

Common Thread Counseling, LLC

Client Records

The laws and standards of my profession require that I keep Protected Health Information (PHI) about you in your clinical record. Except in unusual circumstances that involve danger to yourself or others or make reference to another person (unless such other person is a health care provider) and I believe that access is reasonably likely to cause substantial harm to such other person or where information has been supplied to me confidentially by others, you may examine and/or receive a copy of your clinical record, if you request it in writing.

Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. For this reason, I recommend that you initially review them in my presence or have them forwarded to another mental health professional so you can discuss the contents.

Client electronic records are stored in SimplePractice, a HIPAA compliant software system.

Client Rights and HIPAA

HIPAA provides you with several expanded rights with regard to your clinical record and disclosures of protected health information. These rights include: requesting that I amend your record; requesting restrictions on what information from your clinical record is disclosed to others; requesting an accounting of most disclosures of Protected Health Information that you have neither consented to nor authorized; determining the location to which protected information disclosures are sent; having any complaints you make about my policies and procedures recorded in your records; and the right to a paper copy of this agreement and the accompanying Pennsylvania HIPAA Notice form.

Confidentiality

The law protects the privacy of all communications between a client and therapist. In most situations, I can only release information about your treatment to others if you sign a written authorization that meets certain legal requirements imposed by HIPAA. There are certain other situations that require only that you provide written advance consent. Your signature on this agreement provides consent for those

activities as follows:

- I may occasionally consult with other health/mental health professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my client. The other professionals are also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you do not object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together. I will note consultations in your clinical record.
- Disclosures required by health insurers or to collect unpaid fees, which is noted elsewhere in this agreement.
- If a client threatens to harm himself/herself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members/others who can provide protection.

There are some situations where I am permitted or required to disclose information without either your consent or authorization. Such situations are as follows:

- If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information concerning the professional services I provided to you, such information is protected by the psychotherapist-patient privilege law. I cannot provide any information without your written authorization or a court order. If you are involved in or are contemplating litigation, you should consult with your attorney to determine whether a court would be likely to order me to disclose information.
- If a government agency is requesting the information for health oversight activities, I may be required to provide it for them.
- If a patient files a complaint or lawsuit against me, I may disclose relevant information regarding that patient in order to defend myself.
- If I am treating a patient who files a worker's compensation claim I may, upon appropriate request, be required to provide otherwise confidential information to your employer.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take actions, which I believe are necessary to attempt to protect others from harm and I may have to reveal some information about a patient's treatment. Such situations (which are unusual in my practice) are as follows:

- If I have reason to believe that a child has been abused, the law requires that I file a report with the appropriate government agency, usually the Department of Public Welfare. Once such a report is filed, I may be required to provide additional information.
- If I have a reason to believe that an elderly person or other adult is in need of protective services (regarding abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment) the law allows me to report this to an agency designated by the Department of Human Resources. Once such a report is filed I may be required to provide additional information.
- If I determine that a client presents a serious danger of violence to another, I may be required to take protective actions including notifying the potential victim, contact the police, and/or seeking hospitalization for the client.

If such a situation arises, I will make every reasonable effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action and to limit my disclosure to what is necessary. While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns you might have. The laws governing confidentiality can be quite complex and I am not providing you with legal advice. In situations where specific advice is required, formal legal consultations may be desirable.

I am aware that an agent of my insurance company or other third-party payer may be given information about the types(s) cost (s), date(s), and providers of any services or treatments I receive. I understand that If payment for the services I receive here is not made, the therapist may stop my treatment and I will be responsible for payment.

This is a strictly confidential patient medical record. Redisclosure or transfer is expressly prohibited by law.