



## PsychSanDiego's Privacy Policy:

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO YOUR OWN PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION. PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY, AND CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.**

### **Personal Health Information:**

Personal health information (PHI) is obtained through treatment, payment and related healthcare operations, application and enrollment processes, as well as healthcare providers or health plans, or through other means as applicable. PHI is protected by law and generally includes any information, oral, written or recorded, that is created or received by certain health care entities, including health care providers, such as physicians and hospitals, as well as, health insurance companies or plans. The law specifically protects health information that contains data, such as your name, address, social security number, and information that could be used to identify you as the individual patient who is associated with that health information.

PsychSanDiego strives to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements. The following is our privacy policy:

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** All information disclosed in sessions and the written records pertaining to said sessions is confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your written permission, except when required by law.

**When Disclosure Is Required By Law:** Disclosure is required by law when there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect. It is also required when a client presents a danger to themselves, to others, to property or is gravely disabled or when clients' family members communicate to the therapist that the client presents a danger to others.

**When Disclosure May Be Required:** Disclosure may be required in a legal proceeding by or against you. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by your therapist. Additionally, in couple and family therapy, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members, unless otherwise agreed upon. Your therapist will not release records to any outside party unless authorized to do so by all adult family members who were part of the treatment. In all these situations, your therapist will use their clinical judgment when revealing such information.

**Emergencies:** If there is an emergency during your work in therapy, where your therapist becomes concerned about your personal safety, the possibility of you injuring someone else, or about you receiving proper psychological care, they will do whatever they can, within the limits of the law, to prevent you from injuring yourself or others and to ensure that you receive the proper medical care. For this purpose your therapist may also contact the person whose name you have provided on the biographical sheet.

**HEALTH INSURANCE & CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS:** Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier or HMO/PPO/MCO/EAP in order to process claims. If you instruct your therapist, only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier. Your therapist has no control or knowledge over what insurance companies do with the information submitted, or who has access to this information. You must be aware that submitting a mental health invoice for reimbursement carries a certain amount of risk to confidentiality, privacy or to future capacity to obtain health or life insurance or even a job. The risk stems from the fact that mental health information is likely to be entered into insurance companies' computers and is likely to be reported to the National Medical Data Bank. Accessibility to companies' computers or to the National Medical Data Bank database is always in question as computers are inherently vulnerable to break-ins and unauthorized access. It has been reported that medical data has also been legally accessed by law enforcement and other agencies, which may also put you in a vulnerable position.