



Consent & Confidentiality Form

Here is some general information we would like you to know regarding counseling at Covenant Presbyterian Church. Please take some time to look this over. Do not hesitate to ask your counselor about any questions you may have.

Confidentiality & Treatment

As counselors, we place a high value on the confidentiality of the information our members share with us. That means we will never divulge personal information without your consent except under the below conditions. Confidentiality of personal information is vital for building a solid therapeutic relationship. There are some very important exceptions to confidentiality that require the disclosure of personal information without your consent. We are legally obliged to take action to protect others from harm, even if we have to reveal some information about your treatment/evaluation/consultation.

1. **Physical Threat:** Per Va Code 54.1-2400.1, if you threaten to harm either yourself or someone else and we believe your threat to be serious, we are obligated by law to take whatever actions seem necessary to protect people from harm. Also, by law, we are required to report to the proper agency any instances where we believe a child's welfare is at risk.

2. **Legal Proceedings:** If you are involved in any type of current or potential legal difficulties, we suggest that you discuss such matters with your attorney before informing us of the difficulties or informing others of the services you have received here. We also ask that you inform us of any current or potential legal actions at the time of your first appointment. This is so that we may be aware of the possibility that a subpoena may be issued requiring the release of confidential information.

3. **Cooperation with other Professionals:** If there is a need to share information in your records with someone not employed here (for example, your physician or another therapist), you will first be consulted and asked to sign a form agreeing to this action. You may wish to discuss the release of the material and related implications very carefully before you sign. The form will specify the information which you give us permission to release to the other party and will specify the time period during which the information may be released. You can revoke your permission at any time by simply giving us written notice.

4. **Consultation with other Professionals:** In order to continually improve our skills as therapists, we do ask other professionals for assistance on particular cases. In those instances, we protect the client's anonymity by not revealing personally identifying information.

5. **Records:** Personal information you share with us may be entered into your records. However, an effort is generally made to avoid entry of information which may be especially sensitive or embarrassing. Your counselor will be the only person with access to your files.

6. **Exceptions** to confidentiality may be made if there is potential slander to the name of Christ Jesus or this local expression of his body, Covenant Presbyterian Church. The Session of Covenant holds to the classical pastoral care and counseling position, which does care for and about the individual but is not so individual-oriented that we would jeopardize the peace, purity, unity and vitality of Christ's body, the church. Therefore, if a **member of Covenant** is admonished to stop an overt sinful behavior as defined by scripture, and the individual continues in the behavior, and if this sinful behavior has the potential to become public knowledge and/or is dangerous or harmful to this church community and the good name of Christ, then church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 and in the PCA Book of Church Order will be considered as an option by the pastor/counselor. Biblical discipline is intended to restore the penitent and to protect the integrity of Christ Jesus and his church. Also, in the event a **member** of the PCA (not a CPC member) becomes involved in church discipline, we continue to keep all matters confidential except in rare instances in which judicial action is necessary. In such a case, if we are under subpoena by a court of the PCA, then some confidential information may be disclosed.

In summary, we make every reasonable effort to safeguard the personal information which you may share with us. There are, however, certain instances when we may be obligated under law (secular or scriptural) to release such information to others. If you have any questions about confidentiality, please discuss them with Greg Becker, Director of Congregational Care and Counseling.

Understanding the above, I/we give permission for _____ to provide counseling to me/us.

Signature of client

Printed name of client

Date

Signature of client

Printed name of client

Date

Signature of Guardian, if client is minor

Printed name of Guardian

Date

Contact

In the event of any medical or life-threatening emergency, I grant permission for counselor to contact the following person(s).

Print Name

Phone number

Print Name

Phone number