

1. This practice has an obligation to maintain all medical records and information discussed during the course of counseling in the strictest confidence.
 - a) This means that information that is revealed will not be discussed with others without client knowledge and written authorization.
 - b) This confidentiality also applies to minors. Information learned from and about minors will be kept confidential from parents and caregivers unless the minor is aware of the information and provides written consent.
 - c) If the patient is in the room with the counselor and another person, the patient's verbal consent and presence in the room signifies consent to discuss confidential information.
2. There are times that the counselor will have to make an exception to the above policies. Counselors are legally required to take action to protect the client and others from harm, even though it requires revealing confidential information.
 - a) If the counselor believes that a child, an elderly person or disabled person is being abused, the counselor must file a report with the appropriate state agency.
 - b) If the counselor believes that the client intends serious bodily harm to another person, then the counselor is required to take protective action, which may include notifying the potential victim, notifying the police, or seeking appropriate hospitalization.
 - c) If a client threatens to harm him/herself, the counselor may use discretion in seeking hospitalization for the client or contact family members or others who can help provide protection.
 - d) **Authorization is not required for emergency care and treatment.**
3. The counselor will be requesting from the client who they can speak with or leave information for, in the case of an emergency. This information can be changed at any time.
4. With client written authorization, the counselor may disclose the minimum information necessary to another health care provider, legal entity, or other person indicated in the release of information signed by the client.
5. The counselor will disclose the minimum information necessary to the client's insurance company for billing purposes. This information may include a clinical diagnosis and a treatment plan for summary. The counselor may also disclose the minimum information necessary to a billing service or to a collection agency for the purpose of payment.
6. Clients will be offered the Notice of Psychologist/Counselor/Social Worker Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information, at each initial session, the Notice will be in the waiting room for clients to review and be available anytime upon request.