

## **Sanctuary Christian Counseling: Electronic Communications Policy**

Many different types of electronic communication are common in our society, and many prefer these methods over more traditional ones. These electronic modes of communication may put your privacy at risk, however, and may be inconsistent with the law and with the standards of our professions. Consequently, this policy has been prepared to assure the security and confidentiality of your treatment and to assure it is consistent with ethics and law.

### **EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS/TEXT MESSAGES**

We use email communications and text messaging only with your permission and only for administrative purposes unless we have made other agreements. That means that email and text exchanges with our office should be limited to things like setting and changing appointments, billing matters and other related issues. Please do not email us about clinical matters unless you have our approval beforehand. Even though we have a HIPAA-compliant email platform, it is always possible for your confidential data and information to be intercepted. Face-to-face is the most secure mode of communication, so we urge you to leave clinical conversation for our therapy sessions.

### **TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS**

Treatment is most effective when clinical discussions occur at your regularly scheduled sessions. But if an urgent issue arises, you should feel free to attempt to reach us by phone. We will try to return your call within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays. If you are unable to reach us and feel that you cannot wait for us to return your call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room or call 9-1-1. We are not a crisis counseling center and we do not have a therapist on call.

Our Sanctuary Christian Counseling office number, 717-200-3158 is HIPAA-compliant. Calls and voicemails to this number meet the privacy requirements of the law. Calls and voicemails to this number and to the personal business number your therapist gives you meet the privacy requirements of the law. If you have our non-HIPAA-compliant personal cell phone numbers and choose to communicate that way, you accept the risk of breaches to your privacy and confidentiality. We urge you not to do this.

Our business phone numbers may forward to our personal cell phone numbers. Please understand that we may not answer this phone at all times because we are in sessions or in a situation in which we cannot guarantee your confidentiality. If you desire a returned call, please leave a message.

### **WEBSITES**

We have a professional website that you are free to access. We use it for professional reasons to provide information to others about us and our practice. Our website contains information that may be helpful to you regarding many

therapeutic issues. We'd be happy to discuss any website content during our therapy sessions.

### **WEB SEARCHES**

We will not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission. We believe that this violates your privacy rights; however, we understand that you might choose to gather information about us in this way. In this day and age there is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the Internet, much of which may be known to that person and some of which may be inaccurate, unknown or false. If you encounter any information about us through web searches, or in any other fashion, for that matter, please discuss it with us during our time together so that we can deal with it and the potential impact on your treatment.

Recently, it's become trendy for clients to review their health care providers on various websites. Unfortunately, mental health professionals such as us at Sanctuary Christian Counseling cannot respond to such comments and related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews of us or any professional with whom you are working, please share it with us so that we can discuss it and its potential impact on your treatment. Please do not rate our treatment of you while we are working together on any of these websites, as it has potential to damage our ability to work together.

### **ELECTRONIC RECORDINGS**

We will not record you, neither our communications nor our sessions, without your written permission. We ask that you do not record them, either, unless we agree together that it is in your best interests to do so. Likewise, if we are seeing you face-to-face, please do not record anything or anyone you see or meet in our offices or in the building in which our offices are situated.

### **ELECTRONIC CREDIT AND DEBIT CARD CHARGES**

By signing below, you also give us permission to store and charge your credit card for appointments, online or in-person, as agreed by us mutually. We will always let you know when we have done so, via Square email, which may or may not be totally secure, unless you ask us not to inform you. We reserve the right to charge you our customary fee for no-show or missed appointments without 24-hours email or phone notice to us.

Please understand if you use your Health Savings Account to pay for our services, we have only limited control of your confidentiality as your card issuer and fund manager may see your charges. This is out of our control.

I/we understand and agree to adhere to the electronic communications policy outlined in this document.

---

(Client 1 Signature)

---

(Date)

---

(Client 1 Printed Name)

---

(Client 2 Signature)

---

(Date)

---

(Client 2 Printed Name)

---

(Client 3 Signature)

---

(Date)

---

(Client 3 Printed Name)

---

(Client 4 Signature)

---

(Date)

---

(Client 4 Printed Name)