

Notice of Privacy Practices
HIPPA Client Rights Statement

March, 2003; revision February, 2009

The Private Policies of the First Presbyterian Church Counseling Center, Inc. have been revised to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA). This notice describes your rights under the HIPPA, how clinical information about you may be used and disclosed, and how you can get access to this information. Please review it.

All information revealed by you in a counseling or therapy session and most information placed in your file (all clinical records or other individually identifiable health information held or disclosed in any form [electronic, paper, oral] is considered Protected Health Information (PHI) under HIPPA). As such, your PHI cannot be distributed to anyone else without your expressed informed and voluntary written consent or authorization. The exceptions to this are defined immediately below. Additional information regarding your rights as a client can be found in your therapist's Professional Disclosure Statement and Consent for Treatment.

Use or disclosure of the following PHI does not require your consent or authorization:

- Uses and disclosures required by law – such as files subpoenaed by a judge
- Uses and disclosures about victims of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence – such as the duties to warn explained in your counselor's Disclosure Statement
- Uses and for health and oversight activities – such as correcting records already disclosed
- Uses and disclosures for judicial and administrative proceedings – such as in a case where you are claiming malpractice or breach of ethics
- Uses and disclosures for law enforcement purposes – such as when you claim mental health issues as a defense in a civil or criminal case
- Uses and disclosures for research purposes – such as using client information in a research project; always maintaining confidentiality
- Uses and disclosures to avert a serious threat to health or safety – such as calling Probate Court for a commitment hearing
- Uses and disclosures for Worker's Compensation (WC) – such as the basic information obtained in therapy as a result of your WC claim

Your rights as a Counseling/Therapy Client regarding your health information

- As a client, you have the right to see your counseling file. Psychotherapy notes are afforded special privacy protection under the HIPPA regulations and are excluded from this right
- As a client, you have a right to review a copy of your counseling file, excluding psychotherapy notes as noted above; you will be required to pay copying fees @ \$0.50/page
- As a client, you have the right to request amendments to your file

- As a client, you have the right to request a history of all disclosures of Protected Health Information (PHI); you will be required to pay copying fees @ \$0.50/page
- As a client, you have a right to restrict the use and disclosure of your PHI for purposes of treatment, payment, or operations; if you choose to release any PHI, you will be required to sign an Authorization for Release of PHI form detailing exactly to whom and what information you wish disclosed
- As a client, you have the right to register a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you feel your rights, herein explained, have been violated

Prior to your counseling or therapy, you will receive:

1. An exact duplicate of this Notice of Privacy Practices
2. Your therapist/counseling's Professional Disclosure Statement and Consent for Treatment – both for your personal records
3. A request that you review these documents; it will be necessary for you to sign indicating that you have received, read, and understood both documents; this certificate will be placed in your counseling/therapy file; please do not sign if you do not understand any part of the HIPPA Client Rights or Professional Disclosure Statement and Consent for Treatment; your counselor or therapist will be happy to explain these documents further

Our notice of Private Policies

By law, we must abide by the terms of these policies. As changes occur in federal HIPPA laws, we will change our Privacy Policies accordingly. When changes to these policies are made, the new policies will be posted in our business office and waiting room area. Further, copies will be available for you to review.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about these policies, feel free to discuss them with your counselor. You may also address your questions or complaints to Dr. Thomas Barbian, Privacy Officer at the Christian Counseling Center, 1500 Lady Street, Columbia, SC 29201.