

# **HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices of Bert Epstein, Psy.D.**

## **AVAILABILITY OF SERVICE:**

- No regular services are available beyond the regularly-scheduled appointment.
- Clients requiring emergency services are advised to go to an Emergency Room, call 911, or call the Sonoma County 24-hour Crisis Line at (707) 576-8181.

## **MISSED APPOINTMENTS:**

- Missed appointments will be billed at the regular rate unless you call with two days notice. Exceptions may be made only in the case of emergencies or illness.

## **INSURANCE INFORMATION:**

- If you are paying for services through your insurance company, then you understand that information conveyed in therapy may need to be relayed to your insurance company, and we have no control over re-disclosure. Typically, insurance companies only want dates of service and a diagnosis.
- If you have health insurance, but we are not on their preferred provider panel, we are happy to provide you with a receipt such that they may be able to reimburse you for a portion of the fee. Inform your therapist if you would like a form you may then submit to your insurance company. Be aware that not all services are covered.
- All charges incurred for psychotherapy are the responsibility of the client regardless of whether the services are or are not covered by the client's insurance carrier.

## **RESEARCH AND REPORTING OF GROUP DATA:**

- Grouped non-identifying information may be used for research to advance knowledge in the field.

## **IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED:**

- You are strongly urged to speak with your provider.

## **RISKS AND BENEFITS:**

- There are risks and benefits that may occur in counseling. Counseling may involve remembering unpleasant events, arouse strong emotional feelings, and cause some level of discomfort. Counseling may impact relationships with significant others. The benefits from counseling may be an improved ability to relate with others; a clearer understanding of goals; increased productivity; and an ability to deal with everyday stress.

## **MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS:**

- Records of appointments are kept secure in paper form and/or electronic form. All records are stored with strict attention to security as required by legal and ethical standards.
- Clients may request to review their records with their provider.
- In accordance with California law, records are maintained for 7 years following the last activity on the file (and for minors records are kept 7 years from the time they reach 18) and are then destroyed. At no time is the confidentiality of records compromised.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

- In accordance with state and federal law, and professional ethical guidelines, your provider maintains confidential records of all client contacts.
- Email should not be sent to the provider except for scheduling purposes. Confidentiality of email cannot be guaranteed, as email messages reside on servers.
- For some high security and government (i.e., military/Peace Corps) employment positions, you may be required to release medical records as part of a background check. We will only do so with your written authorization.
- Without your consent, no information about your treatment will be disclosed to others, except as noted below.
- In the interest of providing responsible service, your clinician may consult with other licensed practitioners about your treatment when medically necessary. Your name will not be used and other information that would clearly identify you will be modified.
- There are some exceptions to confidentiality. Providers may release certain information without your consent:
  - 1... When we have knowledge or observation of, or reasonably suspect, abuse or neglect of a child or elderly or dependent adult,
  - 2... As a result of a court order,
  - 3... When mental health issues are raised by you or your attorney in a criminal or civil action,
  - 4... In the event we have reasonable concern that you may harm yourself, others, or cause danger to others through property damage.
- If you feel your rights to privacy have been violated, please discuss this with your provider.

## **PROFESSIONAL WILL:**

- In the unlikely event that I become incapacitated in any way to continue to provide therapy, I have designated licensed mental health professionals who would inform you, provide referrals, and ensure that your records are kept securely.

## **OFFICE SUBLET:**

- I sublet a professional therapy office, but I do not share records with anyone, including those who work in the same building.