

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

This notice describes how clinical information about you is protected, how it may be used and disclosed, and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

Confidentiality and trust are at the heart of any therapeutic relationship. The fact that you are engaged in counseling, as well as everything you share with me, will be kept in strictest confidence. There are specific exceptions to this commitment (legislated by RCW 18.19.180) which are included in order to honor and protect your rights and the rights of others:

1. If I feel you are at risk of suicide, I will do all that I can to prevent such harm. This may include informing a close family member and/or contacting appropriate emergency services.
2. If I have strong reason to believe that a child or vulnerable adult is at significant risk of abuse or neglect, I will contact the Dept. of Health and/or Child Protective Services and cooperate with their procedures.
3. If I feel that others are at risk of bodily harm from you, I will seek to warn the at-risk party and/or the police.

Record-keeping

1. *Legal obligations and client rights:* If I am served a legitimate subpoena for your records, I will use every legal means available to me to block such action and protect your confidentiality. However, if the legal authorities do not support this ethic, I will be required to release the records and possibly appear in court. My own ethic does not support this action, so if you anticipate involvement in litigation, I ask that you seek another counselor. If we do work together, you have a right to know that I keep a record of dates of service and fees as well as notes to assist me in my work. I make a practice of not keeping too much personal data in these notes, and observe security precautions to protect confidentiality. You have the right to request that session notes NOT be kept; to review your record if you desire; to ask me to correct the record if you believe the information is in error. A copy of your corrections to my record will be placed within your record at your request. If we agree that it would be useful for me to communicate with another of your healthcare providers, you must give me written consent for that communication and may stipulate what information may and may not be given or received.
2. *Professional consultation:* In order to maximize my effectiveness and growth as a professional private practice counselor, I participate in formal one-on-one consultation with a Licensed Mental Health Counselor. If in the course of my ongoing consultation with other mental health professionals, I consider it beneficial to your process to discuss issues in my work with you, I will always do so in a manner that protects your anonymity and honors the commitment to confidentiality.
3. *Physical and electronic barriers to records:* There are two locks guarding the privacy of all client records. All electronic documents containing client information are encrypted and password-protected. Out-of-date documents are permanently deleted. Back-up is provided by a secure cloud back-up company through a program specifically designed for businesses and encrypted.
4. *Email:* I limit email communication to the email associated with my website. I also include the following statement with my signature at the bottom of my emails: This e-mail message and any attachments are confidential and intended solely for the addressee(s) named above. Communication sent and received via this e-mail account is considered private and may contain material protected by therapist-client privileges. I am the only person who has access to this account. However, in our current internet world, it is not possible to ensure the privacy of email communication. (For example, it has come to my attention that social media "mine" email data and access contact lists.) I recommend that you limit email communication to what is essential – scheduling, for example – and refrain from including personal information. If you need to communicate about personal matters, I suggest that you call me and leave a message, and I will return your call within a reasonable time frame. If you choose to email confidential information, please know that you do so at your own risk. If you prefer to ensure your privacy more completely, please let me know, and we will only communicate via telephone.

I am required to abide by the terms of the Notice of Privacy Practices currently in effect; I reserve the right to revise the terms of this notice and to provide clients with a revised Notice.

January 3, 2016