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Psychotherapist**

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Please refer to my Communications Policy for best contact methods.

Notice of Privacy Practices

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.

Your health record contains personal information about you and your health. This information about you that may identify you and that relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services is referred to as Protected Health Information ("PHI"). This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose your PHI in accordance with applicable law, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA"), regulations promulgated under HIPAA including the HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules, and the *NASW Code of Ethics*. It also describes your rights regarding how you may gain access to and control your PHI.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI. We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. We reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice of Privacy Practices at any time. Any new Notice of Privacy Practices will be effective for all PHI that we maintain at that time. We will provide you with a copy of the revised Notice of Privacy Practices by posting a copy on our website, sending a copy to you in the mail upon request or providing one to you at your next appointment upon request.

Minnesota Patient Consent for Disclosures

For most disclosures of your health information we are required by the State of Minnesota Laws to obtain a written consent from you, unless the disclosure is authorized by Law. This consent may be obtained at the beginning of your treatment, during the first delivery of health care service or at a later point in your care, when the need arises to disclose your health information to others.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

A. For Purposes of Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations

- **For Treatment.** Your PHI may be used and disclosed by those who are involved in your care for the purpose of providing, coordinating, or managing your health care treatment and related services. This includes when your therapist consults with another health care

provider, such as your primary care physician or another therapist. We may disclose PHI to another healthcare professional only with your authorization.

- **For Payment.** We may use and disclose PHI so that we can receive payment for the treatment services provided to you. This will only be done with your authorization. Examples of payment-related activities are: making a determination of eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, processing claims with your insurance company, reviewing services provided to you to determine medical necessity, or undertaking utilization review activities. If it becomes necessary to use collection processes due to lack of payment for services, we will only disclose the minimum amount of PHI necessary for purposes of collection.
- **For Health Care Operations.** We may use or disclose, as needed, your PHI in order to support our business activities including, but not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. For example, we may share your PHI with third parties that perform various business activities (e.g., our billing services) provided we have a written contract with the business that requires it to safeguard the privacy of your PHI. For training or teaching purposes PHI will be disclosed only with your authorization.
- If you have paid for your services out-of-pocket in full, we will accommodate your request that the PHI related solely to those services paid for out-of-pocket not be disclosed to a health plan for payment or health care operations.

B. Uses and Disclosures Requiring Your Authorization

In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment or health care operations, you may give us written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this notice. Additionally, we will need to obtain a written authorization before releasing *Psychotherapy Notes*. *Psychotherapy Notes* are notes your therapist made about your conversation during a private, group, joint, or family therapy session, which your therapist might have kept separate from the rest of your medical record. These notes are given a greater degree of protection than PHI.

C. Uses and Disclosures with Neither Consent Nor Authorization Required

Following is a list of the categories of uses and disclosures permitted by HIPAA without an authorization. Applicable law and ethical standards permit us to disclose information about you without your authorization only in a limited number of situations.

As a social worker licensed in this state (MN), it is our practice to adhere to more stringent privacy requirements for disclosures without an authorization. The following language addresses these categories to the extent consistent with the *NASW Code of Ethics* and HIPAA.

- **Child or Elder Abuse or Neglect.** We may disclose your PHI to a state or local agency that is authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect.

- **Judicial and Administrative Proceedings.** We may disclose your PHI pursuant to a subpoena (with your written consent), court order, administrative order or similar process.
- **Deceased Patients.** We may disclose PHI regarding deceased patients as mandated by state law, or to a family member or friend that was involved in your care or payment for care prior to death, based on your prior consent. A release of information regarding deceased patients may be limited to an executor or administrator of a deceased person's estate or the person identified as next-of-kin. PHI of persons that have been deceased for more than fifty (50) years is not protected under HIPAA.
- **Medical Emergencies.** We may use or disclose your PHI in a medical emergency situation to medical personnel only in order to prevent serious harm. Our staff will try to provide you a copy of this notice as soon as reasonably practicable after the resolution of the emergency.
- **Family Involvement in Care.** We may disclose information to close family members or friends directly involved in your treatment based on your consent or as necessary to prevent serious harm.
- **Health Oversight.** If required, we 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.
- **Law Enforcement.** We may disclose PHI to a law enforcement official as required by law, in compliance with a subpoena (with your written consent), 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.
- **Specialized Government Functions.** We may review requests from U.S. military command authorities if you have served as a member of the armed forces, authorized officials for national security and intelligence reasons and to the Department of State for medical suitability determinations, and disclose your PHI based on your written consent, mandatory disclosure laws and the need to prevent serious harm.
- **Public Health.** If required, we 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
- **Public Safety.** We may disclose your PHI if necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public. If information is disclosed to prevent or lessen a serious threat it will be disclosed to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.
- **Research.** PHI may only be disclosed after a special approval process or with your authorization.
- **Verbal Permission.** We may also use or disclose your information to family members that are directly involved in your treatment with your verbal permission.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR PHI

You have the following rights regarding PHI we maintain about you. To exercise any of these rights, please submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer at Stacy Rankin Greco, MSW, LICSW, 3005 James Avenue S, Suite 102, Minneapolis, MN 55408:

- **Right of Access to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right, which may be restricted only in exceptional circumstances, to inspect and copy PHI that is maintained in a “designated record set”. A designated record set contains mental health/medical and billing records and any other records that are used to make decisions about your care. Your right to inspect and copy PHI will be restricted only in those situations where there is compelling evidence that access would cause serious harm to you or if the information is contained in separately maintained psychotherapy notes. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for copies. If your records are maintained electronically, you may also request an electronic copy of your PHI. You may also request that a copy of your PHI be provided to another person.
- **Right to Amend.** If you feel that the PHI we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information although we are not required to agree to the amendment. If we deny your request for amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us. We may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy. Please contact the Privacy Officer if you have any questions.
- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request an accounting of the disclosures that we make of your PHI for which you have neither provided consent nor authorization (as described above in this form). We may charge you a reasonable fee if you request more than one accounting in any 12-month period.
- **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the use or disclosure of your PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations. We are not required to agree to your request unless the request is to restrict disclosure of PHI to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations, and the PHI pertains to a health care item or service that you paid for out of pocket. In that case, we are required to honor your request for a restriction.
- **Right to Request Confidential Communication.** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about health matters in a certain way or at a certain location. We will accommodate reasonable requests. We may require information regarding how payment will be handled or specification of an alternative address or other method of contact as a condition for accommodating your request. We will not ask you for an explanation of why you are making the request.
- **Breach Notification.** If there is a breach of unsecured PHI concerning you, we may be required to notify you of this breach, including what happened and what you can do to protect yourself.
- **Right to a Copy of this Notice.** You have the right to a copy of this notice.

YOUR CHOICES

For certain health information, you can tell us your choices about what we share. If you have a clear preference for how we share your information in the situations described below, talk to us. Tell us what you want us to do and we will follow your instructions.

- Notification: We may use or disclose information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or another person responsible for your care, your location and general condition.
- Communication with family: Health professionals, using their best judgment, may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe we have violated your privacy rights, you have the right to file a complaint in writing with our Privacy Officer at Stacy Rankin Greco, MSW, LICSW, 3005 James Avenue S, Suite 102, Minneapolis, MN 55408 or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services at 200 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20201 or by calling (202) 619-0257. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

The effective date of this Notice is November 2014.