



Client Confidentiality

We will treat what you disclose with great care. Our ethics (Marriage and Family Therapy's rules about professional values) and the laws of this state prevent us from telling anyone else what you tell us unless you give us written permission. These rules and laws are the ways our society recognizes and supports the privacy of what is discussed in session—in other words, the “confidentiality” of therapy.

However, there are some times when the law requires therapists to disclose client confidences to others. There are also some other limits on confidentiality. Please read these pages carefully and we can discuss any questions you might have.

Client Identity

You should also know that therapists are required to keep the identity of their clients confidential. Therefore, if we meet in a public place we will follow your lead. We will not acknowledge you or say hello unless you acknowledge us or say hello first. We will do this in order to protect your privacy. We will never introduce ourselves as your therapist; if you would like to introduce us as your therapist, it is up to you, but we will follow your lead. Lastly, when our therapy is completed, we will continue to protect your privacy if we happen to meet outside the therapy office, which can sometimes happen.

Mandated Reporter and Duty To Warn

When you or other persons are in physical danger, the law requires me to tell others:

- As therapists, and by law, the therapists at Relationship Insights are mandated reporters. If we believe or suspect that you are abusing a child, an elderly person, a disabled person, or a vulnerable adult, a report must be filed with a state agency. To “abuse” means to neglect, hurt, or sexually molest another person. Therapists do not have any legal power to investigate the situation to find out all the facts. The state agency will investigate. If this might be your situation, the legal aspects should be discussed in detail before you disclose anything about these topics and/or talk to a lawyer.
- If we have reason to believe that you are threatening serious harm to another person, We are required to try to protect that person, and have a duty to warn them. We may have to tell the person and the police, or perhaps try to have you put in a hospital.
- If you seriously threaten or act in a way that is very likely to harm yourself, we may have to seek a hospital for you, or to call on your family members or others who can help protect you, If such a situation does come up, we will fully discuss the situation with you before any decisions are made or actions are taken, unless there is a very strong reason not to. In an emergency where your life or health is in danger, and we cannot get your consent, we may give another professional some information to protect your life. Attempt to try to get your permission will be made first, and we will discuss this with you as soon as possible afterwards.

Consultation with other Mental Health Professionals

- We will consult (talk) with other professionals about your treatment on a regular basis. These other professionals are also required by professional ethics to keep your information confidential. Likewise, when

we are out of town or unavailable, it may be necessary to provide another therapist to you that will be available to help. In that case, basic information (name, diagnosis, treatment plan) must be given.

Court Orders and Subpoenas

- Our therapists are not experts in the custody of children and/or divorce proceedings. Marriage and family therapy ethics prevent therapists from doing both therapy and custody evaluations, as it is a conflict of interest. If your therapist is court ordered or subpoenaed to testify in a case, it is very unlikely that the therapist will be able to help your case.
- A court order is necessary for your therapist to appear and a \$500 charge must be paid to the therapist no later than one week before the date of appearance. The fee is \$200.00 per hour for a minimum of four (4) hours your therapist is engaged in legal appearances, as well as for additional travel time billed at 15 minute intervals, to be paid in full by cashiers check seventy-two hours ahead of time. Copying file information from the file will cost \$.75 per page. We do not release the private psychotherapy notes of the therapist, but will provide a written summary if court ordered, and requested to do so by each member of the couple.

Confidentiality: Couples

- If you and your spouse or partner have a custody dispute we will need to know about it. Marriage and family therapy ethics prevent therapists from doing both therapy and custody evaluations, as it is a conflict of interest.
- If you are seeking couples counseling and are married or partnered, you agree that if you eventually decide to divorce or end your relationship, you will not request testimony from me for either side. The court, however, may order a therapist to testify.
- Due to the nature of couples therapy, we maintain a “no secrets” policy. A “no secrets” policy means that information obtained by the therapist in any manner is to be used in a fashion that fosters the therapeutic process. However, if a secret gets in the way of the therapeutic work or if the therapists finds that a secret is not in the couple’s best interest, the therapist may decide to discontinue therapy. Every effort will be made to protect the couple as well as the individuals within the couple and the therapist will do their best to protect the individual who is holding the secret.

Confidentiality: Children and Families

When children under the age of about 12 are treated, information must be disclosed to the child(s) parents upon request. As children grow more able to understand and choose, they assume legal rights. For those between the ages of 12 and 18, most content is treated as confidential to nurture the therapeutic process. However, parents or guardians do have the right to general information, including how therapy is going, in order to make well-informed decisions about therapy. We will share information with parents or guardians if the minor’s mental or physical welfare is at risk, or if their actions might put them or others in any danger.

Confidentiality: Group Therapy

In group therapy, the other members of the group are not therapists. They do not have the same ethics and laws that therapists work under. Confidentiality is always requested as a rule, but you cannot be certain that what you say in the group will be confidential.

Confidentiality: Authorization to Record and Authorization to Release Information

- We will not record our therapy sessions on audiotape or videotape without your written permission.

- If you want me to send or discuss information about our therapy to someone else, or if you want us to have information from someone else, you must sign an “Authorization to Release” form. No information will be released without your consent. Any information that you disclose in session and also share outside of therapy, willingly and publicly, will not be considered protected or confidential by a court.

In couple’s therapy *both* individuals in the couple must sign an authorization to release information in order to release any information from the couples sessions.