A Few Notes about Family and Child Therapy

We hope that your time at The Center will be supportive and useful, and are pleased to have an opportunity to be of service to you and your family. Our goal is to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children and families can work on understanding their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and communicate more openly around these topics.

Therapy with children often involves working with both children and their caregivers and has a different format than traditional individual therapy. As such, we would like to share some information to help you better understand our policies for families working with our practice.

Consenting to Treatment

The state of Pennsylvania requires the consent of one parent for minors under the age of 14 when the biological parents or legal guardians are married. When separated or divorced, the state of Pennsylvania requires consent of both parents (or guardians) for children under the age of 14 to participate in psychotherapy, unless there is a legal document giving one caregiver sole custody of the child. Adolescents age 14 or older are able to provide their own consent to treatment. If you have concerns regarding obtaining consent from both legal guardians, please contact The Center as soon as possible to discuss this issue.

Record Keeping

The psychologists at The Center offer services to help improve the well-being of your child and the overall functioning of your family. We do not specialize in custody evaluations or make recommendations regarding parenting fitness. At no time will your psychologist provide a final opinion or determination regarding custody arrangements for your child(ren).

Should you choose, or a judge order, that we release your child’s protected health information, please be aware that when you or your child(ren) engage in family therapy, some material kept in your child’s official mental health record may contain information about family members other than the individual whose name is on the chart.

Meeting Attendance

Clients will plan with their psychologist who should attend each therapy session. Please note that we do not have a supervised waiting room, and therefore children who are not directly involved in treatment should not come unsupervised. In addition, if someone who was supposed to come to a meeting cannot attend, please contact the therapist to create a new plan.
Should a parent or guardian request a special meeting with only the therapist and not the child, please be aware that insurance may not provide payment for this meeting and you may be asked to cover the cost of this session on your own. You and your therapist can discuss these arrangements prior to scheduling this type of meeting.

In order to help ensure the best treatment outcome possible, we ask that you keep in mind the following responsibilities of the parent or guardian participating in treatment:

- Understand and support the goals and methods of the treatment.
- **Understand that your psychologist’s role is limited to providing treatment and that you will not involve your psychologist in any legal dispute, especially a dispute concerning custody or custody arrangements (visitation, etc).**
- Ensure the child(ren) and any adults attend all scheduled meetings and arrives on time.
- Inform the psychologist of any concerns or problems related to the child(ren)’s coping (behavior changes, school concerns, body changes, etc).
- Assist the child(ren) in understanding and participating in therapy sessions.
- Encourage the child(ren) to communicate with you about the therapy meetings, but also respect the child(ren)’s right to privacy.

Responsibilities of the child(ren) or adolescent participating in treatment:

- Participate in the therapy meetings in whatever way is comfortable.
- Attend every meeting.
- Be aware of and agree to the purpose of the therapy.
- Respect the rules of the practice.

I have read the above and consent to treatment for my child: ____________________________

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Mother’s (or guardian’s) Signature                  Date:

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Father’s (or guardian’s) Signature                  Date:
Confidentiality for Kids
What Kids Say Here Stays Here

Most of the things you talk about with your psychologist will stay between the two of you. It will be confidential. However, for your own well-being, there are times when your psychologist may need to share things with the people who care about you.

Here is a list of times when your psychologist may need to talk to your family, or another adult:

❖ If your psychologist believes that you are being hurt or abused by someone.

❖ If your psychologist believes that you may hurt yourself, someone else, or damage someone’s property.

❖ If your psychologist believes that you are misusing drugs, using alcohol, or doing anything else that is against the law.

❖ If you or your guardian gives written permission to talk to other professionals working with your family.

Besides these, sometimes your psychologist may think that something you have said is important to share with your parent or guardian because it will help you understand one another better or help you function better.

Your psychologist will let you know ahead of time if he or she decides to speak to your parent or guardian about something that was talked about in private. Together, the two of you will think of the best way to talk to the adults who care for you about any problems or concerns.

I have talked with my psychologist about confidentiality and had a chance to ask questions about it.

_________________________________  ____________________
Client

_________________________________  ____________________
Psychologist Date