

Tim Courtois

Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information.

By law, I have to provide you with a summary “in plain language” of the mountain of nearly indecipherable legalese the government has produced regarding your privacy.

This document is my attempt to make that summary as simple as possible. Since this is a summary, it does not include every detail. You may ask for clarification if you need it on any point.

I. What information is covered?

Any information I possess that is identifiable as being linked to you is protected by law.

II. Situations in which I’m allowed to use your private information:

1. For “Treatment”, “Payment”, and “Health Care Operations”

“Treatment”: I’m allowed to use your private information in counseling sessions and to communicate as needed with other health care professionals who provide treatment to you.

“Payment”: I’m allowed to use your private information to obtain fees. For example, I can use your credit card information to charge you for your sessions through your credit card company.

“Health Care Operations”: I’m allowed to use your private information to conduct and improve my work for you by doing things such as consulting with other counselors.

2. To contact you

I’m allowed to use your private information to get in touch with you (i.e., to remind you of appointments).

3. When required by law

There are some situations in which I am *required* by law to disclose private information. Some of these include:

- Most common instances: I'm required to report suspected child or elder abuse to proper authorities. If I believe you are in danger or killing yourself or harming someone else, I am required to make reasonable attempts to communicate this threat to appropriate third parties who are able to intervene and/or who are at risk.
- More obscure instances: If you are a part of a legal proceeding I may be required to disclose private information. I may also release private information to government agencies who check to see that counselors are obeying the privacy laws, to public health agencies investigating disease, and to worker's compensation programs.

4. Special considerations for minors

For clients who are minors, parent(s) or guardian(s) have the legal right to know what is going on in the client's counseling.

III. How your private information would be disclosed

In all instances, my disclosure of your private information must be done with an interest to protecting your privacy: disclosing as little information as possible while still complying with laws and providing good care.

IV. Further disclosures will only be made with your permission.

Outside of the above instances, disclosures of your information can only be made with your written consent—which you can revoke at any time. And the law requires that I notify you if there is a breach of your private information.

V. Your rights and how you may exercise them

You have the right to request that I restrict disclosures of your private information beyond the requirements of the law. However, I am not obligated to agree to such a request.

You have the right to express your preferences regarding how and where I contact you.

You have the right to inspect and copy your records. If you ask to do so, I will provide you with assistance in interpreting your records.

You have the right to ask me to correct your records if you believe them to be incomplete or inaccurate.

You have the right to ask me for an accounting of all the instances in which I have disclosed your private information—apart from disclosures to you, and disclosures related to treatment, payment, or health care operations.

Finally, you have a right to receive a printed copy of this notice of privacy practices upon request.

VI. My duties with regard to your private information

I am obligated to maintain your confidentiality and to provide you with this document. If laws change, I will provide you with an updated document.

VII. Your right to complain

If you ever believe that I have violated your privacy rights, you may contact me to express your concern. You will not be retaliated against in any way for expressing such concerns. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. You can find how to do this here:

<https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf>

As the sole proprietor of Tim Courtois LLC, I am also the designated “Privacy Officer” to handle any complaints or to provide further information regarding this notice and how it applies to you. You may contact me at any time. (talktotim@timcourtois.com)

Effective date of this notice:

This notice went into effect on October 17, 2023