

Confidentiality: Family and Couple Therapy Services, Inc.

One of the hallmarks of any counseling service is its commitment to client confidentiality. Other than the few situations outlined below, all client information, records, and sessions are kept in the strictest confidence. Client files are maintained in secure file cabinets, and our electronic information is completely inaccessible from outside our offices.

Situations where confidentiality must be breached:

- A client wants/needs to share information about their counseling with a third party. In this case, confidentiality is broken at the request of the client. In order for this to occur, a Release of Information must be signed by the client and detailing to whom this information can be released. Oftentimes, a statement as to the limit of what can be disclosed is part of the Release.
- The client is an immediate threat to themselves (suicidal) or others (homicidal).
 - If suicidal, and the client cannot or will not go to a hospital voluntarily, the counselor must contact the police, family, friends, or some other responsible party to ensure the safety of the client and that they receive the care that they need.
 - If the client is homicidal and a potential victim is known, the counselor is bound to inform the police and/or the potential victim of the homicidal intent.
- The client mentions an instance of child abuse, past or present. In this case, the Department of Social Services must be contacted, even if the incident occurred in a different state or if the victim of the abuse is now an adult.
- ***If the client is involved in a court case, client counseling records may be requested (subpoena) or demanded (court order).***
 - ***Subpoenas: A lawyer can subpoena the counseling records to help with their case for or against the client. If the client's lawyer requests the records, and the client is willing to have the records released, a copy of the records is given to the attorney. If the client does not wish for the records to be released (e.g., the request is from the opposing attorney), our office will not release the records. In sum, Family and Couple Therapy Services, Inc. does not respond to subpoenas from lawyers unless instructed to by the client.***
 - ***Court Order: A court order differs from a subpoena in that the request for the records in this case is made by the court itself, not by a lawyer. When this occurs, Family and Couple Therapy Services, Inc. is legally bound to provide the information requested in the court order.***

Client Signature _____ Date _____