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Phone: (907) 357-6513 | Fax: (907) 357-6514

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Please read the important Notice Regarding Privacy Practices and Client Rights before printing any of your Intake documents. You will have an opportunity to discuss any questions about this notice and all your intake forms at your first appointment.
  
2. Please thoroughly read, sign, and submit the following required forms to Olive Tree Counseling's office before your first session.
  - a. Authorization for Treatment
  - b. Agreement Regarding Information for Court
  - c. Agreement to Pay for Professional Services
  - d. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Notice of Privacy Practices and Client Rights
  - e. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Intake Forms
  - f. Intake General Information

Thank you,

*Holly Hoff, LPC*

*Derek Sandlin, LPC*

*Brittney Punt, LCSW*

*David Banks, LPC*

*Ken Brewington, LPC*

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES AND CLIENT RIGHTS**

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW YOUR MEDICAL INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. REVIEW CAREFULLY AND KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS.

\*Because Olive Tree Counseling, Inc. (aka, OTC) sees clients under 18, all references to "you" include your child as the parent or guardian of the child. A parent or guardian may exercise the rights of the minor or child.

OTC understands that your health information is personal to you, and OTC is committed to protecting your information. This Notice of Privacy Practices and Client Rights (aka, Notice) describes how OTC will use and disclose protected information and data OTC receives or creates related to your health care.

### **OUR DUTIES**

OTC is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to give you this Notice describing our legal duties and privacy practices. OTC is also required to follow the terms of this Notice currently in effect.

### **USE AND DISCLOSURE OF HEALTH INFORMATION**

OTC will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization except in the following situations:

#### **TREATMENT**

OTC may use and disclose your health information while providing, coordinating, or managing your health care. Information obtained by a member of your counseling team will be documented in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you. OTC may also provide other healthcare providers with the minimum information that will assist them in treating you.

#### **PAYMENT**

OTC may use and disclose your medical information to obtain or offer payment for providing your health care. If OTC sends you or your health plan a bill, the information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, your diagnosis, procedures, or supplies used. OTC may be required to disclose information to your health plan to determine your eligibility for payment for certain benefits. Please note: some insurance companies request detailed information and others request only a diagnosis and office visit codes. It is your responsibility to know what personal information is required by your insurance company.

#### **HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS**

OTC may use and disclose health information to deal with certain administrative aspects of your health care and to manage our business more efficiently. OTC's medical staff may use information in your health record to assess the quality of care and outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will be used to improve the quality and effectiveness of the healthcare and services OTC provides.

#### **BUSINESS ASSOCIATES**

OTC may disclose your health information to its business associates to perform the job OTC has asked these associates to do, such as accounting or legal analysis. However, OTC requires the business associates to take precautions to protect your health information.

#### **NOTIFICATION OF FAMILY**

In an emergency, OTC may use or disclose information, your location, or general condition to notify or assist a family member, personal representative, or other person responsible for your care.

## COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILY

OTC may disclose to a family member, relative, friend—or other person with whom you identify—health information relevant to said individual's involvement in your care.

## COURT PROCEEDING

OTC may disclose your health information in response to requests made during judicial and administrative proceedings, court orders, or subpoenas as required by law.

## OTHER USES

OTC may use and disclose your personal health information for the following purposes:

- Leave messages for patients regarding upcoming appointments or other administrative matters at the contact numbers on file.
- Describe or recommend treatment alternatives to you.
- Provide information about health-related benefits or services that may be of interest.

Rarely, OTC may disclose information for Food and Drug Administration (FDA), public health, reporting abuse, neglect or domestic violence, health oversight, law enforcement, threats to public health or safety, and specialized government functions (military, national security).

## PROHIBITION ON OTHER USES OR DISCLOSURES

OTC will not make any other use or disclosure of your personal health information without your written authorization. Your name and identity will only be disclosed in accordance with AS 08.29.200. Once given, you may revoke the authorization in writing. OTC is unable to reverse any disclosure that has been made previously with your permission.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Confidentiality at OTC is maintained according to the AAMFT Code of Ethics, State Professional Counseling regulations and HIPAA regulations. OTC cannot guarantee that your data will be kept private where disclosing information is required by law. There are limits and exceptions to confidentiality. Understand what can and cannot be kept private:

1. When you or another person is in physical danger, OTC is required by law to report it. OTC will reveal the minimum information necessary to protect you or other individuals.
2. If OTC has reason to believe you are threatening harm to another person, OTC is required by law to protect said person. OTC is required to inform said person and the police, or have you hospitalized.
3. If you threaten or act in a way likely to harm yourself, OTC may have you hospitalized or call family to protect you. If such a situation does occur, OTC will attempt to fully discuss the situation with you before acting unless there is an exceptional reason not to.
4. In an emergency where your life or health is in danger, and OTC cannot get your consent, OTC may give another professional minimum information to protect your life. OTC will attempt to get permission first and discuss the situation as soon as possible.
5. If OTC suspects you are abusing a child, elderly person, or disabled person, the law requires OTC to file a report with a state agency. Abuse includes neglect, physically assault, or sexually molest another

person. OTC does not have any legal power to investigate the situation. Discuss legal aspects in detail before you disclose anything to OTC. Consider speaking with a lawyer.

Other considerations regarding confidentiality and treatment:

- OTC may consult with a qualified individual about your treatment without providing your name. Likewise, when OTC is unavailable, another therapist may have access to client records at the client's request. Your information will remain protected under HIPAA guidelines.
- OTC is required to keep records and notes of your treatment. If you have specific or unusual concerns, please speak with your own attorney—OTC does not give legal advice.
- OTC sees people individually, as couples, or as families. OTC will keep information confidential except for the previously listed situations. However, if others need the information for your continued progression in therapy, OTC may encourage and work with you to disclose relevant information.

