

# Fellow Travelers Counseling

Liz Ortland, LMFT intern

[www.fellowtravelerscounseling.com](http://www.fellowtravelerscounseling.com)

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## Notice of Privacy Practices

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

### Overview

- I. My Pledge Regarding Health Information
- II. How I May Use and Disclose Health Information About You
- III. Certain Uses and Disclosures Require Your Authorization
- IV. Certain Uses and Disclosures DO NOT Require Your Authorization
- V. Certain Uses and Disclosures Require You To Have the Opportunity to Object
- VI. Rights With Respect to Your PHI

### I. My Pledge Regarding Health Information

I understand that information about you and your health care is personal. I am committed to protecting your information. I create a record of the care and services you receive from me. I need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice applies to all of the records of your care generated by this mental health care practice. This notice will tell you about the ways in which I may use and disclose health information about you. I also describe your rights to the health information I keep about you, and describe certain obligations I have regarding the use and disclosure of your health information.

I am required by law to:

- Make sure that protected health information (“PHI”) that identifies you is kept private.

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- Give you this notice of my legal duties and privacy practices with respect to health information.
- Follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect. I can change the terms of this Notice, and such changes will apply to all information I have about you. Updated Notices will be available upon request, in my office, and on my website.

## II. How I May Use and Disclose Health Information About You

The following categories describe different ways that I use and disclose health information. For each category of uses or disclosures I will offer an explanation and examples where possible. All of the ways I am permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of these categories, however this Notice does not provide an exhaustive list of all uses or disclosures possible within each category.

### **Treatment, Payment, or Health Care Operations:**

Federal privacy rules and regulations allow health care providers who have a direct treatment relationship with a patient/client to use or disclose the patient/client's personal health information without the patient's written authorization in order to carry out the health care provider's own treatment, payment, or health care operations. I may also disclose your protected health information for the treatment activities of any health care provider. This can be done without your written authorization.

Disclosures for treatment purposes are not limited to the minimum necessary standard. Therapists and other health care providers need access to the full record and/or full and complete information in order to provide quality care. The word "treatment" includes, among other things, the coordination and management of health care providers with

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a third party, consultations between health care providers, and referrals of a patient for health care from one health care provider to another.

For example, I may consult with another licensed health care provider about your condition and disclose confidential healthcare information in order to assist in my diagnosis and/or treatment of your mental health condition. I may also provide confidential information to a provider to whom I am referring your care.

## **Lawsuits and Disputes:**

If you are involved in a lawsuit, I may disclose health information in response to a court or administrative order. I may also disclose health information about your child in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

## **III. Certain Uses and Disclosures Require Your Authorization**

The following uses and disclosures of your PHI require your authorization. Some noted exceptions apply.

1. Psychotherapy Notes. I keep “psychotherapy notes” as that term is defined in 45 CFR § 164.501. Any use or disclosure of such notes requires your authorization unless the use or disclosure is:
  - a. For my use in treating you.
  - b. For use in training or supervision to help improve my skills in group, joint, family, or individual counseling or therapy.
  - c. For my use in defending myself in legal proceedings instituted by you.

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- d. For use by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to investigate my compliance with HIPAA.
  - e. Required by law, and the use or disclosure is limited to the requirements of such law.
  - f. Required by law for certain health oversight activities pertaining to the originator of the psychotherapy notes.
  - g. Required by a coroner who is performing duties authorized by law.
  - h. Required to help avert a serious threat to the health and safety of others.
2. Marketing Purposes. As a psychotherapist, I will not use or disclose your PHI for marketing purposes.
  3. Sale of PHI. As a psychotherapist, I will not sell your PHI in the regular course of my business.

## IV. Certain Uses and Disclosures DO NOT Require Your Authorization

Subject to certain limitations in the law, I can use and disclose your PHI without your Authorization for the following reasons:

1. When disclosure is required by law, and the use or disclosure complies with and is limited to the relevant requirements of such law.
2. For public health activities, including reporting suspected child, elder, or dependent adult abuse, or preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone's health or safety.
3. For health oversight activities, including audits and investigations.
4. For judicial and administrative proceedings, including responding to a court or administrative order, although my preference is to obtain an Authorization from you before doing so.
5. For law enforcement purposes.

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6. To coroners or medical examiners, when such individuals are performing duties authorized by law.
7. For workers' compensation purposes. Although my preference is to obtain an Authorization from you, I may provide your PHI in order to comply with workers' compensation laws.
8. Appointment reminders and health related benefits or services. I may use/disclose your PHI to contact you to remind you that you have an appointment with me. I may also use/disclose your PHI to tell you about treatment alternatives, or other health care services or benefits that I offer.

## V. Certain Uses and Disclosures Require You To Have the Opportunity to Object

Disclosures to family, friends, or others: I may provide your PHI to a family member, friend, or other person that you indicate is involved in your care or the payment for your health care, unless you object in whole or in part. The opportunity to consent to these disclosures may be obtained retroactively in emergency situations.

## VI. You Have the Following Rights With Respect to Your PHI:

1. The Right to Request Limits on Uses and Disclosures of Your PHI. You have the right to request me not to use or disclose certain PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations purposes. I am not required to agree to your request, and I may say "no" if I believe it would affect your health care. This request must be in writing
2. The Right to Request Restrictions for Out-of-Pocket Expenses Paid for In Full. You have the right to request restrictions on

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- disclosures of your PHI to health plans for payment or health care operations purposes if the PHI pertains solely to a health care item or a health care service that you have paid for out-of-pocket in full.
3. The Right to Choose How I Send PHI to You. You have the right to ask me to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address, and I will agree to all reasonable requests.
  4. The Right to See and Get Copies of Your PHI. Other than “psychotherapy notes,” you have the right to get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record and other information that I have about you. I will provide you with a copy of your record, or a summary of it, if you agree to receive a summary, within 30 days of receiving your written request, and I may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for doing so.
  5. The Right to Get a List of the Disclosures I Have Made. You have the right to request a list of instances in which I have disclosed your PHI for purposes other than treatment, payment, or health care operations, or for which you provided me with an Authorization. I will respond to your request for an accounting of disclosures within 60 days of receiving your request. The list I will give you will include disclosures made in the last six years unless you request a shorter time. I will provide the list to you at no charge, but if you make more than one request in the same year, I will charge you a reasonable cost based fee for each additional request.
  6. The Right to Correct or Update Your PHI. If you believe that there is a mistake in your PHI, or that a piece of important information is missing from your PHI, you have the right to request that I correct the existing information or add the missing information. I may say “no” to your request, but I will tell you why in writing within 60 days of receiving your request.

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7. The Right to Get a Paper or Electronic Copy of this Notice. You have the right get a paper copy of this Notice, and you have the right to get a copy of this notice by e-mail. And, even if you have agreed to receive this Notice via e-mail, you also have the right to request a paper copy of it.

## Effective Date of This Notice

This notice went into effect on April 1st, 2020.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Privacy Notice:

Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), you have certain rights regarding the use and disclosure of your protected health information. By checking the box below, you are acknowledging that you have received a copy of HIPPA Notice of Privacy Practices.

**BY SIGNING BELOW I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_