

Akron Family Institute, Inc.
INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINORS

IS THE CLIENT A MINOR/CHILD (i.e., under the age of 18 years old)? If YES, please thoroughly read this page and sign at the bottom. If NO, you can move on to the following sections.

PARENT AUTHORIZATION FOR MINOR'S MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

In order to authorize mental health treatment for your child, you must have either sole or joint legal custody of your child. If you are separated or divorced from your child's other parent, please notify me immediately. I will ask you to provide me with a copy of the most recent custody decree that establishes custody rights of you and the other parent or otherwise demonstrates that you have the right to authorize treatment for your child.

If you are separated or divorced from the child's other parent, please be aware that I may notify the other parent that I am meeting with your child.

One risk of child therapy involves disagreements among parents and/or disputes between parents and the therapist regarding the child's treatment. If such conflicts occur, I will strive to listen carefully so that I can understand your perspectives and fully explain my perspective. We can resolve such disagreements or agree to disagree so long as this enables your child's therapeutic progress. Ultimately, parents decide whether therapy will continue. If either parent decides that treatment should end, I will honor that decision unless there are extraordinary circumstances. However, in most cases, I will ask that you allow me the option of having a few closing sessions with your child to appropriately end the treatment relationship.

INDIVIDUAL PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATIONS WITH ME

During my treatment of your child, I may meet with the child's parents/guardians either separately or together. Please be aware, however, that, at all times, my client is your child – not the parents/guardians nor any siblings or other family members of the child.

If I meet with you or other family members during your child's treatment, I will make notes of that meeting in your child's treatment records. Please be aware that those notes will be available to any person or entity with legal access to your child's treatment record.

MANDATORY DISCLOSURES OF TREATMENT INFORMATION

In some situations, I am required by law or by the guidelines of my profession to disclose information, whether or not I have your or your child's permission. I have listed some of these situations below.

Confidentiality **cannot be maintained** when:

- A child client tells me they plan to cause serious harm or death to themselves, and I believe they have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future; I must take steps to inform a parent or guardian or others of what the child has told me and how serious I believe this threat to be and to try to prevent the occurrence of such harm.
- A child client tells me they plan to cause serious harm or death to someone else, and I believe they have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future. In

this situation, I must inform a parent or guardian or others, and I may be required to inform the person who is the target of the threatened harm [and the police].

- A child client is doing things that could cause serious harm to them or someone else, even if they do not intend to harm themselves or another person. In these situations, I will need to use my professional judgment to decide whether a parent or guardian should be informed.
- A child client tells me, or I otherwise learn, that it appears that said child client is being neglected or abused (physically, sexually, or emotionally) or that it appears that they have been neglected or abused in the past. I am a Mandated Reporter, and as such, in this situation, I [may be] required by law to report the alleged abuse to the appropriate state child-protective agency.
- I am ordered by a court to disclose information.

DISCLOSURE OF MINOR'S TREATMENT INFORMATION TO PARENTS

Therapy is most effective when a trusting relationship exists between the therapist and the client. Privacy is especially important in earning and keeping that trust. As a result, children need to have a “zone of privacy” where children feel free to discuss personal matters without fear that their thoughts and feelings will be immediately communicated to their parents. This is particularly true for adolescents who are naturally developing a greater sense of independence and autonomy.

My policy is to provide you with general information about your child’s treatment but NOT to share specific information your child has disclosed to me without your child’s agreement. This includes activities and behavior that you would not approve of (or might be upset by) but that do not put your child at risk of serious and immediate harm. However, if your child’s risk-taking behavior becomes more serious, I will need to use my professional clinical judgment to decide whether your child is in serious and immediate danger of harm. If I feel that your child is in such danger, I will communicate this information to you.

You can always ask me questions about the types of information I would disclose. You could ask in the form of “hypothetical situations,” such as: “If a child told you that he or she was doing _____, would you tell the parents?”

Even though we have agreed to keep your child’s treatment information confidential from you, I believe that it is important for you to know about a particular situation that is going on in your child’s life. In these situations, I will encourage your child to tell you, and I will help your child find the best way to do so. Also, when meeting with you, I may sometimes describe your child’s problems in general terms, without using specifics, to help you know how to be more helpful to your child.

PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT NOT TO USE MINOR'S THERAPY INFORMATION/RECORDS IN CUSTODY LITIGATION

When a family is in conflict due to parental separation or divorce, it is very difficult for everyone, particularly for children. Although my responsibility to your child may require my helping to address conflicts between the child's parents, my role will be strictly limited to providing treatment to your child.

Please note that your agreement may not prevent a judge from requiring my testimony, even though I will only do so if legally compelled. If I am required to testify, I am ethically bound not to give my opinion about either parent's custody, visitation suitability, or fitness. If the court appoints a custody evaluator, guardian *ad litem*, or parenting coordinator, I will provide information as needed if appropriate releases are signed, or a court order is provided, but I will not make any recommendation about the final decision(s). Furthermore, if I am required to appear as a witness or to otherwise perform work related to any legal matter, the party responsible for my participation agrees to pay a non-refundable retainer prior to my attending court. This retainer is used for time spent traveling, speaking with attorneys, reviewing, and preparing documents, testifying, attending, and other case-related costs. Additional costs may be incurred.

CHILD/ADOLESCENT CLIENT:

By signing below, you show that you have read and understood the policies described above. If you have any questions as we progress with therapy, you can ask me anytime.

Minor's Signature* _____

Date _____

* For very young children, the child's signature is not necessary

PARENT/GUARDIAN OF MINOR CLIENT:

Please initial after each line and sign below, indicating your agreement to respect your child's privacy:

I will refrain from requesting detailed information about individual therapy sessions with my child. I understand that I will receive periodic updates about general progress and/or may be asked to participate in therapy sessions as needed.

I understand that I will be informed about situations that could endanger my child. I know this decision to breach confidentiality in these circumstances is up to the therapist's professional clinical judgment unless otherwise noted above.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____