

### HIPAA – Notice of Privacy

Welcome to Methodist Counseling Center, Inc. The following notice is an introduction to your rights and responsibilities as a client of counseling services. Methodist Counseling Center, Inc. serves dual functions: to provide counseling for the community and to aid in the professional development of counselors and supervisors. All counseling is facilitated by licensed professionals or graduate students at the master's level who are supervised by a state approved supervisor. *All counseling sessions, with the client's authorization, at Methodist Counseling Center, Inc are video taped for supervisory and educational purposes.*

This notice, in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), describes how your medical information may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information.

Methodist Counseling Center, Inc. is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information.

**Effective August 1, 2005:**

#### How We Protect Your Health Information

- All of your health information that we collect is confidential.
- Access to your health information is restricted to only clinical staffs that need to know your health information in order to provide services to you.
- We employ physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards, which comply with federal and state regulations guarding your health information.
- Methodist Counseling Center, Inc. maintains records of client health information in a confidential file system. Client files remain the property of Methodist Counseling Center, Inc.

#### Voluntary Release of Health Information

- Methodist Counseling Center, Inc. may disclose information to outside treatment or healthcare providers with your written authorization. You may revoke such authorizations at any time provided each revocation is in writing.
- Methodist Counseling Center, Inc. may use your information to develop accounts receivable information and with your consent, provide information to your insurance company for services provided. The information provided to insurers and other third party payers may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, type of service, date of service, provider name/identifier, and other information about your condition and treatment.
- Health Care Operations: Our practice may use and disclose your PHI (Protected Health Information) to operate our business. Examples include using your PHI to evaluate the quality of care you received from us, to conduct cost-management and business planning activities for our practice, or for fundraising activities. We may disclose your PHI to other health care providers and entities to assist in their health care operations.
- Appointment Reminders: Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to contact you and remind you of an appointment.
- Treatment Options: Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to inform you of potential treatment options or alternatives.
- Health-related benefits and services: Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to inform you of health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.

#### Mandatory Disclosures Without Consent Or Authorization

Methodist Counseling Center, Inc. may disclose your mental health information without your consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

- **Abuse** – If we have reason to believe that a minor child, elderly person, or person with a disability has been abused, abandoned, or neglected, the Methodist Counseling, Inc. must report this concern to the appropriate authorities.

- **Judicial and Administrative Proceedings as Required** – If you are involved in a court proceeding and a court subpoenas information about the professional services provided you and/or the records thereof, we may be compelled to provide the information. Methodist Counseling Center, Inc. will not release your information without attempting to notify you or your legally appointed representative.

- **Injury to Self or Others** – If you communicate to your counselor an explicit threat of imminent physical harm to yourself or others, we have a legal duty to take the appropriate measures, including disclosing information to the police.

#### Client's Rights:

- **Right to Request Restrictions** - You have the right to request additional restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information. The clinic may not be able to accept your request, but if we do, we will uphold the restriction unless it is an emergency.
- **Right to Alternative Means and Alternative Locations** – You have the right to request and receive confidential communications of mental health information by alternative means and at alternative locations. (For example, you may not want a family member to know you are being seen at the clinic. On your request, the clinic will send your information to another address).
- **Right to Inspect and Copy** – You have the right to inspect or obtain a copy of your clinical records. A reasonable fee may be charged for copying. Access to your records may be limited or denied under certain circumstances, but in most cases, you have a right to request a review of that decision. On your request, we will discuss with you the details of the request and denial process.
- **Right to Amend** – You have the right to request, in writing, an amendment of your health information for as long as the mental health information records are maintained. The request must identify which information is incorrect and include an explanation of why you think it should be amended. If the request is denied, a written explanation will be provided to you. You may also make a statement disagreeing with the denial, which will be added to the information of the original request. If your original request is approved, we will make a reasonable effort to include the amended information in future disclosures. Amending a record does not mean that any portion of your health information will be deleted.
- **Right to An Accounting** – You generally have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of mental health information. If your mental health information is disclosed for any reason other than treatment or health operations, you have the right to an accounting for each disclosure of the previous six (6) years, but the request cannot include dates before August 1, 2005. The accounting will include the date, name of person, or entity, description of the information disclosed, the reason for disclosure, and other applicable information. If more than one (1) accounting is requested in a twelve (12) month period, a reasonable fee may be charged.
- **Electronic Information**  
Methodist Counseling Center, Inc. uses an encryption system which satisfies state and federal standards to transmit your health information through electronic means to insurance companies and third party payers. Requests for client mental health information for the purpose of consultation are honored through phone and postal mail communication only.

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

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

Client Copy   
File Copy