

Positive Perspectives, Inc.
Confidentiality and Professional Records

CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and a therapist is protected by law and your therapist can only release information about your work to others **with your written permission**. But there are a few exceptions:

* In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent your therapist from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order your therapist's testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it.

* There are some situations in which we are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if we have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. For example, if your therapist believes that a child, an elderly person, or disabled person is being abused, he or she must make a report to the appropriate state agency. Similarly, if your therapist believes that you are threatening serious bodily harm to someone else, protective actions are required. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If a client threatens to harm himself/herself, there may be an obligation to seek hospitalization or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

* Your therapist may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, your therapist will make every effort to avoid revealing your identity. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

* You should also be aware that your contract with your health insurance company requires that we provide it with information relevant to the services that we provide to you. We are required to provide a clinical diagnosis, and sometimes we are required to provide treatment plans or summaries, or copies of your entire clinical record. In such situations, we will make every effort to release only the minimum information about you that is necessary for the purpose requested. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, we have no control over what they do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information bank. We will provide you with a copy of any report submitted, if you request it.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that you discuss any questions or concerns that you may have with your therapist. Formal legal advice may be needed because the laws governing confidentiality are quite complex.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of your therapist's profession require that he or she keep treatment records. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records, or a summary can be prepared for you instead. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. If you wish to see your records, we recommend that you review them in your therapist's presence so that you and he or she can discuss the contents. Clients will be charged an appropriate fee for any professional time spent in responding to information requests.

Client Signature

Date

Therapist Signature

Date

Printed Name: _____

Printed Name: _____