



LIMITATION ON CONFIDENTIALITY WHEN PROVIDING THERAPY TO COUPLES OR FAMILIES

This statement of policy is intended to inform you, the participants in therapy, that when the therapist agrees to treat a couple or a family, the therapist considers that couple or family (the treatment unit) to be the client. For instance, if there is a request for the treatment records of the couple or the family, the therapist will seek the authorization of all members of the treatment unit before she releases confidential information to third parties. Also, if treatment records are subpoenaed, the therapist will assert the psychotherapist-patient privilege on behalf of the client (treatment unit).

During the course of work with a couple or a family, the therapist may see a smaller part of the treatment unit (e.g., an individual or two siblings) for one or more sessions. These sessions should be seen by you as a part of the work that the therapist is doing with the family or the couple, unless otherwise indicated. If you are involved in one or more of such sessions with the therapist, please understand that generally these sessions are confidential in the sense that the therapist will not release any confidential information to a third party unless the therapist is required by law to do so, or unless the therapist has your written authorization. In fact, since those sessions can and should be considered a part of the treatment of the couple or family, the therapist would also seek the authorization of the other individuals in the treatment unit before releasing confidential information to a third party.

However, the therapist may need to share information learned in an individual session (or a session with only a portion of the treatment unit being present) with the entire treatment unit – that is, the family or the couple, if the therapist is to effectively serve the unit being treated. The therapist will use their best judgment as to whether, when, and to what extent they will make disclosures to the treatment unit, and will also, if appropriate, first give the individual or the smaller part of the treatment unit being seen the opportunity to make the disclosure. Thus, if you feel it necessary to talk about matters that you absolutely want to be shared with no one, you might want to consult with an individual therapist who can treat you individually.

This “no secrets” policy is intended to allow the therapist to continue to treat the couple or family by preventing, to the extent possible, a conflict of interest to arise where an individual’s interests may not be consistent with the interests of the unit being treated. For instance, information learned in the course of an individual session may be relevant or even essential to the proper treatment of the couple or the family. If the therapist is not free to exercise their clinical judgment regarding the need to bring this information to the family or the couple during their therapy, they might be placed in a situation where they will have to terminate treatment of the couple or the family. This policy is intended to prevent the need for such a termination.

By signing below, you, as members of the couple/family or other unit receiving treatment, acknowledge that each of you has read this policy, that you understand it, that you have had an opportunity to discuss its contents with me as your therapist, and that you undertake couple/family therapy in agreement with this policy.

Client/Guardian Signature

Date

Printed Name

Client/Guardian Signature

Date

Printed Name

Client/Guardian Signature

Date

Printed Name

Client/Guardian Signature

Date

Printed Name