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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.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS NOTICE

This notice went into effect on JANUARY 06, 2023

I. MY PLEDGE REGARDING HEALTH INFORMATION: I understand that health information about you and your health care is personal. I am committed to protecting health information about you. 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.
- 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. The new Notice 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 explain what I mean and try to give some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways I am permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

1. **For Treatment Payment, or Health Care Operations:** Federal privacy rules (regulations) allow health care providers who have direct treatment relationship with the patient/client to use or disclose the patient/client's personal health information without

the patient's written authorization, 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 too can be done without your written authorization. For example, if a clinician were to consult with another licensed health care provider about your condition, we would be permitted to use and disclose your personal health information, which is otherwise confidential, in order to assist the clinician in diagnosis and treatment of your mental health condition.

Disclosures for treatment purposes are not limited to the minimum necessary standard. Because 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 a third party, consultations between health care providers and referrals of a patient for health care from one health care provider to another.

2. **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:

1. **Psychotherapy Notes.** I do keep "psychotherapy notes" as that term is defined in 45 CFR § 164.501, and 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 my use in training or supervising mental health practitioners to help them improve their skills in group, joint, family, or individual counseling or therapy. c. For my use in defending myself in legal proceedings instituted by you. 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. **Disclosures otherwise required by Law.** At times, I must make disclosures to government agencies for the purpose of investigating or determining our compliance with the requirements of the Privacy Rule, when disclosure is required by state or federal law, and the use or disclosure complies with and is limited to the relevant requirements of such law.
2. **Child or Elder Abuse or Neglect.** I may disclose your PHI to a state or local agency that is authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse as mandated by the Oklahoma Child Abuse Reporting and Prevention Act, if we have a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Disclosures of PHI may also be made to state or local agency authorized to receive reports of elder abuse or neglect as mandated by the Oklahoma Protective Services for Vulnerable Adults, if I have a reasonable suspicion of elder abuse or dependent adult abuse.
3. **Health Oversight.** If required, I may disclose PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies and organizations that provide financial assistance to the program (such as third-party payors based on your prior consent) and peer review organizations performing utilization and quality control.
4. **Judicial and Administrative Proceedings.** I may disclose your PHI when required by federal, state, or local law via a subpoena, court order, administrative order or similar process, although my preference is to obtain an Authorization from you before doing so. Example: I may make a disclosure to the appropriate officials when a law requires us to report information to judicial court officials, government agencies, law enforcement personnel and/or in an administrative proceeding, or if disclosure is required by a lawful search warrant.
5. **Law Enforcement.** I may disclose PHI to a law enforcement official as required by law, in compliance with a subpoena/court order, administrative order or similar document, for the purpose of identifying a suspect, material witness or missing person, in connection with the victim of a crime, in connection with a deceased person, in connection with the reporting of a crime in an emergency, or in connection with a crime on the premises.
6. **Public Health.** If required, I may use or disclose your PHI for mandatory public health activities to a public health authority authorized by law to collect or receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability, or if directed by a public health authority, to a government agency that is collaborating with that public health authority.
7. **Individual and Public Safety.** If necessary, I may provide PHI to law enforcement personnel or persons able to prevent or mitigate a serious threat to the health or safety of yourself or the public. For example, if your mental or emotional condition are perceived to be dangerous to yourself, or the person or property of another, and if I determine that information disclosed may prevent or lessen a serious threat, it will be provided to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat.
8. **Relating to decedents.** I may disclose PHI relating to an individual's death to coroners, medical examiners or funeral directors, and to organ procurement organizations relating to organ, eye, or tissue donations or transplants, when such individuals are performing duties authorized by law.

9. **For research purposes.** In certain circumstances, and under supervision of a privacy board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your PHI, I may disclose PHI to our research staff and their designees in order to assist medical/psychiatric research.
10. **For specific government functions.** If you are a member of military personnel or a veteran, I may release your PHI as required by military command authorities: (i) for activities deemed necessary by appropriate military command authorities; (ii) for the purpose of a determination by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or (iii) as requested by foreign military authority if you are a member of the foreign military services. I may also disclose PHI in the interest of specialized government functions, including, ensuring the proper execution of military missions; protecting the President of the United States; conducting intelligence or counter-intelligence operations; or, helping to ensure the safety of those working within or housed in correctional institutions.
11. **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.

V. CERTAIN USES AND DISCLOSURES REQUIRE YOU TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT.

1. **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 may be obtained retroactively in emergency situations.
2. **Appointment reminders and health related benefits or services.** I may use and disclose your PHI to contact you to remind you that you have an appointment with me. I may also use and disclose your PHI to tell you about treatment alternatives, or other health care services or benefits that I offer.
3. **Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care.** Disclosures may be made if the PHI is directly relevant to the involvement of a family member, close friend, or other individual's involvement in your care and/or payment for your health care. For example, I might discuss your appointment schedule with a person who will be transporting you to appointments. You may object to these disclosures by notifying me. I may also give PHI to someone who helps pay for your care.

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 ask 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.
2. **The Right to Request Restrictions for Out-of-Pocket Expenses Paid for In Full.** You have the right to request restrictions on 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.
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.

VII. CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

I can change the terms of this Notice, and such changes will apply to all the information I have about you. The new Notice will be available upon request, in my office and on my website.