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Client Confidentiality and HIPAA Policy

Purpose:

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of client information in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other applicable federal and state laws.

Policy Statement:

Anchor Point Counseling & Coaching is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all client information and ensuring compliance with HIPAA regulations. This policy outlines the rights of clients, the responsibilities of the clinic, and procedures for handling protected health information (PHI).

Confidentiality of Client Information:

1. Protected Health Information (PHI):

- PHI includes any information related to a client's health condition, treatment, or payment that can identify the client.
- PHI may be stored in electronic, paper, or verbal form and is protected under this policy.

2. Client Rights Under HIPAA:

- The right to receive a copy of their medical records.
- The right to request corrections to inaccurate information.
- The right to request restrictions on the use or disclosure of their PHI.
- The right to receive an accounting of disclosures of their PHI.
- The right to file a complaint if they believe their rights have been violated.

Use and Disclosure of PHI:

1. Permitted Uses and Disclosures Without Client Authorization:

- Treatment: Sharing necessary PHI with healthcare providers involved in the client's care.
- Payment: Disclosing PHI to insurers or billing entities for payment purposes.
- Healthcare Operations: Using PHI for internal quality assessment, training, and compliance audits.

- Legal Requirements: Disclosing PHI when required by law, such as court orders or mandated reporting of abuse.
2. **Uses and Disclosures Requiring Client Authorization:**
- Any disclosures outside of treatment, payment, or healthcare operations require a signed authorization from the client.
 - Clients have the right to revoke authorization at any time, except when disclosure has already occurred.

Safeguarding Client Information:

- **Electronic Records:** Access to electronic health records (EHR) is restricted to authorized staff only.
- **Paper Records:** Physical files are stored in locked cabinets in a secure location.
- **Verbal Communication:** Staff should avoid discussing PHI in public areas or non-secure settings.
- **Email and Electronic Communication:** PHI should only be transmitted through encrypted and secure channels.

Reporting and Breach Notification:

1. **Reporting Violations:**
- Any suspected or actual breaches of client confidentiality must be reported immediately to Jennifer Webb, LCSW, Designated Privacy Officer.
 - Staff members who violate confidentiality policies may be subject to disciplinary action.
2. **Breach Notification:**
- In the event of an unauthorized disclosure of PHI, affected clients will be notified as required by HIPAA.

The practice will take corrective action to prevent future breaches.

Consent & Acknowledgment

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have **read, understood, and agree** to the information outlined in this Client Confidentiality and HIPAA Policy at Anchor Point Counseling & Coaching.

Client Name (Printed): _____

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

