

## **Client Privacy Policy and Consent Form For Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information**

Privacy of your personal information is an essential part of providing you with quality service. All clinicians who work in this office are also private practitioners and as such have their own policies and procedures. Although I may work collaboratively on cases with some of these clinicians, you will need to sign a separate consent form allowing us to exchange information about you. The administrative support staff that come into contact with your personal information have been trained in the appropriate uses and protection of your information and will adhere to the policies outlined below with respect to the handling of your information.

### **Collection of Information**

In the course of your work with me, you will be asked to fill out a client information form and a service agreement. You will also provide me with information during our interview sessions. This information is collected for both clinical and administrative purposes as outlined below:

#### **Clinical Use of Information**

- To deliver continuous high quality and efficient service;
- To assess your needs and advise you of treatment options;
- To offer and provide treatment or other services;
- To make a referral, with your written consent, on your behalf
- To communicate, with your written consent, with other professionals, including referring doctors and lawyers;

#### **Administrative Use of Information**

- To establish and maintain communication with you;
- To enable us to contact you to book and confirm appointments;
- To invoice for services and collect unpaid accounts, where applicable,
- To allow us to efficiently follow up for treatment and billings;
- To complete and submit claims for third party adjudications and payment;
- To assist this office to comply with all legal and regulatory requirements; and
- For training and supervision on an anonymous basis.

**Disclosure of Information**

The information you provide to me will be kept confidential. This means that I will not willingly disclose information to anyone without your written consent except in the specific circumstances that are outlined in the service agreement.

Only relevant information will be shared when you seek reimbursement of fees from third parties, or fees are claimed as a tax deduction, and I am contacted to verify information.

In the case that it is necessary to use a collection agency for unpaid fees, your personal information will be shared. This is limited to the contract for service, your name, address, phone number, statements of accounts, and any records related to billing. This information would not extend to the content of the services provided.

**Protecting Personal Information**

Paper information is secured in a locked cabinet in a restricted area and computers have passwords. Only reputable mail carriers or couriers are used.

Electronic information is kept on a secure server through Apple's Mobile Me and is password protected.

**Retention and Destruction of Personal Information**

For legal and accountability purposes to regulatory agencies files are retained for a period of seven years. Paper files containing personal information are destroyed by shredding. Electronic information may be deleted regularly when there has been no contact with you for a period of six months.

**Access to Client Records**

With only a few exceptions, you have the right to see what personal information is contained in your file.

These exceptions include:

- information received from other professionals or collateral sources;
- information contained in a file that is considered detrimental to your mental, emotional or physical health;
- if you are receiving services jointly such as couples counselling, family counselling, mediation or collaborative services, the consent of all parties participating and having information within that file must be obtained before information will be released;

- if you are the parent or custodial guardian of a child receiving service, I must have the child's consent if they are deemed competent and they consented to the service on his or her own;
- if information is provided in confidence by a third party.

### **Access & Disclosure of information**

Requests to view or copy your file must be received in writing by mail or in person and contain your signature. I may need to confirm your identity, if you have not received service for some time, before providing you with this access. In the event that someone else is acting on your behalf (eg. Estate trustee; or Power of Attorney), I must verify their legal right to access the requested information.

I require you to meet with me in person to access your record in order that I am available to answer questions and so that you may receive appropriate explanations of the content of your file.

If you believe that there is a mistake in the information reviewed, you have the right to ask for it to be corrected. This applies to factual information and not to any professional opinions I may have formed. I may ask you to provide documentation that the information is not accurate so that changes may be made. Where I agree there is an error, I will make the correction and notify anyone to whom I have sent incorrect information. If I do not agree that an error has been made, you may provide a notice of disagreement that will be included in the file and I will forward that notice to anyone else who received the earlier information.

Fees for accessing and disclosing information, to you or any third party, will be charged to you at the current pro-rated hourly rate for the time spent to facilitate the request. This includes time spent in retrieving your file from storage; separating out your information from those of others; meeting with you in person; and any other related tasks. If photocopies of part or all of the record are requested, an additional fee of twenty-five cents per page will be charged.

### **Concerns and Further Information**

If you have a concern about my policies and procedures or have a concern about the way that your privacy has been handled, please do not hesitate to speak or write to me.

This privacy policy has been developed in accordance with the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA) and professional regulations and ethical standards. For general inquiries regarding PHIPA please call 1-800-282-1376 or visit [www.ipc.on.ca](http://www.ipc.on.ca).