

# Privacy of Information Policies – Susan LaFreniere & Associates:

This form describes the confidentiality of your medical records, how the information is used, your rights, and how you may obtain this information. Effective 4-14-03

## **Our Legal Duties**

State and Federal laws require that we keep your medical records private. Such laws require that we provide you with this notice informing you of our privacy of information policies, your rights, and our duties. We are required to abide these policies until replaced or revised. We have the right to revise our privacy policies for all medical records, including records kept before policy changes were made. Any changes in this notice will be made available upon request before changes take place.

The contents of material disclosed to us in an evaluation, intake, or counseling session are covered by the law as private information. We respect the privacy of the information you provide us and we abide by ethical and legal requirements of confidentiality and privacy of records.

## **Use of Information**

Information about you may be used by the personnel associated with this office for diagnosis, treatment planning, treatment, and continuity of care. We may disclose it to health care providers who provide you with treatment, such as doctors, nurses, mental health professionals, and mental health students and mental health professionals or business associates affiliated with this office such as billing, quality enhancement, training, audits, and accreditation.

Both verbal information and written records about a client cannot be shared with another party without the written consent of the client or the client's legal guardian or personal representative. It is the policy of this office not to release any information about a client without a signed release of information except in certain emergency situations or exceptions in which client information can be disclosed to others without written consent. Some of these situations are noted below, and there may be other provisions provided by legal requirements.

## **Duty to Warn and Protect**

When a client discloses intentions or a plan to harm another person or persons, the health care professional is required to warn the intended victim and report this information to legal authorities. In cases in which the client discloses or implies a plan for suicide, the health care professional is required to notify legal authorities and make reasonable attempts to notify the family of the client.

## **Public Safety**

Health records may be released for the public interest and safety for public health activities, judicial and administrative proceedings, law enforcement purposes, serious threats to public safety, essential government functions, military, and when complying with worker's compensation laws.

## **Abuse**

If a client states or suggests that he or she is abusing a child or vulnerable adult, or has recently abused a child or vulnerable adult, or a child (or vulnerable adult) is in danger of abuse, the health care professional is required to report this information to the appropriate social service and/or legal authorities. If a client is the victim of abuse, neglect, violence, or a crime victim, and their safety appears to be at risk, we may share this information with law enforcement officials to help prevent future occurrences and capture the perpetrator.

## **Prenatal Exposure to Controlled Substances**

Health care professionals are required to report admitted prenatal exposure to controlled substances that are potentially harmful.

## **In the Event of a Client's Death**

In the event of a client's death, the spouse or parents of a deceased client have a right to access their child's or spouse's records.

## **Professional Misconduct**

Professional misconduct by a health care professional must be reported by other health care professionals. In cases in which a professional or legal disciplinary meeting is being held regarding the health care professional's actions, related records may be released in order to substantiate disciplinary concerns.

## **Judicial or Administrative Proceedings**

Health care professionals are required to release records of clients when a court order has been placed.