



Limitation on Confidentiality in Couple or Family Therapy

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

During the course of the therapist's 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 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 these sessions can and should be considered a part of the family or couple therapy, 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 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 my best judgment as to whether, when, and to what extent the therapist 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 me to continue to treat the patient (the couple or family unit) 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 family. If the therapist is not free to exercise my clinical judgment regarding the need to bring this information to the family or the couple during their therapy, the therapist might be placed in a situation where the therapist will have to terminate treatment of the couple or family. This policy is intended to prevent the need for such a termination.

We, the members of the _____ (couple/family or other unit) being seen, acknowledge by our individual signatures below that each of us had read this policy, that we understand it, that we have had an opportunity to discuss its contents with _____ (the therapist), and that we enter couple/family therapy in agreement with this policy.

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____ Signature _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____ Signature _____