### **RECORDS REQUESTS FOR MINORS**

While parents have the legal right to receive information their children share in therapy, for the mental wellbeing of the child, OTC encourages parents to not request this data. OTC may encourage and assist children in sharing information, but OTC will not share data unless necessary to protect the life and wellbeing of an individual. OTC does not believe it is in a child's best interest to release therapeutic records in most cases. OTC's code of ethics prohibits harm to clients; therefore, OTC will not willingly release records unless required by law. Clients do not feel safe when information is passed on to family or if information disclosed in therapy is used in court proceedings. Therefore, OTC reserves the right to review or reject any request for records where compliance is not lawfully required.

### **OTHER RECORDS REQUESTS**

OTC does not release marriage and family therapeutic records to spouses without both spouses' written consent. Only your own individual records are available for you to request. However, it is not in the best interest of an individual to obtain therapeutic records—any request for records with which OTC is legally obligated to comply will include a written statement declaring that you were informed as such.

### **INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY RIGHTS**

Clients have the right to confidentiality of client health information. As a client, you have the right to:

1. Request restrictions on the health information OTC may use and disclose for treatment, payment, and health care operations. OTC is not required to agree to these requests. To request restrictions, please send a written statement to the address listed at the end of this document.
2. Receive confidential communications of health information about you in a certain manner or at a certain location. For instance, you may request that OTC only contact you at work or by mail. To make such a request, you must write the address listed at the end of this document stating how or where you wish to be contacted.
3. Inspect or copy your health information in paper or electronic form. You must submit your request in writing to the address listed at the end of this document. If you request a copy of your health information, OTC will charge a fee for the cost of copying, mailing, and other supplies. OTC reserves the right to deny

your request to inspect or copy your health information. However, you may request that the denial be reviewed by a separate licensed professional. OTC will comply with the outcome of their review.

4. Amend health information. If the health information that OTC has on record is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask to amend the information. To request an amendment, you must write to the address at the end of this document with the reason to support your request. OTC may deny your request to amend your health information if it is not in writing or a reason to support your request is not provided. OTC may also deny your request if:
  - a. The information was not created by OTC, unless the person that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment.
  - b. The information is not part of the health information kept on record by or for OTC.
  - c. It is not part of the information you are permitted to inspect or copy.
  - d. It is accurate and complete.
5. To receive an accounting of disclosures of your health information. You must submit a request in writing to the address listed at the end of this document. Not all health information is subject to this request. Your request must state a time no longer than 6 years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003, and how you would like to receive the report (paper or electronically).
6. There is no charge for your first accounting request. For additional accountings, OTC may charge you the cost of providing this service. OTC will notify you of this cost, and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request before any charges are made.
7. To receive a paper copy of this Notice upon request—even if you have agreed to receive the Notice electronically—you must submit a request for a paper Notice in writing to the address listed at the end of this Notice.

All requests to restrict use of your health information for treatment, payment, and health care operations, to inspect and copy health information, to amend your health information, or to receive an accounting of disclosures of health information must be made in writing to the contact person listed at the end of this Notice.

### **OTHER CLIENT RIGHTS**

As a client, you have the right to:

1. Be treated with respect regarding psychosocial, spiritual, and cultural variables that influence perceptions.
2. Have a safe environment, free from discrimination of race, color, religion, gender, sex, handicap, national origin, or political standing. OTC treats individuals with respect and recognizes basic human rights.
3. Receive information about therapist qualifications, including license, education, training experience, membership in professional groups, special areas of practice, and limits of practice.
4. Have written information about fees, methods of payment, insurance coverage, and number of sessions the therapist thinks will be needed, and cancellation policies.
5. Have informed consent to procedures, benefits and risks, and alternative options for your care.
6. Privacy and confidentiality of your assessment and records, with exceptions noted in this document.
7. Refuse audio or video recordings of sessions.
8. Ask the therapist to inform you of your progress.
9. Report any illegal or immoral behavior by a therapist.

## **PROPER AND IMPROPER THERAPIST CONDUCT**

A therapist should never use threatening or coercing behavior as part of your treatment plan. If you feel threatened by your therapist, confront it immediately and contact OTC's office at (908) 357-6513.

It is normal for clients to develop positive feelings or affection toward a therapist giving clients support and care. However, these feelings may take negative forms of sexual attraction. Sexual contact with your therapist is prohibited and is harmful to the client and therapist. Sexual contact is against the professional code of conduct for all professional groups of mental health workers (i.e., psychologists, psychiatrists, licensed counselors, and marriage and family counselors). You are encouraged to contact OTC's office for more information on any of OTC's therapists or to file a complaint.

## **NO GUARANTEED OUTCOME**

OTC strives to help clients reach the goals they desire. However, therapy does not guarantee success. OTC will do its best to help you or will refer you to someone who can. Consequences not considered ideal, such as divorce, are a possibility. OTC will do its best to encourage the best possible outcomes with the least discomfort. If therapy seems ineffective, OTC will explore alternative therapy or resources for you.

## **COMPLAINTS**

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint at (907) 357-6513 or to the address listed below. For severe violations, submit a complaint to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. OTC will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

## **CONTACT PERSON**

The following OTC's contact person for all written questions, requests, or further information related to the privacy of your health information:

Holly Hoff

1981 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy. Suite 220

Wasilla, AK 99654 Attn: Privacy Officer

Office: (907) 357-6513 | Fax: (907) 357-6514

## **CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE**

OTC reserves the right to change its privacy practices and apply revisions to previous health information. Any revision to our privacy practices will be described in a revised Notice that will be posted prominently in our facility.

Effective date: Jan. 2025. Reviewed and revised: September 2023.