on this topic.

DISCLOSURE OF YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

With few exceptions, your personal health information will not be disclosed to people outside of this practice without your knowledge and express consent. Written consent is always preferred, however in time-sensitive situations if you provide verbal consent to share information, written consent can be obtained in our next meeting. The exceptions are (a) situations where disclosure without consent is allowed by law (e.g., clear and imminent risk of serious bodily harm to someone, or professional or legal consultation), and (b) situations where disclosure is required by law (such as the mandatory reporting of a child who may be in need of protection, the mandatory reporting of a regulated health professional who has sexually abused a client, or a court order to release information from a record). These exceptions are entitled "limits of confidentiality"; if other limits of confidentiality apply to your situation, we will identify and discuss them with you before proceeding with your service.

When providing consent to the disclosure of your personal health information, you may restrict the information that I do share. If, however, it is the opinion of your treating professional that the information you wish to restrict is reasonably necessary for another health service provider to provide appropriate services, I am required by law to inform the other provider that you have refused consent to provide some needed information.

The law requires that any disclosure of your personal health information is limited to information that is reasonably necessary for the purpose of that disclosure and does not include private information provided by a third party. Professional ethical standards governing our practice also require that we not disclose any information that might cause serious harm to someone, unless the law requires disclosure.

PROTECTION AND RETENTION OF YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

The privacy of your personal information is protected through the use of established procedures in my office. Examples of those procedures include that paper and electronic information is secured in a locked or restricted area at all times, computers are password protected, paper information that is shared is transmitted in sealed and addressed envelopes stamped "Confidential," and electronic documents are encrypted and password protected. Email communication is only used with your consent. If you have a team of service providers and email communication is requested among service providers to coordinate care, all emails sent by my office have the subject line "Confidential message from Nancy Sigafoos, MA Psychotherapist" and contain a confidentiality warning, and you are only referred to by initials in the emails. Faxing is used to transmit confidential client information only to verified fax numbers.

I am required to retain your personal health information for some time in order to ensure that I can answer any questions you might have about the services provided as well as for my own accountability to external regulatory bodies. The College of Psychotherapists of Ontario requires that client records be kept for at least 10 years past the date of last contact for adults, and 10 years past the date at which the client would turn 18 years old. Paper records are destroyed through cross-cut shredding. Electronic information is deleted, and I physically destroy the hard drive of discarded hardware.

YOUR ACCESS TO YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

With only a few exceptions, you have the right to access any record of your personal health information and to request copies of the information (I reserves the right to charge a nominal fee for record copying). If the record contains personal health information about another individual, that person's information must be severed before you access the record. Other exceptions include access to raw data from psychotherapeutic assessments, information provided in confidence by a third party, and information that could result in serious harm to someone's treatment or recovery (including your own) or in serious bodily harm to someone (including yourself).

If you are the custodial parent or guardian of an adolescent under the age of 18 years who has received or is receiving service, you may not access the personal health information of that adolescent unless (a) s/he has provided written consent for you to access such information, or (b) s/he has been deemed incompetent to consent to the service on her or his own.

If you believe that the information in your record is not accurate, you have the right to request a correction. This right applies to factual information and not to your clinician's clinical opinion. Your request must be in writing and I will need 30 days to review it. Where I agree that there is an error, your clinician will make the necessary correction(s) and notify all individuals to whom s/he may have sent the incorrect information. If your clinician does not agree that a mistake has been made, you may submit a notice of disagreement that we must file in your record, and we will forward that notice to all persons to whom we may have sent the information.

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

These privacy policies and procedures have been developed in accordance with the laws of Ontario, as well as professional regulations and ethical standards. Further details regarding the applicable laws, regulations and ethical standards may be found at the websites of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (www.health.gov.on.ca), and the soon-to-be proclaimed College of Psychotherapists of Ontario.

I, Nancy Sigafos, MA, will speak with you directly to answer any questions you may have regarding this Privacy Statement, and to provide you with any further information about privacy practices or limits of confidentiality that are specific to your situation. If you have a concern about my privacy policies and procedures or have a complaint about how your privacy has been handled, please do not hesitate to speak or write to me.

Complaints or general inquiries may also be addressed to:

The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario
2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400
Toronto, Ontario M4W 1A8
Phone: 416-326-3333, 1-800-387-0073
TTY: 416-325-7539
Fax: 416-325-9195
Website: www.ipc.on.ca