

# Canaan Christian Counseling Ministry

2840 Hikes Lane

Louisville, KY 40218

Phone (502) 459-5578, ext. 109

## OFFICE PRIVACY POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Confidentiality and privacy are the cornerstones of the mental health professions. Patients have an expectation that their communications with therapists/counselors, and their treatment records, will generally be kept confidential and will not be released to others without the written authorization of the patient. One of the purposes of the **Notice of Privacy Practices** is to inform and educate patients about the fact that there are exceptions to the general rule of confidentiality. Many of these exceptions have existed for years, and many of them are the result of laws and regulations being passed by state legislatures and by the federal government. These laws and regulations are essentially statements of public policy. Canaan Counseling Ministry policies and procedures, as well as the ethical standards of the counseling profession, are intended to shape our practice so that privacy and confidentiality are maintained, consistent with Kentucky law and the federal "Privacy Rule."

1. Patient records will be kept in locked file cabinets in our individual offices. Our individual offices are locked when we are not there. Patient records will not be left in places in our offices where others are able to see its contents. We will take steps to assure that patient records are accessed only by persons who need this information, which includes those in our employ with our permission, who may need to access them on our behalf or on the patient's behalf.
2. For those in our employ who violate these policies and procedures or who compromise the confidentiality or privacy of a patient, will result in their immediate dismissal from this area of ministry.
3. Information and records concerning a patient may be disclosed as described in the Notice of Privacy Practices and in accordance with applicable law or regulation. Generally, we will obtain a written authorization from the patient before releasing information to third parties for purposes other than treatment payment, and health care operations, unless disclosure is required by law or permitted by law.
4. If mental health records are subpoenaed by an adverse party we will assert the psychotherapist-patient privilege on behalf of the patient and will thereafter act according to the wishes of the patient and the patient's attorney, unless we are ordered by a Court or other lawful authority to release records or portions thereof.
5. We keep patient records for at least seven years from the date of last treatment. With respect to the records of a minor, we keep those records for at least seven years or until the patient is twenty-one years old, whichever is longer. Thereafter, we may destroy patient records. When records are destroyed, they will be destroyed in a manner that protects patient privacy and confidentiality.
6. We will attempt to find out from patients, as early as possible, whether they have any objection to individuals in this office sending correspondence to their residence, and whether we are permitted to call them at their residence or elsewhere to change appointment times or dates, or to discuss matters related to their treatment.
7. Our duty of confidentiality and the psychotherapist-patient or Counselor-Counselee privilege survive the death of a patient.
8. With respect to e-mail communications, we will do our best to ensure that communications are encrypted and can only be opened by the person to whom they are being sent.

I, (Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_, have received a copy of Canaan Counseling Ministry's Office Privacy Policies and Procedures and have been trained in how to properly implement these procedures.