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Family Counseling Service
INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS REGARDING
CONFIDENTIALITY
THERAPY PROGRAM

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We place a high value on the confidentiality of the information that our clients share with us. This sheet was prepared to clarify our legal and ethical responsibilities regarding this important issue.

Personal information that you share with us may be entered into your records in written form. However, an effort is generally made to avoid entry of information which may be especially sensitive or embarrassing. The only individuals with access to our files are staff members who are either directly involved in providing services to you, those performing related clerical tasks, insurance companies that monitor mental health care services, and professional accreditation persons bonded in the same code of confidentiality who audit files to assess quality service.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO OTHERS

If for some reason there is a need to share information in your record with someone not employed here (for example, your physician or another therapist), you will first be consulted and asked to sign a form authorizing transfer of the information. Because of the sensitive nature of the information contained in some records, you may wish to discuss the release of this material and related implications very carefully before you sign. The form will specify the information which you give us permission to release to the other party and will specify the time period during which the information may be released. You can revoke your permission at any time by simply giving us written notice.

EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY

There are several important instances when confidential information may be released to others. First, if you have been referred to this agency by the Court ("court ordered"), you can assume that the Court wishes to receive some type of report or evaluation. You should discuss with us exactly what information may be included in a report to the Court before you disclose any confidential material. In such instances, you have a right to tell us only what you want us to know.

Second, if you are involved in litigation of any kind and inform the court of the services that you received from us (making your mental health an issue before the court), you may be waiving your right to keep your records confidential. You may wish to consult your attorney regarding such matters before you disclose that you have received treatment.

Third, if you threaten to harm either yourself or someone else and we believe your threat to be serious, we may divulge circumstances to law enforcement or medical personnel where someone's life appeared to be in danger.

Fourth, if we have reason to believe that you are abusing or neglecting your children or vulnerable adults, we are obligated by law to report this to the appropriate state agency. The law is designed to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm and the obligations to report suspected abuse or neglect are clear in this regard.

There may be some other rare instances in which you waive your rights to have your records protected. If you are involved in any type of current or potential legal difficulties, we suggest that you discuss such matters with your attorney before informing others of the services you have received here.

In summary, we make every reasonable effort to safeguard the personal information which you may share with us. As noted above, however, there are certain instances when we may be obligated under the law to release such information to others. If you have any questions about confidentiality, please discuss them with us.