

Centers for Family Change Policy for the Treatment of Children and Adolescents

This document details the Centers for Family Change's policies for the provision of services for children and adolescents. Please remember that it is important that you read this document carefully because by signing the **Centers for Family Change Consent to Receive Therapy Services Form** you are agreeing to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this agreement.

Parental Involvement in Therapy

- The involvement of both parents in the therapy process is strongly recommended, even when parents are divorced, separated, or never married.
- It is our policy that both parents must consent to treatment.
- In the case of divorced, separated, divorcing or separating, or never married parents living apart, we do require the written consent of both parents in order to provide therapy to a child or adolescent.
- It is our belief that for therapy to be successful, the cooperation of both parents is critical. However, we are sensitive to the fact that some divorced, separated, or never married parents may not want to attend sessions together. Thus, while recommending the involvement of both parents, we are flexible in how we work with families i.e. sometimes meeting separately with each parent.

Notification of and Consent to a Child's Therapy

- Your therapist will require both parents to consent to treatment,
- For divorced, separated, divorcing or separating, or never married parents living separately, both parents must sign a separate **Consent to Receive Therapy Services Form**.
- If only one parent is consenting to the child receiving therapy, this parent must sign the **Notification of Understanding Parental Consent to Treatment Form** which stipulates the child's other parent is unreachable or has had no contact with the child for the last several years.
- If one parent withdraws consent for treatment, the Centers for Family Change will stop treatment (contingent upon holding one final wrap up session with the child).
- By consenting to treatment, both parents understand and agree that the Centers for Family Change therapist will choose (with the agreement of those participating in therapy) the treatment approach that the therapist believes will be most helpful for the child(ren). This may include family therapy, which may

include a stepparent or other adults living with the child(ren), and may also include occasional collateral contacts with parents without the child(ren) present in the session.

Confidentiality of Records for Children and Adolescents

Confidentiality of treatment has always been considered an essential component of effective psychotherapy. Confidentiality allows all clients, including teens and even older children, to share issues they are struggling with. Therefore, the Centers for Family Change requests that parents and guardians agree to the confidentiality of the treatment of your child/adolescent. Specifically, the Centers for Family Change requests that parents sign our Confidentiality of Records for Children and Adolescents and give their written consent to honor the confidentiality of their adolescent's or child's treatment.

Centers for Family Change therapists strive to help our adolescent clients avoid and/or stop problematic and/or risky behavior. In addition, Centers for Family Change therapists will seek to involve parents in the therapy process to improve parent-child communication and help parents find ways to assist their adolescent children in stopping negative behaviors. Centers for Family Change therapists also stress with adolescents the importance of sharing their concerns and difficulties with their parents.

The Centers for Family Change will violate the confidentiality of our patients (of all ages) in instance when there is/are:

- Court orders for clinical records
- Suspicion of child and/or elder abuse
- Imminent risk of harm to self or others*

*This refers to suicidal behavior and threats to kill or severely injure oneself or others.

Centers for Family Change therapists will provide parents with the following information:

- The dates your child was seen for therapy (this information would also be available in explanation of insurance benefits)
- Missed appointments and charges for these appointments (parents are the responsible parties for paying for treatment)
- Diagnosis, treatment plan, and prognosis

For parents to obtain any other information about their child/teen's therapy, the Centers for Family Change would require that the child/teen sign a release of information allowing their therapist to share information with their parents/guardians.

Finally, we understand that the law regarding the confidentiality of treatment records for minors, ages 12-17, changed (effective January 2024) to allow parents/guardians access to their child/teen's records. Therefore, as parents you have a right to decline to sign this agreement. However, in these instances, your Centers for Family Change therapist may decline to provide treatment if the therapist believes that treatment is likely to be ineffective or severely compromised by the lack of confidentiality. In these instances, the Centers for Family Change staff will recommend that you seek treatment at a facility or practice that better suits your preferences.

Parents/guardians have a right to revoke their consent for the confidentiality of their child/teen's therapy. In these instances, your child/teen's Centers for Family Change therapist will request that this revocation be in writing and will request the opportunity to discuss the impact of revocation. In addition, the Centers for Family Change may end your child/teen's treatment if the therapist believes that the revocation of confidentiality will significantly disrupt or impair treatment.

Once a teen turns 18 years of age, they are entitled to complete control of their records. Thus, parental requests for copies of the teen's record will not be valid once the teen reaches the age of 18. In these instances, the teen must provide consent for the release of their treatment record.