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FLORIDA NOTICE FORM

**Notice of Policies and Practices to
Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information**

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

I. **Uses and Disclosures for Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations**

I may use or disclose your protected health information (PHI), for treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes with your consent. To help clarify these terms, here are some definitions:

- **"PHI"** refers to information in your health record that could identify you.
- **"Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations"**
 - **Treatment** is when I provide, coordinate or manage your health care and other services related to your health care. An example of treatment would be when I consult with another health care provider, such as your family physician or another psychologist.
 - **Payment** is when I obtain reimbursement for your healthcare. Examples of payment are when I disclose your PHI to your health insurer to obtain reimbursement for your health care or to determine eligibility or coverage.
 - **Health Care Operations** are activities that relate to the performance and operation of my practice. Examples of health care operations are quality assessment and improvement activities, business-related matters such as audits and administrative services, and case management and care coordination.

- **"Use"** applies only to activities within my office such as sharing, employing, applying, utilizing, examining, and analyzing information that identifies you.
- **"Disclosure"** applies to activities outside of my [office, clinic, practice group, etc.] such as releasing, transferring, or providing access to information about you to other parties.

II. Uses and Disclosures Requiring Authorization

I may use or disclose PHI for purposes outside of treatment, payment, and health care operations only when your appropriate authorization is obtained. An *"authorization"* is written permission above and beyond the general consent that permits only specific disclosures. In those instances when I am asked for information for purposes outside of treatment, payment and health care operations, I will obtain an authorization from you before releasing this information. I will also need to obtain an authorization before releasing your psychotherapy notes. *"Psychotherapy notes"* are notes I have made about our conversation during a private, group, joint, or family counseling session, which I have kept separate from the rest of your medical record. These notes are given a greater degree of protection than PHI.

You may revoke all such authorizations (of PHI or psychotherapy notes) at any time, provided each revocation is in writing. You may not revoke an authorization to the extent that (1) I have relied on that authorization; or (2) if the authorization was obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance coverage, and the law provides the insurer the right to contest the claim under the policy.

III. Uses and Disclosures with Neither Consent nor Authorization

I may use or disclose PHI without your consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

- **Child Abuse:** If I know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare, the law requires that I report such knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Department of Child and Family Services.
- **Adult and Domestic Abuse:** If I know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a vulnerable adult (disabled or elderly) has been or is being abused, neglected, or exploited, I am required by law to immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the Central Abuse Hotline.

- **Health Oversight:** If a complaint is filed against me with the Florida Department of Health on behalf of a Florida Licensing Board for providers of psychological services, the Department has the authority to subpoena confidential mental health information from me relevant to that complaint.
- **Judicial or Administrative Proceedings:** If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about your diagnosis or treatment and the records thereof, such information is privileged under state law, and I will not release information without the written authorization of you or your legal representative, or a subpoena of which you have been properly notified and you have failed to inform me that you are opposing the subpoena or a court order. The privilege does not apply when you are being evaluated for a third party or where the evaluation is court ordered. You will be informed in advance if this is the case.
- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety:** When you present a clear and immediate probability of physical harm to yourself, to other individuals, or to society, I may communicate relevant information concerning this to the potential victim, appropriate family member, or law enforcement or other appropriate authorities.
- **Worker's Compensation:** If you file a worker's compensation claim, I must, upon request of your employer, the insurance carrier, an authorized qualified rehabilitation provider, or the attorney for the employer or insurance carrier, furnish your relevant records to those persons.

IV. Patient's Rights and Mental Health Provider's Duties

Patient's Rights:

- **Right to Request Restrictions:** You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information about you. However, I am not required to agree to a restriction you request.
- **Right to Receive Confidential Communications by Alternative Means and at Alternative Locations:** You have the right to request and receive confidential communications of PHI by alternative means and at alternative locations. (For example, you may not want a family member to know that you are seeing me. Upon your request, I will send your bills to another address.)
- **Right to Inspect and Copy:** You have the right to inspect or obtain a copy (or both) of PHI in my mental health and billing records used to make decisions about you for as long as the PHI is maintained in the record. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the request process.

- **Right to Amend:** You have the right to request an amendment of PHI for as long as the PHI is maintained in the record. I may deny your request. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the amendment process.
- **Right to an Accounting:** You generally have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of PHI regarding you. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the accounting process.
- **Right to a Paper Copy:** You have the right to obtain a paper copy of the notice from me upon request, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically.

Mental Health Provider's Duties:

- I am required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with a notice of my legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI.
- I reserve the right to change the privacy policies and practices described in this notice. Unless I notify you of such changes, however, I am required to abide by the terms currently in effect.
- If I revise my policies and procedures, I will provide you with a written notification, by mail, of those revisions on or before the effective date.

V. Complaints

If you are concerned that I have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision I made about access to your records, please call me. You may send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The appropriate address will be provided upon request.

VI. Effective Date, Restrictions and Changes to Privacy Policy

This notice went into effect on April 15, 2003. I reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new notice provisions effective for all PHI that I maintain. I will provide you with a revised notice by mail on or before the effective date.